

# Season 2018-2019

**Thursday, May 9, at 7:30**

**Friday, May 10, at 2:00**

**Sunday, May 12, at 2:00**

## The Philadelphia Orchestra

**Yannick Nézet-Séguin** Conductor

**Mahler** Symphony No. 9 in D major

I. Andante comodo

II. Im Tempo eines gemächlichen Ländlers. Etwas täppisch und sehr derb

III. Rondo—Burleske: Allegro assai. Sehr trotzig

IV. Adagio: Sehr langsam und noch zurückhaltend

This program runs approximately 1 hour, 40 minutes, and will be performed without an intermission.

The May 9 concert celebrates our 12-year partnership with the **Bravo! Vail Music Festival**.

The May 9 concert is sponsored by  
**Lisa and Peter DiLullo.**

The May 10 concert is sponsored by  
**Peter A. Benoiel and Willo Carey.**

Philadelphia Orchestra concerts are broadcast on WRTI 90.1 FM on Sunday afternoons at 1 PM, and are repeated on Monday evenings at 7 PM on WRTI HD 2. Visit [www.wrti.org](http://www.wrti.org) to listen live or for more details.

Please join us following the May 10 concert for a free Chamber Postlude featuring members of The Philadelphia Orchestra.

**Mahler/arr. Wen** Adagietto, from Symphony No. 5 in C-sharp minor

**Che-Hung Chen** Viola

**Marvin Moon** Viola

**Burchard Tang** Viola

**Meng Wang** Viola

**Haydn** Divertimento in D major, for three cellos

**Derek Barnes** Cello

**John Koen** Cello

**Alex Veltman** Cello

The Postlude runs approximately 25 minutes.

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



## Celebrating our partnership with the Bravo! Vail Music Festival

**For the past 12 seasons, The Philadelphia Orchestra** has been proud to be part of the Bravo! Vail Music Festival, performing six concerts each summer in the breathtaking setting of the Rocky Mountains and Vail, Colorado. The Festival began as a chamber music series in 1987, and while it continues to honor that past today, it also hosts four top-tier orchestras annually, becoming one of the world's great festivals.

The Orchestra is grateful for the inspired leadership of Bravo! Vail Executive Director Caitlin Murray, Artistic Director Anne-Marie McDermott, and the entire Board of Trustees. We welcome them and other special guests from Colorado to Bravo! Vail Day at The Philadelphia Orchestra on May 9, 2019.

Please join us for our 2019 Bravo! Vail summer residency from July 5-13. Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin leads the Orchestra along with Principal Guest Conductor Stéphane Denève in such highlights as Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto with Hilary Hahn, selections from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*, Anna Clyne's *Masquerade*, and Puccini's *Tosca*, the first time an opera has been staged at the Festival.

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Jeffrey Griffin



The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the preeminent orchestras in the world, renowned for its distinctive sound, desired for its keen ability to capture the hearts and imaginations of audiences, and admired for a legacy of imagination and innovation on and off the concert stage. The Orchestra is inspiring the future and transforming its rich tradition of achievement, sustaining the highest level of artistic quality, but also challenging—and exceeding—that level, by creating powerful musical experiences for audiences at home and around the world.

Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin's connection to the Orchestra's musicians has been praised by both concertgoers and critics since his inaugural season in 2012. Under his leadership the Orchestra returned to recording, with four celebrated CDs on the prestigious Deutsche Grammophon label, continuing its history of recording success. The Orchestra also reaches thousands of listeners on the radio with weekly broadcasts on WRTI-FM and SiriusXM.

Philadelphia is home and the Orchestra continues to discover new and inventive ways to nurture its relationship with its loyal patrons at its home in the Kimmel Center, and also with those who enjoy the Orchestra's area performances at the Mann Center, Penn's Landing, and other cultural, civic, and learning venues. The Orchestra maintains a strong commitment to collaborations with cultural and community organizations on a regional and national level, all of which create greater access and engagement with classical music as an art form.

The Philadelphia Orchestra serves as a catalyst for cultural activity across Philadelphia's many communities, building an offstage presence as strong as its onstage one. With Nézet-Séguin, a dedicated body of musicians, and one of the nation's richest arts ecosystems, the Orchestra has launched its **HEAR** initiative, a portfolio of integrated initiatives that promotes **H**ealth, champions music **E**ducation, eliminates barriers to **A**ccessing the

orchestra, and maximizes impact through **R**esearch. The Orchestra's award-winning Collaborative Learning programs engage over 50,000 students, families, and community members through programs such as PlayINs, side-by-sides, PopUP concerts, free Neighborhood Concerts, School Concerts, and residency work in Philadelphia and abroad.

Through concerts, tours, residencies, presentations, and recordings, the Orchestra is a global cultural ambassador for Philadelphia and for the US. Having been the first American orchestra to perform in the People's Republic of China, in 1973 at the request of President Nixon, the ensemble today boasts five-year partnerships with Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts and the Shanghai Media Group. In 2018 the Orchestra traveled to Europe and Israel. The Orchestra annually performs at Carnegie Hall while also enjoying summer residencies in Saratoga Springs and Vail. For more information on The Philadelphia Orchestra, please visit [www.philorch.org](http://www.philorch.org).

# Music Director

Chris Lee



Music Director **Yannick Nézet-Séguin** will lead The Philadelphia Orchestra through at least the 2025-26 season, an extraordinary and significant long-term commitment. Additionally, he became the third music director of the Metropolitan Opera, beginning with the 2018-19 season. Yannick, who holds the Walter and Leonore Annenberg Chair, is an inspired leader of The Philadelphia Orchestra. His intensely collaborative style, deeply rooted musical curiosity, and boundless enthusiasm, paired with a fresh approach to orchestral programming, have been heralded by critics and audiences alike. The *New York Times* has called him “phenomenal,” adding that under his baton, “the ensemble, famous for its glowing strings and homogenous richness, has never sounded better.”

Yannick has established himself as a musical leader of the highest caliber and one of the most thrilling talents of his generation. He has been artistic director and principal conductor of Montreal’s Orchestre Métropolitain since 2000, and in summer 2017 he became an honorary member of the Chamber Orchestra of Europe. He was music director of the Rotterdam Philharmonic from 2008 to 2018 (he is now honorary conductor) and was principal guest conductor of the London Philharmonic from 2008 to 2014. He has made wildly successful appearances with the world’s most revered ensembles and has conducted critically acclaimed performances at many of the leading opera houses.

Yannick signed an exclusive recording contract with Deutsche Grammophon (DG) in May 2018. Under his leadership The Philadelphia Orchestra returned to recording with four CDs on that label. His upcoming recordings will include projects with The Philadelphia Orchestra, the Metropolitan Opera, the Chamber Orchestra of Europe, and the Orchestre Métropolitain, with which he will also continue to record for ATMA Classique. Additionally, he has recorded with the Rotterdam Philharmonic on DG, EMI Classics, and BIS Records, and the London Philharmonic for the LPO label.

A native of Montreal, Yannick studied piano, conducting, composition, and chamber music at Montreal’s Conservatory of Music and continued his studies with renowned conductor Carlo Maria Giulini; he also studied choral conducting with Joseph Flummerfelt at Westminster Choir College. Among Yannick’s honors are an appointment as Companion of the Order of Canada; an Officer of the Order of Montreal; *Musical America’s* 2016 Artist of the Year; the Prix Denise-Pelletier; and honorary doctorates from the University of Quebec in Montreal, the Curtis Institute of Music, Westminster Choir College of Rider University, McGill University, and the University of Pennsylvania.

To read Yannick’s full bio, please visit [philorch.org/conductor](http://philorch.org/conductor).

# Framing the Program

## Parallel Events

**1909****Mahler**

Symphony  
No. 9

**Music**

Vaughan  
Williams  
Fantasia on  
a Theme of  
Thomas Tallis

**Literature**

Maeterlinck  
*L'Oiseau bleu*

**Art**

Picasso  
*Harlequin*

**History**

Perry reaches  
the North Pole

During his final three summers Gustav Mahler composed *Das Lied von der Erde* (The Song of the Earth, 1908), his Ninth Symphony (1909), and began an ultimately unfinished Tenth Symphony (1910). These works have long been considered a sort of valedictory trilogy. Death haunted Mahler's life, beginning with that of many of his siblings and later of his beloved daughter Maria Anna. Death also haunted Mahler's music, most evident in the funeral marches found in many of his symphonies.

Mahler explored death in new and extraordinary ways during his final years as he coped with a serious heart condition. In the Ninth Symphony, one colleague noted, Mahler bid "Farewell to all whom he loved": to the world, art, and his life. The Ninth resonated only within the inner ears of his imagination—he did not live to rehearse or premiere his last completed work. He died in Vienna in May 1911, at age 50.

The Philadelphia Orchestra is the only orchestra in the world with three weekly broadcasts on SiriusXM's *Symphony Hall*, Channel 76, on Mondays at 7 PM, Thursdays at 12 AM, and Saturdays at 6 PM.

# The Music

## Symphony No. 9



**Gustav Mahler**  
**Born in Kalischt (Kaliště),**  
**Bohemia, July 7, 1860**  
**Died in Vienna, May 18,**  
**1911**

“Gustav Mahler was a Saint.” With these words Arnold Schoenberg began his 1912 memorial address honoring the composer, who had died the previous year at age 50. A younger generation of Viennese composers and artists, including Anton von Webern and Alban Berg, shared his passion for Mahler’s music. Admirers sent a funeral wreath reading, “Bereft of the saintly human being Gustav Mahler, we are left forever with a never-to-be-lost example of his life and impact.” Berg spoke repeatedly of the “Holy Mahler,” and Schoenberg dedicated his important treatise on harmony (*Harmonielehre*) “to the memory of Gustav Mahler ... this martyr, this saint.” One might add yet another epitaph: prophet. For many, Mahler’s music prophesized not only his own life, but also foretold the future of music and even of the 20th century.

Saint, Martyr, Prophet—such images have vast implications for our understanding of Mahler’s life and his music, especially of his final compositional trilogy: *Das Lied von der Erde* (The Song of the Earth) and the Ninth and Tenth symphonies. These works explore shared musical and philosophical issues, and they are all, in a certain sense, unfinished. Mahler did not live to perform them and he invariably continued to revise a work through the stages of bringing it to the public. While the Tenth Symphony is clearly unfinished (even its first movement, which reached the most advanced stage and is frequently performed separately), both *Das Lied* and the Ninth would surely have undergone further refinements had Mahler lived to conduct them. (His protégé, Bruno Walter, led the first performances in 1911 and 1912 respectively.)

**Numbering the Ninth** “It seems that the Ninth is the limit. He who wants to go beyond it must pass away. It seems as if something might be imparted to us in the Tenth for which we are not yet ready. Those who have written a Ninth have stood too near to the hereafter.” Mahler supposedly shared these superstitions of Schoenberg’s about composing a ninth symphony, as had concluded the careers of Beethoven and Bruckner. (Schubert and Dvořák might now appear to be candidates for this list as well, although their symphonies were not so numbered in Mahler’s time.)

Alma Mahler, the composer's widow and a far from reliable source in many instances, reported that her husband tried to cheat fate after the uplifting Eighth Symphony by initially calling *Das Lied* the Ninth, but that he later "crossed the number out." *Das Lied*, left unnumbered, was titled a "Symphony for Tenor and Alto Voice and Orchestra," and sets Hans Bethge's German adaptations of Chinese poetry. After completing the Symphony we hear today, the official Ninth, Mahler allegedly told her, "Actually, of course, it's the Tenth, because *Das Lied von der Erde* was really the Ninth." When he began what he evidently intended to be a five-movement Tenth Symphony in F-sharp, he remarked: "Now the danger is past." The Ninth is a work that begins where the haunting final song of *Das Lied*, "Der Abschied" (The Farewell), ended. Mahler composed most of the Ninth Symphony in the summer of 1909. The following summer, his last, he sketched the Tenth.

**A Farewell Trilogy?** The connections between and among these three works, as well as their ultimate place in the composer's output, have made it all too tempting to view them as pointing toward death, a "farewell" trilogy, the artistic testament of a dying man. Mahler had, after all, received serious personal blows in 1907: His beloved elder daughter, Maria Anna, died at the age of four; he resigned an untenable position at the Vienna Court Opera; and he was diagnosed with a serious heart condition. He accepted a lucrative offer from the Metropolitan Opera in New York, but nonetheless returned to Europe each summer, when he always did most of his composing. By 1909, the year of the Ninth Symphony, his professional situation in New York had become more complicated, as had his marriage to the nearly 20-year-younger Alma, who was soon to begin an affair with the young architect Walter Gropius (later her second husband). Mahler eventually learned of the liaison and sought relief from Sigmund Freud in the summer of 1910, while writing the Tenth. There was to be no next summer. The fatally ill Mahler left New York for Vienna, where he died on May 18.

The blows of 1907 left their mark on his last four years. Mahler commented in some of his most personal letters that he had to "start a new life." In 1908, while composing *Das Lied*, he remarked on trying to settle into a different location (he refused to return to the site of his daughter's death the previous summer): "This time it is not only a change of place but also a change in a whole way of life. You can imagine how hard the latter comes to me. For many years I have been used to constant and vigorous

exercise—roaming about in the mountains and woods, and then, like a kind of jaunty bandit, bearing home my drafts.” The doctors advised that he curtail not only the long walks that he so treasured, but also some of his taxing conducting activities. “I stand *vis-a-vis de rien*” (face to face with nothing), he wrote to Bruno Walter, “and now, at the end of my life, I have to begin to learn to walk and stand.”

**Mahler and Death** And yet we might want to resist what may be too simple a connection between Mahler’s late works and death. Mahler had, after all, dealt with the subject extensively in his earlier music. His first known composition, written at around the age of seven, was a “Polka with Funeral March.” Funeral marches abound in his symphonies, beginning with the third movement of his First Symphony. He wrote his haunting *Kindertotenlieder* (Songs on the Death of Children) before the death of his own child. Moreover, whatever the frustrations, Mahler enjoyed considerable success in New York. (The final devastating blow of his life was personal, not professional: learning of Alma’s infidelity.) And, despite the initial warnings from his doctors, he gradually became more active, conducting the New York Philharmonic in a large number of concerts and on tours. The year of the Ninth he wrote to Walter: “I am experiencing so much more now (in the last eighteen months [since Maria’s death]), I can hardly talk about it. How should I attempt to describe such a tremendous crisis! I see everything in such a new light—am in such a state of flux, sometimes I should hardly be surprised suddenly to find myself in a new body. (Like Faust in the last scene.) I am thirstier for life than ever before.”

Mahler provided few comments about the intent or meaning of his late works. Concerning the Ninth, he informed Walter that “the work itself (insofar as I know it, for I have been writing away at it blindly, and now that I have begun to orchestrate the last movement I have forgotten the first) is a very satisfactory addition to my little family.” This is an interesting metaphor, given the recent loss of his daughter, and may indicate how successfully Mahler sublimated a wide range of feelings into his music. “In it something is said that I have had on the tip of my tongue for some time.” He compared the work to the Fourth Symphony, but admitted the two symphonies were “quite different.” His nearly daily letters to Alma, who was at a spa, speak little about the composition and dwell on more mundane matters.

**Mahler’s Private Messages** More revealing are some indications that he scribbled in the sketches and manuscript. In the first movement of the Ninth he wrote: “O

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Youth! Lost! O Love! Vanished!" and in the finale: "O Beauty, O Love, Farewell, farewell." (He made similar annotations in the Tenth: "Farewell, my music! Farewell. Farewell. Farewell" and at the end of the finale: "To live for you! To die for you!" "Almschi!") These were personal notes, not meant for public consumption. Although they do not appear in the final score, colleagues such as Berg (to whom Alma gave the draft score of the Ninth in 1923) and the conductor Willem Mengelberg learned of them and it no doubt influenced their interpretations. The latter noted in his score: "The Ninth Symphony is: Farewell from all whom he loved—and from the world!—and from his art, his life, his music."

Mahler's view about divulging "extra-musical" information concerning his works changed over the course of his career. His early symphonies initially carried intricate programs and descriptive titles, some of which he later withdrew. His middle trilogy of purely instrumental ones (Nos. 5–7) furthered the retreat. With regard to his last works, it has primarily been musicians, critics, and listeners who have invented their own "programs," especially ones that make connections with farewell and death. A similar situation applies to Tchaikovsky's Sixth Symphony, premiered just nine days before the Russian composer's death in 1893, and a piece, like Mahler's Ninth Symphony, that ends with an emotional slow movement. (Mahler allegedly did not much care for Tchaikovsky's final symphony, although he conducted it six times in 1910–11.)

More recent biographers and commentators have continued to make the connections. The British musicologist Deryck Cooke, who constructed the most frequently performed edition of the Tenth Symphony, remarked that Mahler's earlier works project "images" of mortality, while the late ones have the "taste" of death. Since the Mahler revival of the 1960s, in which he played a commanding role, Leonard Bernstein's views of the Ninth Symphony have been particularly influential. "The Ninth is the ultimate farewell," the conductor noted. The end of the Ninth is "the closest we have ever come, in any work of art, to experiencing the very act of dying, of giving it all up." The Ninth was Mahler's "last will and testament," a sonic presentation of death itself. But Bernstein saw more than prophecies of Mahler's "own imminent death," extending to "the death of tonality" and, finally, "the death of society." After recounting a list of 20th-century horrors, he remarked that "only after all this can we finally listen to Mahler's music and understand that it foretold all."

**A Closer Look** The start of the first movement (**Andante comodo**) picks up harmonically and thematically from the end of *Das Lied*, with its nine-fold repetition of the word *ewig* (forever). The rhythm, presented by cellos and a horn repeatedly intoning the pitch A, returns at crucial structural moments in the movement, including at the climax “with utmost force.” As early as 1912 (and taken up by Cooke and Bernstein later), the rhythm was likened to the irregular beating of a diseased heart. A nostalgic D-major theme gradually emerges in the second violins, accumulating force through a series of fragments played by strings, harp, clarinets, and muted horns. The organic growth of the themes marks one of Mahler’s greatest compositional achievements. Over the past century commentators have discerned various allusions in this movement, not just to Mahler’s own music, but also to other compositions, including Johann Strauss Jr.’s waltz “Freut euch des Lebens” (Enjoy Life) and, more tellingly, Beethoven’s “Les Adieux” (Farewell) Piano Sonata in E-flat, Op. 81a. (This allusion comes at the point where Mahler wrote “Leb’ wol” [Farewell] in his sketches.) Berg believed that “The whole movement is permeated with the premonition of death. ... Again and again it occurs, all the elements of worldly dreaming culminate in it ... which is why the tenderest passages are followed by tremendous climaxes like new eruptions of a volcano.”

The slow first and last movements frame two fast, more ironic central movements. Constantin Floros has called the second, which begins **in the tempo of a relaxed Ländler**, the “summation” of Mahler’s dance styles. Although it starts innocently, it takes on the flavor of a “Dance of Death,” as T.W. Adorno observed. The following **Rondo-Burleske** likewise offers a wide range of moods and ideas, including the gestures of popular music of the sort that brought charges of banality against Mahler. The movement shows Mahler’s increasing interest in counterpoint, taking his studies of Bach to new extremes. Fugato mixes with marches, grotesque and angry passages with more tender moments. A quieter, phantasmagorical middle section looks forward to the final movement. Adorno called this movement the first major work of new music.

The final **Adagio** opens with a forceful unison violin theme reminiscent of the slow movement of Bruckner’s Ninth and Wagner’s *Parsifal*, both of which also project lush, hymn-like mediations. The music plunges into the key of D-flat major. Whereas in some of his earlier symphonies the tonality progressed upward, for example, in the Fifth

Mahler composed his  
*Symphony No. 9* in 1909.

William Smith conducted *The Philadelphia Orchestra's* first performances of Mahler's *Ninth*, in December 1969. The most recent subscription performances were in January 2005, with Christoph Eschenbach.

The Orchestra recorded the *Symphony* in 1979 with James Levine for RCA.

Mahler scored the work for piccolo, four flutes, four oboes (IV doubling English horn), three clarinets, E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, four bassoons (IV doubling contrabassoon), four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion (bass drum, chimes, cymbals, glockenspiel, large bells [in A, B, and F-sharp], snare drum, tam-tam, triangle), two harps, and strings.

The *Ninth Symphony* runs approximately 1 hour and 40 minutes in performance.

Symphony from C-sharp minor in the first movement to D major in the finale, here the tonality is regressive, from D major to D-flat. All the Ninth's movements, except for the furious coda of the third, end in disintegration, approaching the state of chamber music. The incredible final page of the Ninth offers the least rousing finale in the history of music, but undoubtedly one of the most moving. Mahler provides one further self-allusion, played by the first violins, to the fourth of his *Kindertotenlieder*. The unsung song, played by the first violins, originally accompanied the words "Der Tag ist schön auf jenen Höh'n" (The day is beautiful on those heights), telling of the parents' vision of their dead children at play on a distant mountain. The music becomes ever softer and stiller, almost more silence than sound, until we may be reminded of the heartbeat that opened the Symphony, but now realize it is consciousness of our own heartbeat. In this extraordinary way Mahler implicates his listeners into the work, which ends *ersterbend*—dying away.

Psychologists, notably Elisabeth Kübler-Ross, have explored the various stages of dealing with death, including denial, anger, and acceptance, and one might argue that all these and more are conveyed in Mahler's valedictory trilogy, both within and among the individual compositions. One finds denial in *Das Lied* through the ecstatic celebration of nature and life, but also rage, and ultimately peace. The Rondo-Burleske in the Ninth is an even more terrifying expression of rage, while the last moments of the Symphony transcend acceptance so as to suggest some sort of visionary state. From what we can tell of the Tenth Symphony, it likewise has moments of extreme, dissonant anger, although the sketches suggest that Mahler aimed for acceptance at the end. The Ninth Symphony, as well as its framing companions, not only ponders death, but also bids farewell to the passing of a musical and artistic world, the end of Romanticism, tonality, and perhaps even the genre of the symphony. At the same time Mahler looks forward, offering a prophetic vision of music that we are still trying to understand.

—Christopher H. Gibbs

# The Philadelphia Orchestra

Yannick Nézet-Séguin Music Director



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# Musical Terms

## GENERAL TERMS

**Burleske:** A humorous piece involving parody and grotesque exaggeration

**Cadence:** The conclusion to a phrase, movement, or piece based on a recognizable melodic formula, harmonic progression, or dissonance resolution

**Chord:** The simultaneous sounding of three or more tones

**Coda:** A concluding section or passage added in order to confirm the impression of finality

**Counterpoint:** The combination of simultaneously sounding musical lines

**Dissonance:** A combination of two or more tones requiring resolution

**Fugato:** A passage or movement consisting of fugal imitations, but not worked out as a regular fugue

**Fugue:** A piece of music in which a short melody is stated by one voice and then imitated by the other voices in succession, reappearing throughout the entire piece in all the voices at different places

**Harmonic:** Pertaining to chords and to the theory and practice of harmony

**Harmony:** The combination of simultaneously sounded musical notes to produce chords and chord progressions

**Ländler:** A dance similar to a slow waltz

**Legato:** Smooth, even, without any break between notes

**Meter:** The symmetrical grouping of musical rhythms

**Mute:** A mechanical device used on musical instruments to muffle the tone

**Rondo:** A form frequently used in symphonies and concertos for the final movement. It consists of a main section that alternates with a variety of contrasting sections (A-B-A-C-A etc.).

**Sonata:** An instrumental composition in three or four extended movements contrasted in theme, tempo, and mood, usually for a solo instrument

**Timbre:** Tone color or tone quality

**Tonality:** The orientation of melodies and harmonies towards a specific pitch or pitches

## THE SPEED OF MUSIC (Tempo)

**Adagio:** Leisurely, slow

**Allegro:** Bright, fast

**Andante:** Walking speed

**Comodo:** Comfortable, easy, unhurried

**Derb:** Robust, rough

**Im Tempo eines gemächlichen Ländlers:**

In the tempo of a comfortable Ländler (a dance similar to a slow waltz)

**Langsam:** Slow

**Täppisch:** Awkward, clumsy

**Trotzig:** Defiant

**Zurückhaltend:** To hold back, to slow down

## TEMPO MODIFIERS

**Assai:** Much

**Etwas:** Somewhat

**Noch:** Still, yet

**Sehr:** Very

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