



## PRESS RELEASE

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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **Mahler Symphony 1: An Orchestra Premiere for the Spartanburg Philharmonic**

**Former Orchestra Member John Young Shik Concklin  
Returns As Music Director Finalist**

**(Spartanburg, SC)** On Saturday, April 23, the Spartanburg Philharmonic welcomes Music Director Finalist [John Young Shik Concklin](#), to the podium to lead Gustav Mahler's **Symphony No. 1 in D. Major**. An awe-inspiring piece, both in scale and complexity, the April 23 concert will be the first performance of the symphony for the 93-year-old orchestra. The symphony has also not been played in the Upstate for several decades. The concert, entitled "EPIC," provides a triumphant conclusion to the Spartanburg Philharmonic's 2021/22 Season.

Mahler's Symphony No. 1 is commonly referred to as "Titan" for the incredible "hero's journey" the piece takes the listener on. While inspired by German folk poetry, conductor John Concklin shares that this is just the foundation of the work's story. "In Mahler's 1st, it is so clear that he has built a universe of his own. You can see the beginnings of his fascination with nature, the human spirit, transformation of the soul, indescribable love, heartache, and death, and finally, triumph —themes he revisits in later works. Some composers build symphonies akin to houses, some build castles; and comparatively, Mahler built Hogwarts." The symphony also features the familiar melody, "Frère Jacques," first played by the double bass and performed by longtime SPhil Principal Bass, Ian Bracchitta.

It is not the first time John Concklin has appeared with the Spartanburg Philharmonic. Concklin started his musical career as a violist, even performing as a member of the SPhil for many years. His last appearance in 2018 was as guest conductor for a concert featuring John Williams most remarkable works. Now, he returns to Spartanburg as a finalist for Music Director for the Spartanburg Philharmonic.

A longtime resident of the Upstate, John Concklin is looking forward to working with colleagues and friends once again. "Because I live here, it has been so exciting to see the Spartanburg Philharmonic grow over the last decade. They have so much energy in the orchestra. With all the different series they're doing, between Music Sandwiched In and the Zimmerli Series and Bluegrass, and all the other various things that are happening, there is so much energy in Spartanburg. They are a wonderful orchestra, and because I've been here, I get to see my friends and colleagues succeed, which is one of the most joyful things."

In welcoming Concklin back to the Spartanburg Philharmonic, Executive Director, Kathryn Boucher, stated, " We first invited John to lead our EPIC concert as a guest conductor. Now, as a Music Director finalist, we are delighted to have a conductor of John's caliber lead the orchestra in our first performance of Mahler 1. The complexity and grandeur of the piece make it a challenge for any conductor and orchestra. We look forward to seeing how John approaches the music and his leadership in working with our musicians in preparing for the concert."

The concert will open with two movements of *Petite suite de concert*, op.77 by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. Also an orchestra premiere for the SPhil, the piece's inclusion allows the audience to hear a fairly unknown composition reminiscent of Elgar and the operettas of Gilbert & Sullivan. Entitled "Nanette's Caprice" and "The Frisky Tarantella," Concklin looks forward to conducting the dynamic and harmonious movements. "The two selections by Coleridge Taylor are so expertly written and catchy that they are immediately loveable on first listen. The quirky caprice and colorful tarantella are a perfect way to warm up our appetite for the epic symphony by Mahler."

**Epic: Mahler Symphony No. 1 "Titan"** begins at 7:00 PM, Saturday, April 23, at Twichell Auditorium in the Zimmerli Performance Center on the Converse University campus. The performance will also include the pre-concert "Classical Conversations" with the Director of the Petrie School of Music, Chris Vaneman, chatting with John Concklin about the concert program.

## **Tickets**

Tickets for the concert are \$25-45 and can be purchased online at [www.SpartanburgPhilharmonic.org](http://www.SpartanburgPhilharmonic.org) or by calling the Converse University Box Office at 864-596-9724. In addition to attending the concert in person, the performance will also be livestreamed. At-home viewers can purchase a single household pass for \$25.

**About Spartanburg Philharmonic** Almost a century old, Spartanburg Philharmonic has its roots in the 1895 May Festival, the precursor of the South Atlantic States Music Festival founded in 1898, and one of only four such festivals featuring orchestras in the United States at that time. Recognized as a pillar of creativity, inspiration, and entertainment, Spartanburg Philharmonic is a modern orchestra with a strong foundation in traditional and contemporary music.

As a firm proponent of diversity and inclusion, the Philharmonic is dedicated to creating innovative and exhilarating experiences through memorable performances of well-known and rarely played works by female composers, composers of color, and both established and contemporary composers, for all members of the Spartanburg community and beyond.

An arts organization whose mission is to enrich, inspire, and educate through live performances of high-quality music, the Spartanburg Philharmonic partners with a variety of community, health, and education organizations to provide opportunities for all ages and abilities to enjoy. Amongst the programs are Music Sandwiched In, a free and open to the public lunch hour series; the Spartanburg Philharmonic Youth Orchestras, offering instrumental music education to students grades 6 through 12 in 16 different schools across three counties; and Carnegie Hall's Weill Institute's Link Up program, providing a music curriculum to 4th graders throughout Spartanburg County. [www.spartanburgphilharmonic.org](http://www.spartanburgphilharmonic.org)