

PROGRAM

PRINCETON
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

SUNDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2006 4:00 P.M. RICHARDSON AUDITORIUM PRINCETON

MARK LAYCOCK, *Music Director*
BENJAMIN ROUS, *Assistant Conductor*

PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

MARK LAYCOCK, *Conducting*
VLADIMIR OVCHINNIKOV, *Piano*

STRAUSS

Don Juan, Op.20

Tone Poem after Nicolaus Lenau

DOHNÁNYI

Variations on a Nursery Song, Op.25

Introduction and Theme

- I. Poco piu mosso
 - II. Risoluto
 - III. Espressivo
 - IV. Molto meno mosso (Allegretto moderato)
 - V. Piu mosso
 - VI. Ancora piu mosso (Allegro)
 - VII. Walzer – Tempo giusto
 - VIII. Alla Marcia
 - IX. Presto
 - X. Passacaglia (Adagio non troppo)
 - XI. Chorale – Maestoso
- Finale fugato – Allegro vivace

VLADIMIR OVCHINNIKOV

INTERMISSION

BRAHMS

Symphony No. 4 in E minor, Op.98

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Andante moderato
- III. Allegro giocoso
- IV. Allegro energico e passionato

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This program is funded in part by the
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WELCOME to the 27th Season of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra. It is with the greatest of honor and pleasure that we bring you music of lasting value, interest and beauty. This season we are delighted to have the return of the brilliant pianist Vladimir Ovchinnikov, who received Russia's highest artistic honor of being named Musician of the Year in 2005. Truly one of the world's top artists, it speaks volumes on behalf of the level and quality of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra that he is enthusiastic about playing with this orchestra and accommodates us into his schedule. As is our custom, this season integrates well-known masterpieces with music you may not have heard before, and does so covering a wide range of musical styles and repertoire in order to present a wide overview of this magnificent art form. We are also deeply moved and grateful to have an even closer personal bond with the Princeton community through this season's first annual Edward T. Cone concert in January. Along with other like-minded individuals, it was with Ed's beautiful spirit, encouragement and enthusiasm that this orchestra was founded – and it is with that spirit that we look forward to seeing you throughout the year for memorable musical experiences.

Sincerely,



Mark Laycock

ABOUT THE PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1980 by Portia Sonnenfeld as the "Little Orchestra of Princeton," today's Princeton Symphony Orchestra has been hailed by critics as New Jersey's "virtuoso orchestra." PSO performs classical masterworks, introduces music by contemporary composers, offers star-studded pops concerts, and delights area schoolchildren with their first orchestra experience. PSO performs its classical subscription series in historic Richardson Auditorium in downtown Princeton, as well as special performances throughout the region. PSO also performs Holiday and Broadway pops concerts, a Sunday afternoon chamber series at Wolfensohn Hall at the Institute for Advanced Study and at the Montgomery Center for the Arts, and *BRAVO!*, an in-school educational series with children's concerts in Richardson Auditorium, reaching more than 10,000 schoolchildren each year.



MARK LAYCOCK, *Music Director*, celebrates his 20th year as Music Director of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra during the 2006–2007 season, and his 21st year with the Orchestra. Under his artistic leadership, the Princeton Symphony Orchestra has been shaped into a nationally recognized and mature ensemble that has received two Citations of Excellence from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts. Maestro Laycock made his conducting debut with the Philadelphia Orchestra at age 21. His multiple re-engagements include those with the Philadelphia Orchestra, Montréal Symphony Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra of London, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Bochumer Symphoniker of Germany, and the Georges Enescu Philharmonic in Bucharest. His guest conducting engagements include those with orchestras of Paris, Kiev, Ekaterinburg, and Mexico City as well as performances at the Cairo Opera house and at the Royal Cultural Center in Amman, Jordan. A published composer, his works have been performed by the Philadelphia Orchestra, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, Alabama Symphony Orchestra, Canton (OH) Symphony Orchestra and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, among others. Admired for his innovative programming, his ability to provide the audience with an understanding of and connection to the music results in a uniquely satisfying concert-going experience. During the summer months Maestro Laycock is Artistic Director of the Lake Placid Sinfonietta. Later in the 2006–07 season he will make his Asian debut in Korea conducting the TJB Orchestra Daejeon, as well as conducting a world premiere in a return engagement with the Bochumer Symphoniker.



BENJAMIN ROUS, *Assistant Conductor*

Benjamin Rous enjoys a varied musical life as conductor, violinist, and composer. He is the music director of the Brahms Society Orchestra in Cambridge, Massachusetts, a post held since 2000. Previous music directorships include the Campus Symphony Orchestra at the University of Michigan, the Harvard Bach Society Orchestra, and Lowell House Opera at Harvard. He has performed regularly as violinist and violist with the Arcturus Chamber Ensemble of Carlisle, Massachusetts, since its founding in 2000. His compositions have been performed by the Portland Youth Symphony, the New England Conservatory Preparatory String Orchestra, the Boston Latin High School String Orchestra, and the Fromm Players at Harvard. Interested in spontaneous composition and improvisation, Rous has performed in experimental ensembles in Boston and Atlanta as violist, violinist, and conductor. Outside of music, he practices a variety of dance and movement forms, including Contact Improvisation and Authentic Movement. Rous received his Master's degree in orchestral conducting, and is currently pursuing Doctoral studies, at the University of Michigan, where he studies with Kenneth Kiesler. In the summer of 2006 he was selected as an Academy Conductor at the Aspen Music Festival.

Guest Artist

Princeton Symphony Orchestra



VLADIMIR OVCHINNIKOV

First Prize winner at the 1987 Leeds International Piano Competition, Vladimir Ovchinnikov is one of Russia's foremost pianists. In addition to a triumphant debut recital at the Barbican in 1987, his concerto appearances include the Chicago Symphony, Montreal Symphony, and all the major London orchestras. The *Independent* of London wrote "Ovchinnikov is an immaculate performer with impeccable taste and a sense of deep repose, even when confronted by the most extravagant technical demands."

Named Russia's "Artist of the Year" in 2005, Ovchinnikov studied with Alexey Nasedkin at the Moscow Conservatoire where he is now professor of piano. He appears frequently with such leading Russian orchestras as the Moscow Philharmonic, Moscow Radio Symphony and the St. Petersburg Philharmonic. Presently recording for Melodiya, Mr. Ovchinnikov's CDs include compilations of Liszt, Prokofiev and Rachmaninov for EMI Classics, as well as Mussorgsky's "Pictures at an Exhibition" and the Shostakovich First Piano Concerto (with Maxim Shostakovich) for Collins Classics.

Princeton-area concert-goers will remember Ovchinnikov's remarkable and acclaimed PSO performance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3. during our 2002 season. Vladimir Ovchinnikov is represented by *Schmidt Artists International, Inc.*

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Princeton Symphony Orchestra

MARK LAYCOCK, Music Director

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Kevin Tsai
Bruno Pena
Ruotao Mao
Hanfang Zhang
Kiri Murakami
Sayuri Lyons
Linda Howard
Carolina Beate

Violin II

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Michelle Brazier
Carmina Gagliardi
Mary Walsh
Sharon Gunderson
Lara Hicks
David Tsai
Nancy Ronquist

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Stephanie Griffin, *Principal*
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Lisa Hammell
Jacqueline Watson
Clifford Young
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Kathleen Foster
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PROGRAM NOTES

BY GENE DE LISA

Don Juan

RICHARD STRAUSS (1864-1949)

Composed in May–September 30, 1888.

First Performance: November 11, 1889, in Weimar, conducted by the composer.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, triangle, cymbals, glockenspiel, harp, and strings

Background

Strauss made his first sketches for Don Juan in the fall of 1887, and completed the score in the summer of 1888, two years after the completion of Brahms' Fourth Symphony. This first masterpiece, which propelled him to fame, was completed when Strauss was only 24! At such an age the virtuosity displayed is astonishing, but perhaps Michael Kennedy is correct that this is "tumescant, erotic music, redolent of the passion of a man in his mid-twenties." Much later, Strauss in a rehearsal of the piece advised the players that "all would go well if they imagined they were engaged rather than married."¹

Strauss received his early musical training from his father who was a professional horn player. Influenced by his father's anti-Liszt/Wagner stance, Strauss' early works were not programmatic. In 1885 he left Munich to accept a position at Meiningen as assistant to Hans von Bülow. There he was introduced to Liszt's ideas of *Zukunftsmusik* (Music of the future) by Meiningen violinist, Alexander Ritter (who was married to Wagner's niece). Strauss embraced the idea that the "poetic idea" should guide the development of the music. His first efforts in this direction were the symphonic fantasy *Aus Italien* followed by *Macbeth* (1886), neither of which were entirely successful. However, beginning in 1888, Strauss created a series of Tone Poems (he preferred this term – Tondichtung – over Symphonic poem) destined to be masterpieces: *Don Juan* (1888), *Tod Und Verklärung* (Death and Transfiguration) (1888–89), *Till Eulenspiegel* (1894–95), *Also sprach Zarathustra* (1895–96), *Don Quixote* (1896–97), and finally culminating in *Ein Heldenleben* (A Hero's Life) (1897–98). Although Strauss wrote several orchestral works after *Ein Heldenleben*, he turned most of his attention to the Lied and Opera in his later life.

Nikolaus Lenau, the pseudonym of Nikolaus Franz Niemsch von Strehlenau (1802–1850), was one of Austria's greatest lyrical poets. In 1844, he began writing *Don Juan*, a verse drama, only a fragment of which was published posthumously. Lenau's poem was Strauss'

¹ Michael Kennedy, "Richard Strauss. The Master Musicians"

Program Notes

Gene De Lisa

inspiration for his own composition *Don Juan*. Key to understanding this work is that Strauss was drawn to Lenau's psychological treatment of his famous subject. Strauss vividly portrays the Don's mental deterioration throughout the work. The form Strauss chose to use is that of a Sonata first movement with two development sections.

The exhilarating opening grabs the listener's attention and doesn't let go until the final moments of the piece. These first few measures contain several ideas that are developed throughout.



The principal theme of the first section is derived from the motifs in the introduction.



This theme is developed in a self-contained section representing the Don's first "adventures." This is followed by a lyrical melody which marks his first love scene.



A second love scene occupies much of the middle of the work. The hauntingly lovely melody brings the oboe to center stage over a static sustained background.



After building in intensity, this section culminates with this theme modified with motifs from the opening, announced heroically in the horns over a high string pedal point.



This love scene is followed by a second development section which is known as the Carnival scene. Don Juan's downfall starts here when he finds a statue of a nobleman he killed and invites him to dinner. The statue does not come to dinner but rather his son Don Pedro.

The final section depicts a duel between Don Juan and Don Pedro. Themes are recapitulated and the tempo gradually presses forward (stringendo) to a climax on a B dominant –seventh chord repeated fortissimo in triplets. Realizing that his assured victory against Don Pedro would bring him only more of the life with which he has become bored, Don Juan drops his sword to allow Don Pedro to provide the final thrust of the match. At that instant, there is a sudden pause in the music. The transition from this exciting swashbuckling to the moment when Don Juan throws away his sword to receive the death blow from Don Pedro is marked by a very soft sustained A minor chord. The moment of the death blow is marked by the trumpets' dissonant F natural over this serene A minor.

The work ends dramatically with Don Juan's life ebbing away. His collapse to the ground and loss of strength are portrayed by descending thirds rustling in the violins, with swelling and diminishing tremolos in the strings until he reaches his last breath. With a final ascending scale in the first violins, his spirit departs to the heavens. All that is left is desolation, and the nerve-induced final shudder of his body depicted in the violas. Two unison pizzicati on E announce the Don's demise.

Strauss suggested that the excerpts from Lenau's poem quoted in the score be printed in the program notes. These verses, spoken by Don Juan, are from the opening and closing of the drama.

*Fain would I run the magic circle,
Immeasurably wide, of a beautiful woman's manifold charms,
In full tempest of enjoyment,
To die of a kiss at the mouth of the last one.
O my friend, would that I could fly through every place
Where beauty blossoms, fall on my knees before each one,
And, were it but for a moment, conquer.*

*I shun satiety and the exhaustion of pleasure;
I keep myself fresh in the service of beauty;
And in offending the individual I rave for my devotion to her kind.
The breath of a woman that is as the odor of spring today
May perhaps tomorrow oppress me like the air of a dungeon.
When, in my changes, I travel with my love In the wide circle of beautiful women
My love is a different thing for each one;
I build no temple out of ruins.*

*Indeed, passion is always and only the new passion;
It cannot be carried from this one to that;
It must die here and spring anew there;*

*And, when it knows itself, then it knows nothing of repentance.
As each beauty stands alone in the world,
So stands the love which it prefers.
Forth and away, then, to triumphs ever new,
So long as youth's fiery pulses race!*

*It was a beautiful storm that urged me on;
It has spent its rage, and silence now remains.
A trance is upon every wish, every hope.
Perhaps a thunderbolt from the heights which I contemned,
Struck fatally at my power of love,
And suddenly my world became a desert and darkened.
And perhaps not; the fuel is all consumed
And the hearth is cold and dark.²*

Variations on a Nursery Song op. 25 for full orchestra and piano concertante

ERNÖ DOHNÁNYI (1877-1960)

Composed in Berlin in 1914.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and strings

Background

Hungarian pianist, conductor, teacher and composer Ernő Dohnányi (Ernst von Dohnányi) studied at the Royal Academy, Budapest and later became its director in 1934. As an accomplished pianist he toured extensively. In 1920 he performed the complete works of Beethoven and later all of Mozart's piano concertos. In 1908, he became professor of piano at the Berlin Hochschule. He was permanent conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra from 1919 to 1944 and in 1931 music director of the Hungarian State Radio. After World War II Dohnányi moved to the United States and taught at Florida State until his death in 1960. He is the grandfather of conductor Christoph von Dohnányi, 1929–, who was music director of the Cleveland Orchestra (1984–2002).

Dohnányi's music is quite different from his fellow countrymen Béla Bartók and Zoltán Kodály in that Hungarian folk music was not as strong an influence on his work. However, this did not prevent Bartók from declaring, "You can sum up Hungarian music in one word, Dohnányi." He did not turn his back completely on folk music. His *Ruralia Hungarica* (1924) was indeed based on Hungarian folk tunes. Later he became interested in American folk music. His last orchestral work, *American Rhapsody* (1953), utilizes folk material which includes "On Top of Old Smokey."

² Norman Del Mar, Richard Strauss: A Critical Commentary on His Life and Works

Program Notes
Gene De Lisa



This sequence of thirds is followed by two additional short motifs that are developed throughout the movement. The second motif is primarily melodic but with a repeated rhythmic pattern.



The third motif is primarily rhythmic, but the thirds from the initial theme are in evidence.



This opening movement is written in a Sonata form without repeated exposition. Actually it appears for a moment that the exposition is indeed repeating, but a few measures in it becomes clear that we are into the development section. The lyrical second theme is introduced by the 'celli:



The recapitulation does not begin with a bold forte announcement of the first themes. Instead it sneaks in very softly with the initial theme first in the woodwinds. The strings seem to not pay attention to them for several moments until they start to toss the themes from one to another. We are treated to a gradual thickening of texture and volume until we do indeed get a grand tutti restatement to close the movement.

Second Movement: Andante Moderato

The young Richard Strauss who was then assistant conductor at Meiningen described this movement as “*A funeral procession moving across moonlit heights.*”³

The opening in the ancient Phrygian church mode (E to E on the piano's white keys) recalls the thirds from the initial theme of the first movement by outlining a rising third

³ Karl Geiringer: Brahms His Life and Work

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followed by a descending third. At the same time it looks forward to the exuberant C major opening of the third movement.



This theme is almost immediately repeated in E major. Throughout the movement it is developed and is tossed from one instrument to another. As in the slow movements of his second and third symphonies, this is an adapted sonata form. In this movement it almost appears to be a theme and variations. Another fanfare-like triplet motif announces a transition to a lyrical second theme in the 'celli.

The horns present the initial fanfare once more before a final struggle between Phrygian and E major. The movement dies away recalling this duality with an arpeggiated “Neapolitan” chord (F major) resolving to E major.

Third Movement: Allegro Giocoso

At first glance the raucous third movement seems out of place to the other more somber movements. But once again there are thematic and harmonic connections. The Phrygian gloom of the second movement is dispelled with an energetic C major theme. Brahms makes the final chord of the first phrase stand out by placing it over an octave lower than its neighbors and by marking it to be played very loudly and forcefully (*forte forzando*). This is not for mere effect because it actually is a highly compressed foreshadowing of the chaconne theme of the fourth movement.



This compression is gradually released until the coda where the chaconne theme (with octave displacement) is more fully revealed.



Fourth Movement: Allegro Energico e Passionato

The very famous last movement of Brahms' last symphony is a theme followed by an incredible thirty variations. It is a special kind of theme and variations used in the Baroque era called a chaconne or passacaglia. Well-known examples are Purcell's *Dido's Lament* and

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J.S. Bach's *Chaconne in Dm for solo violin*. The distinction between these two terms is surprisingly elusive. Brahms himself used the term chaconne for this movement whereas Arnold Schoenberg described it as a passacaglia. Brahms previously experimented with the chaconne in his *Haydn Variations*.

The theme or chaconne subject Brahms uses is an alteration of the final movement of J. S. Bach's *Cantata 150 "Nach dir, Herr, verlanget mich."*



In a conversation with friends Bülow and Ochs, several years before the composition of the symphony, Brahms referred to Bach's chaconne subject "*but it is too clumsy, too straightforward. One must alter it chromatically in some way.*"

The opening of the fourth movement introduces Brahms' subject – indeed altered chromatically – in the flutes, oboes and trombones, utilizing the trombones for the first time in the symphony.



Towards the end of the movement the relationship between the chaconne subject and the initial series of descending thirds from the opening of the first movement is revealed. The first note of each measure outlines the chaconne subject.



And so in our first concert of the season we have heard excellent examples representing both sides of the absolute vs. program music camps and a third that straddles both. *Don Juan* shows how the poetic idea can be portrayed in music. Brahms worked with no extra-musical materials and produced a no less compelling work. Dohnányi used a well-known melody to create somewhat of a parody, by using styles and techniques from both camps, in a way that perhaps recalls Dvořák's place in music history.

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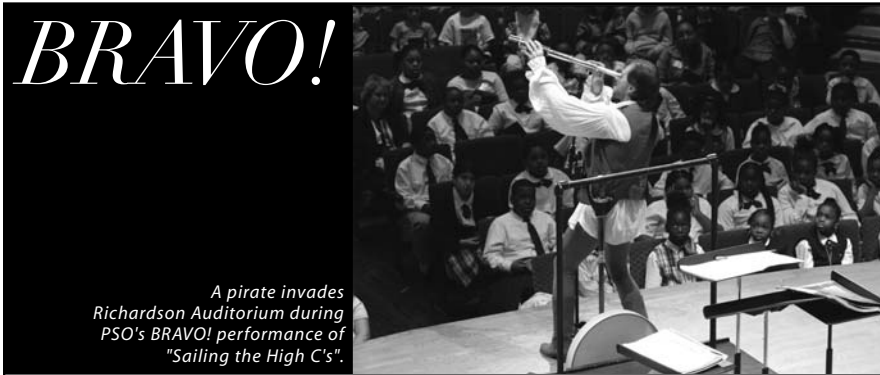
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NOV 12

Sunday, November 12, 2006, 4:00 pm

Musical Impressionists

- Lyadov** The Enchanted Lake
- Hovhaness** Mysterious Mountain (Symphony No. 2)
- Debussy** La Mer
- Ravel** La Valse
- Ravel** Bolero

JAN 21

Sunday, January 21, 2007, 4:00 pm

The Edward T. Cone Series

- Basia Danilow**, *violin*
- Schubert** Symphony No.8, "Unfinished"
- Vaughan Williams** The Lark Ascending
- Beethoven** Symphony No. 6 (Pastorale)

MAR 11

Sunday, March 11, 2007, 4:00 pm

The Brilliance of Sir William Walton

- Mariam Nazarian**, *piano*
- Järnefelt** Praeludium
- Mozart** Piano Concerto No. 22
- Walton** Symphony No. 1

APR 15

Sunday, April 15, 2007, 4:00 pm

Of Lamps and Legends

- Jeffrey Solow**, *cello*
- Horneman** Aladdin Overture
- Shostakovich** Cello Concerto No. 1
- Rimsky-Korsakov** Scheherazade

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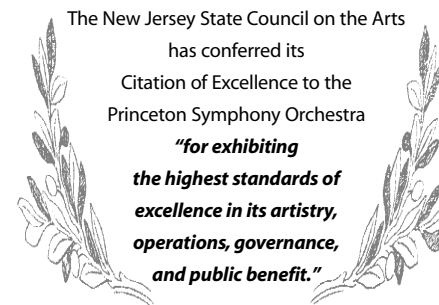
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