When Mahler introduced his First Symphony, in the second month of his second season as director of the Budapest Opera, the work was not billed as a symphony, but under the title “Symphonic Poem in Two Parts,” and there were five movements, one more than we hear in the present concerts. Part I comprised the first two movements as we know them now, but separated by an Andante that Mahler eventually dropped from the score. Part II was made up of the last two movements, headed À la pomes funèbre and Molto appassionato, respectively, and played without pause. The premiere was not one that anyone might call a success. There was booping as well as polite applause, and the critic Viktor von Herzfeld, one of Mahler’s close friends, did not let that friendship get in the way of a tirade he summed up with the observation, “All of our great conductors … have themselves eventually recognized, or have proved, that they were not composers. … This is true of Mahler also.” The movement that gave the most offense was the penultimate one, the Funeral March that begins with the double bass inoning a minor-key variant of a familiar tune (the nursery song known in French as “Frère Jacques” and in German as “Bruder Martin”) and proceeds through a chain of exotic motifs, rhythms and colors such as never heard or imagined in a symphony before. This section was said to reflect both Jewish and Gypsy influences. One of the tunes in the tender second section, which Mahler had used in 1884 for “Die zwei blauen Augen,” the last of his four Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen (“Songs of a Wayfarer”), is virtually identical with a Jewish liturgical theme that was well known in Central Europe at the time, and may represent a boyhood recollection on the composer’s part. Whatever its source, this tender theme must have been the least distressing part of the Funeral March movement to the work’s early audiences. As Mahler’s biographer Henry-Louis de La Grange notes, however, that at the time the First Symphony was composed “the emotions he needed to express were so overpowering that he was not much concerned with his future listeners’ reactions.”

—Richard Freed

Morning Star was commissioned by the Grand Ledge, Michigan High School Wind Symphony, Michael Kaufman, conductor. It was premiered by them in May 1997. I was asked to write a celebratory piece for the opening of the wonderful new concert hall at Grand Ledge High.

Morning Star was a surprise to me. In planning the piece, I came up with a great many ideas — enough for three or four pieces. When it came time to compose, I suddenly discarded all of that material and took up a little tune that came to mind. The result is a happy piece, a concept that does not usually attach itself to my music. The piece is a Rondo shape with the “A” portions being sets of variations on the brief theme. There are 32 variations in all. The orchestration, while offering enough to brass and percussion, strongly emphasizes wind color and open sounds.

Morning Star is about beginnings: the dawning of a new day, the opening of a new hall, the beginning of adult life for the young people who premiered the piece and for those who are playing it now.

—David Maslanka
ETHEL with special guest Todd Rundgren

TELL ME SOMETHING GOOD

Tonight’s program and order will be announced from the stage.

ETHEL’s solo repertoire to include:

Octet 1979
Judd Greenstein, 2011

Spiegel im Spiegel
Arvo Pärt, arr. R. Farris, 1978

Selection from Quartet Set
Lou Harrison, 1972

Todd Rundgren’s solo repertoire and ETHEL/Rundgren collaborative repertoire will be announced from the stage and may include:

I Saw the Light
Todd Rundgren

Flamingo
Todd Rundgren, arr. P. Brantley

Zen Archer
Todd Rundgren, arr. P. Brantley

Stood Up
Todd Rundgren, arr. R. Farris

Soul Brother
Todd Rundgren, arr. D. Lawson

Black Maria
Todd Rundgren, arr. R. Farris

Lord Chancellor’s Nightmare Song
Gilbert and Sullivan, arr. D. Lawson

There will be one 15-minute intermission.

Todd Rundgren appears courtesy of Panacea Entertainment.

This performance is part of Daniel Pearl World Music Days, an annual global concert network affirming the ideals of tolerance, friendship and our shared humanity. World Music Days is inspired by the life and work of journalist and musician Daniel Pearl, who would have celebrated his birthday on October 10. Tonight we join people around the world in a tribute to all the visionary men and women who use the power of music to lift peoples of different backgrounds and beliefs above the differences that set us apart. Through our music, we reaffirm our conviction that humanity will triumph and harmony will prevail.

As each generation comes into its prime, it affects the contemporary musical environment, bringing in elements of the sounds it grew up with. These days, we are surrounded by references to the culture and sounds of the 1970s: the era of funk, glam rock, early minimalism, the bi-centennial, Watergate and the Vietnam War. The ‘70s was a restless, intelligent, dissatisfied time — a decade of contradictions, a decade of loss, a decade of discovery. This vibrant program brings ETHEL and special guest Todd Rundgren together as they draw material — and inspiration — from the sounds and scenes of “The ‘Me’ Decade.”

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

ETHEL

Acclaimed as “one of the most exciting quartets around” (Strad Mag) and “as a necessary jet of cold water in the contemporary classical scene” (Pitchfork.com), the string quartet ETHEL has been a post-classical pioneer since it was founded in 1998. ETHEL invigorates contemporary concert music with exuberance, intensity, imaginative programming and exceptional artistry. With an eye on tradition and an ear to the future, ETHEL is a leading force in concert music’s re-engagement with musical vernaculars, fusing diverse traditions into a vibrant sound that resonates with audiences the world over. The New York City-based quartet comprises Ralph Farris (viola), Dorothy Lawson (cello), Kip Jones (violin) and Tema Watanabe (violin).

ETHEL’s 2012-13 season commences with a nationwide tour of Tell Me Something Good, a celebration of the culture and sounds of the 1970s featuring rock icon Todd Rundgren. Other highlights include: a preliminary performance/workshop of “ETHEL’s Documerica” as part of the Park Avenue Armory’s week-long “Under Construction” series in New York City; the world premiere in the Netherlands of “Cross Avenue”; a new work by composers Jeroen Strijbos and Rob van Rijswijk; collaborative projects and concerts with virtuoso guitarist Kaki King; ongoing performances with Native American flutist Robert Mirabal; appearances as the official house band of TEDxManhattan; and newly commissioned works by Mary Ellen Childs, Jerod Impichchaachaaha’ Tate, Ulysses Owens Jr., James “Kimo” Williams, Hannis Brown, Lainie F efferman and Dan Friel.

Off-stage, ETHEL continues to receive acclaim for its third album, Heavy (Innova Recordings, 2012), which has been described as “another beautiful reality of contemporary music” (All About Jazz).

Over the past three years, ETHEL has premiered more than 50 new works by 20th- and 21st-century composers, including pieces that were commissioned by the quartet or composed by ETHEL. Recent premieres and noteworthy performances include:
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Phil Kline’s SPACE at the gala reopening of Alice Tully Hall; RADIO by Orvaldo Golijov at the debut of WNYC Radio’s Jerome L. Greene Space; ETHEL’s TruckStop®, The Beginner at BAM’s Next Wave Festival; ETHEL’s Fair: The Songwriters at opening night of Lincoln Center’s Out of Doors Festival; WAIT FOR GREEN with choreography by Annie-B Parson, commissioned by artsWorld Financial Center; ETHEL’s HonBiBaKoSan by Dohee Lee at Meet the Composer’s Three-City Dash Festival; ETHEL’s HomeBaked series featuring commissioned works by emerging New York City composers Andy Akiho, Anna Clyne, Judd Greenstein and Matt Marks, as well as premieres by Rick Baitz and Randall Woof at the Tribeca New Music Festival; and works by contemporary music luminaries such as Julia Wolfe, John Zorn, Steve Reich, John King, Raz Mesinai, David Lang, Scott Johnson, Kenji Bunch, Don Byron, Marcelo Zarvos and Evan Ziporyn.

ETHEL has initiated innovative collaborations with an extraordinary community of international artists that include David Byrne, Bang on a Can, Kaki King, Ursula Oppens, Loudon Wainwright III, STEW, Ensemble Modern, Jill Sobule, Dean Osborne, Howard Levy, Joshua Fried, Andrew Bird, Iva Bittová, Colin Currie, Thomas Dolby, Jeff Peterson, Steve Coleeman, Stephen Gosling, Jake Shimabukuro and Polygraph Lounge. ETHEL has recorded Yo-Yo Ma and Gorillaz. A graduate of Walnut Hill School for the Arts, Farris earned his bachelor’s and master’s degrees from The Juilliard School.

A founding member of ETHEL, Ralph Farris (Artistic Director, viola) is a Grammy-nominated arranger, an original Broadway orchestra member of The Lion King and former musical director for The Who's Roger Daltrey. He has worked with Leonard Bernstein, Martin Scorsese, Depeche Mode, Natalie Merchant, Harry Connick Jr., Allen Ginsberg, Yo-Yo Ma and Gorillaz. A graduate of Walnut Hill School for the Arts, Farris earned his bachelor's and master's degrees from The Juilliard School.

A founding member of ETHEL, Dorothy Lawson (Artistic Director, cello) has performed with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the White Oak Dance Project, Philharmonia Virtuosi, the American Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra and numerous new music ensembles. Canadian-born, she completed degrees at the University of Toronto, the Vienna Academy and The Juilliard School. She teaches in the Preparatory Division of Mannes College at the New School in New York City.

Kip Jones (violin) is known for his ebullient and innovative solo performances in a style he describes as “experimental folk.” A modern musical troubadour, he’s performed in a range of eclectic venues that include a veranda packed with Bangladeshi migrant laborers in Kolkata, Aeroschick’s Very Boring Motorcycle Rally, Tirana’s Jordan Nisja School of Music and the Philadelphia Fringe Festival. A native of Minnesota, Jones earned his degree in violin performance from the Berklee College of Music.

Temat Watstein (violin) is an active soloist, chamber musician and educator. Hailed for her “sweeping and bristling” sound by the New York Times, she has performed with the Metropolitan Ensemble, Mark Morris Dance Group, Argento Ensemble and Tanglewood’s New Fromm Quartet, to name a few. She served most recently as the violinist in Gabriel Kahane’s February House at the Public Theater. An alum of Rice University and graduate of the Manhattan School of Music’s Contemporary Performance Program, Watstein is equally home whether playing Ligeti in concert or improvising in a field.

TODD RUNDGREN

Special Guest (Electric Guitar, Acoustic Guitar, Ukulele, Piano)

A Wizard, A True Star. The title of Todd Rundgren’s 1973 solo album aptly sums up the contributions of this multi-faceted artist to state-of-the-art music. As a songwriter, video pioneer, producer, recording artist, computer software developer, conceptualist and, most recently, interactive artist (re-designated TR-i), Rundgren has made a lasting impact on both the form and content of popular music.

Born and raised in Philadelphia, Rundgren began playing guitar as a teenager, going on to found and front The Nazz, the quintessential ’60s cult group. In 1969, he left the band to pursue a solo career, recording his debut offering, the legendary Runt. But it was 1972’s seminal Something/Anything?, on which he played all the instruments, sang all the vocal parts and acted as his own producer, that catapulted Rundgren into the superstar limelight, prompting the press to unaniomously dub him “Rock’s New Wunderkind.” It was followed by such landmark LPs as A Wizard, A True Star, as well as such hit singles as I Saw the Light, Hello It’s Me, Can We Still Be Friends and Bang the Drum.

In 1974, Rundgren formed Utopia, an entirely new approach to the concept of interactive musicianship, and embarked on an extensive round of touring and recording. Standout Utopia offerings included Oops! Wrong Planet, Adventures in Utopia and Oblivion. Along the way, Utopia combined technical virtuosity and creative passion to create music that, for millions, defined the term “progressive rock.”

Rundgren’s myriad production projects include albums by Patti Smith, Cheap Trick, Psychmedic Furs, Meatloaf, XTC, Grand Funk Railroad, and Hall and Oates. Rounding out his reputation as rock’s Renaissance Man, Rundgren composed all the music and lyrics for Joe Papp’s 1989 Off-Broadway production of Joe Orton’s Up Against It (the screenplay commissioned by The Beatles for what was meant to have been their third motion picture). He also has composed the music for a number of television series, including Per Wee’s Playhouse and Crime Story.

Early last year Rundgren performed his iconic 1973 album A Wizard, A True Star in concert in its entirety for the first time ever, and recently did the same with a double bill: Todd & Healing. His latest two studio albums are Todd Rundgren’s Johnson, a collection of classic Robert Johnson songs, and reProduction, covers of songs Rundgren has produced for other artists. This past summer he toured with Ringo Starr (for the third time).

In 1998 Rundgren debuted his new PatroNet technology, which for the first time allowed fans of a musical artist to subscribe directly to the artist’s musical output via the Internet. This caps a long history of groundbreaking early multimedia “firsts,” including:

• 1978: The first interactive television concert, broadcast live over the Warner/QUBE system in Columbus, Ohio (the home audience chose each song in real time during
ABOUT THE ARTISTS

• 1979: The opening of Utopia Video Studios, a multimillion-dollar state-of-the-art facility. The first project produced by Rundgren there was Gustav Holst’s *The Planets*, commissioned by RCA SelectaVision as the first demonstration software for its new videodisc format.

• 1980: Creation of the first color graphics tablet, which was licensed to Apple and released as The Utopia Graphics Tablet.

• 1981: *Time Heals*, the first music video to utilize state-of-the-art compositing of live action and computer graphics (produced and directed by Rundgren), becomes the second video to be played on MTV (after *Video Killed the Radio Star*).

• 1982: The first live national cablecast of a rock concert (on the USA Network), simulcast in stereo to more than 120 radio stations.

• 1982: The first two commercially released music videos, one of which was nominated for the first-ever Grammy awarded for “Best Short Form Video” in 1983.

• 1992: The release of *No World Order*, the world’s first interactive record album on CD-i. Also the first commercially available music downloads via CompuServe.

• 1994: The release of *The Individualist*, the world’s first full-length Enhanced CD.

• 1995: The world’s first interactive concert tour.

• 1998: Launches PatroNet, the world’s first direct artist subscription service.

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