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Music Director

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PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2020-21

ROSSEN MILANOV, Edward T. Cone Music Director

Sunday October 4, 2020, 4pm

Virtual Concert

WALKER / MOZART / RACHMANINOFF

Rossen Milanov, conductor
Inon Barnatan, piano

Mr. Barnatan's appearance is made possible by a generous gift from Yvonne Marcuse.

George Walker	*Lyric for Strings*
W.A. Mozart	Divertimento in D Major, K. 136 I. Allegro II. Andante III. Presto
Sergei Rachmaninoff Arr. for solo piano by Inon Barnatan	Symphonic Dances, Op. 45 I. Non allegro II. Andante con moto (Tempo di valse) III. Lento assai – Allegro vivace

This concert is made possible in part by the generous support of Harriet and Jay Vawter.

Orchestral works recorded at Morven Museum & Garden

Made possible by funds from the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts.

Princeton Symphony Orchestra

The Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO) is a cultural centerpiece of the Princeton community and one of New Jersey's finest music organizations, a position established through performances of beloved masterworks, innovative music by living composers, and an extensive network of educational programs offered to area students free of charge. Led by Edward T. Cone Music Director Rossen Milanov, the PSO presents orchestral, pops, and chamber music programs of the highest artistic quality, supported by lectures and related events that supplement the concert experience. Through PSO BRAVO!, the orchestra produces wide-reaching and impactful education programs in partnership with local schools and arts organizations that culminate in students attending a live orchestral performance. The PSO receives considerable support from the Princeton community and the New Jersey State Council on the Arts, regularly garnering NJSCA's highest honor. Recognition of engaging residencies and concerts has come from the National Endowment for the Arts, and the PSO's commitment to new music has been acknowledged with an ASCAP Award for Adventurous Programming and a Copland Fund Award. The only independent, professional orchestra to make its home in Princeton, the PSO performs at historic Richardson Auditorium on the campus of Princeton University.

Music Director

Respected and admired by audiences and musicians alike, internationally renowned conductor and Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO) Edward T. Cone Music Director **ROSSEN MILANOV** looks forward to collaborating in 2020-21 with established and emerging artists of the orchestral world.

With an impressive pedigree, including positions at The Philadelphia Orchestra, he has galvanized the PSO with his energetic and exacting conducting. Mr. Milanov is also the music director of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, and newly appointed chief conductor of the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra in Ljubljana. Respected and admired by audiences and musicians alike, he has established himself as a conductor with considerable national and international presence.

Mr. Milanov's programming at the PSO embraces the standard repertoire, rarities, and premieres, performed by superb soloists and featuring celebrated American composers. His exuberant and acclaimed performances are characterized by sharp musical intellect, poetic eloquence, and artistic ingenuity.

Mr. Milanov is deeply committed to music education, presenting Link Up education projects with Carnegie Hall and the Orchestra of St. Luke's and leading the PSO's annual BRAVO! concerts for thousands of school children. He was named Bulgaria's Musician of the Year in 2005; he won a 2011 ASCAP award for new music at the PSO; and he was selected as one of the top 100 most influential people in New Jersey in 2014. In 2017, he was recipient of a Columbus Performing Arts Prize awarded by The Columbus Foundation. He is a graduate of the Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School.

A passionate chef, he often dedicates his culinary talents to various charities.

Photo credit: Stephen Pariser

Guest Artist

"One of the most admired pianists of his generation" (*New York Times*), **INON BARNATAN** is celebrated for his poetic sensibility, musical intelligence, and consummate artistry. He inaugurated his tenure as Music Director of California's La Jolla Music Society Summerfest in 2019.

Barnatan is a regular soloist with many of the world's foremost orchestras and conductors. He recently served for three seasons as the inaugural Artist-in-Association of the New York Philharmonic and recreated Beethoven's legendary 1808 concert with the Cincinnati Symphony. The recipient of an Avery Fisher Career Grant and Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, Barnatan is also a sought-after recitalist and chamber musician. He recently made his solo recital debut at Carnegie's Zankel Hall and reunited with frequent cello partner Alisa Weilerstein. Passionate about contemporary music, he has commissioned and performed works by many living composers, premiering pieces by Thomas Adès, Sebastian Currier, Avner Dorman, Alan Fletcher, Joseph Hallman, Alasdair Nicolson, Andrew Norman, and Matthias Pintscher.

This season he released Beethoven's complete piano concertos, recorded with Alan Gilbert and Academy of St Martin in the Fields on Pentatone. Barnatan's acclaimed discography also includes *Rachmaninov & Chopin: Cello Sonatas*, recorded with Weilerstein for Decca Classics, and *Darknesse Visible*, named one of the *New York Times*'s "Best of 2012."

For more information, visit **www.inonbarnatan.com.**

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Princeton Symphony Orchestra

Rossen Milanov, Edward T. Cone Music Director
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Nell Flanders, Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor
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Sunday, October 4, 2020

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Concertmaster
The George W. Pitcher Chair,
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Ruotao Mao
The Yvonne Marcuse Chair,
In memory of Mark M. Rutzky

Cheng-Chih Tsai

VIOLIN II

Dechopol Kowintaweewat**
The B. Sue Howard Chair

Michelle Brazier

Cheng-Hsun Tsai

VIOLA

Stephanie Griffin*
The Harriet & Jay Vawter Chair

Michael Davis

CELLO

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Stephen Groat**
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*Principal player
**Guest principal player

Program Notes

George Walker

Born June 27, 1922, Washington, DC
Died August 23, 2018, Montclair, NJ

Lyric for Strings

"In memory of my grandmother, Malvina King"

Composed
1946 in Philadelphia
Radio Premiere
1946 – Curtis Institute string orchestra; Seymour Lipkin, conductor
Instrumentation
Strings
Duration
6 minutes

George Walker's *Lyric for Strings* first existed as the second movement of his String Quartet No. 1, composed in 1946 during his post-graduate studies at the Curtis Institute of Music. Walker arranged the movement for string orchestra shortly after its composition, and it had its premiere the same year in a radio broadcast conducted by Seymour Lipkin with a string orchestra of Curtis students. The first live performance came the following winter as part of the American Music Festival at the Mellon Art Gallery (now the National Gallery of Art) in Washington, DC.

Walker originally entitled the work *Lament* and dedicated it to the memory of his grandmother Malvina King, who had passed away around the time of its composition. He later revised the title to Adagio for String Orchestra before finally settling on *Lyric for Strings*. "Lyric" seems to me an apt description of this music, which expresses more of a feeling of loving memory and reflection than of painful loss. More than sixty years later, in 2009, Walker wrote in his memoir *Reminiscences of an American Composer and Pianist* that *Lyric for Strings* was the most performed work by any living composer.

George Walker's extraordinary life, spanning nearly the last hundred years, bears testament to his musical genius as well as to both the improving circumstances of Black Americans and the ongoing limitations imposed by systemic racism and racial prejudice. His father emigrated, alone and without

friends or resources, to the United States from Jamaica and worked his way through Temple University Medical School to become a highly respected doctor and preeminent member of the Washington, DC Black community. At a time when the American Medical Association refused membership to Black physicians, Dr. George T. Walker co-founded two Black medical clubs. Walker's maternal grandmother, Malvina, to whom *Lyric for Strings* was dedicated, grew up in slavery and escaped to freedom as a young adult during the Civil War. In his memoir, Walker tells the story of how he once asked his grandmother what it was like to be a slave, and she replied, *"They did everything except eat us."*

George Walker was a brilliant student, graduating from high school at the age of fourteen and going straight to Oberlin College where he studied piano, organ, and composition and was awarded a bachelor of music with highest honors at the age of eighteen. He continued his studies at the Curtis Institute, receiving artist diploma degrees in both piano and composition and studying with Rudolf Serkin and Rosario Scalero. Walker's career as a piano soloist had many notable successes, including a very well received solo recital at Town Hall in New York in 1945. It was the first solo recital by a Black musician in that important venue. He was a trailblazer in the field: the first Black American to graduate from Curtis, the first Black instrumentalist to perform as a soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra, playing Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto, and the first Black instrumentalist signed to a major management agency, National Concert Artists. Yet for all of these early successes, opportunities were limited for a Black American classical piano soloist in the 40's and 50's, and he watched as his peers embarked on major performing careers while he was passed over for engagements. Walker continued to perform as a pianist throughout his life, but when his career as a soloist stalled, he eventually turned to teaching for greater financial security. He earned an artist diploma and a doctor of musical arts in piano performance from the Eastman School of Music in 1957, and fulfilled his dissertation requirement by composing his Second Piano Sonata. Among the many prestigious fellowships he was awarded in his career were a Fulbright Award and the John Hay Whitney Fellowship, which supported his composition studies with Nadia Boulanger in Paris from 1957-1959. He also received two Guggenheim Fellowships, two Rockefeller Fellowships, and the Koussevitzky Award, among many more.

After teaching at institutions including the New School and Smith College, Walker settled in Montclair, NJ, teaching at Rutgers University-Newark from 1969-1992, including two years as chair of the music department. He received many major commissions and performances, including from the New York Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, and the Baltimore Symphony, Boston

Symphony, New Jersey Symphony, and Detroit Symphony Orchestras. In 1996 he received the Pulitzer Prize for his work *Lilacs for Voice and Orchestra.* He was inducted into the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 1999 and the American Classical Music Hall of Fame in 2000, and he was awarded honorary doctorate degrees from seven schools including the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, Montclair State University, and the Curtis Institute of Music. Despite these successes, Walker felt that the music world did not value or support his work as it merited, and his works did not receive repeat performances, recording opportunities, and television broadcasts. As he said in an interview in the *Musical Quarterly* in 2000:

> Racism is alive and well in classical music. Its legacy, which has affected society in general, has left its imprint on performers [and] academics as well as marketing moguls. There appears to be a systematic and exclusionary view of the importance and value of Black composers' works by musicologists and music critics.

Walker's last piece, which he completed in 2016, was his Sinfonia No. 5, "Visions," written as a response to the Charleston church shooting in 2015.

Lyric for Strings begins very softly with a slowly moving descending line passed through the voices of the ensemble. Already in the first few measures of the piece, Walker establishes a poignantly bittersweet ambivalence between the major and minor modes of the home tonality of F-sharp. The primary theme of the piece begins in the first violins with the second violins and the violas taking turns responding. The three overlapping parts create the effect of an idle conversation between family members or close friends. In the second iteration of the theme, the cellos and basses join the dialogue, and the range of pitches, dynamics, and harmonies expands. A series of static alternating chords creates a pause in the conversation, followed by the third entrance of the theme, in which the violas take the lead. This time the theme has a greater sense of purpose, with more forward momentum as it ascends and grows. The cellos start the theme a fourth time, and their greater intensity drives to an anguished climax. The high violin sections wail together before eventually subsiding down into an echo of the prayerfully static chords and a return to the original key of F-sharp major. This tonal homecoming features a more lyrically effusive version of the theme, with greater warmth and rhythmic freedom. The second statement of the theme is simpler, closer to the version that began the piece, and this time the climax is open and generous rather than fraught. The static chords make a final appearance before the piece concludes, much as it began, but now peacefully at rest in the major mode.

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Born January 27, 1756, Salzburg
Died December 5, 1791, Vienna

Divertimento in D Major, K. 136

Composed
1772 in Salzburg
Premiere
Unknown
Instrumentation
Strings
Duration
15 minutes

Mozart composed the set of three "Divertimenti" for string quartet, K. 136-8, during an extended stay at his family home in Salzburg at the beginning of 1772. By the age of sixteen, Mozart was already a highly accomplished composer, having traveled throughout Europe visiting the major centers of culture, where he performed and interacted with the leading composers of the day, absorbing the wide range of compositional styles he encountered. In addition to symphonies, masses, and sonatas for violin and piano, he had already written several operas, and you can hear that operatic influence in the D Major Divertimento.

It is unclear who ascribed the name Divertimenti to this set of works, since the writing on the manuscript is not Mozart's. The term divertimento had a variety of meanings, though it generally implied a light, entertaining piece. These works were probably intended to be performed by a string quartet at social gatherings. Haydn wouldn't complete his groundbreaking Opus 20 quartets until later in 1772, so the genre of the string quartet as a more equal partnership between the four players had not yet been established. Unlike Haydn's quartets, Mozart's Divertimenti have only three movements, with an order of fast, slow, fast. Their musical style is characterized by regular phrase structure, predominantly homophonic textures, balanced forms, and a generally cheerful affect. As a string player myself, I can attest that these pieces are a pure delight to play, filled with exuberant energy, humor, and just enough pathos to keep them interesting.

The D Major Divertimento begins with a proud and joyful Allegro in Sonata form. The first violins take the lead melodically much of the time, though with frequent exchanges back and forth with the second violins. Mozart shows his young genius in the development section. After offering a version of the first theme in the minor mode and modulating to repeat it a second time in a different key, he sets up the expectation for the return of the opening theme back in D major. But instead of recapitulating the opening material, he resolves to D minor instead and creates a spooky texture of alternating plucked notes in the cello and viola, rustling 16th notes in the second violins, and a quiet, eerie melody hovering over them in the first violins. After this surprise departure, the opening material returns in all its carefree glory.

The second movement Andante has the quality of a delicate operatic ensemble, starting off with a sweet vocal pairing of the two violin sections. Each of the string sections has its moment to shine, either as part of a group or commenting around the edges of the main melodies. After the repeat of the opening section, the texture changes briefly, placing a dramatic spotlight on the first violins before returning to the opening theme. In this movement Mozart goes far beyond the light emotional content typical of a divertimento. While the textures and the interaction between the parts is relatively straightforward, the music tells a story through the progression of the musical characters, the interactions between the voices, and the subtle changes Mozart makes to the material. We can see an example of this in the contrast between the material near the end of the first and second halves of the piece. Whereas the first time the violin sections play a smoothly ascending line together, which gives a sense of opening and expanding, in the second half the line descends, guiding the listener to the movement's conclusion.

Frothy and energetic, the third movement Presto is a little gem that bubbles along playfully with sudden dynamic contrasts, scampering 16th notes, and a miraculously charming second theme played in tandem by the two violin sections. Despite the movement's brevity, Mozart succeeds in tucking a short, uncharacteristically contrapuntal imitative section into the development. After cycling twice through the entrances of the four string sections in turn, the movement stumbles into a surprise ending before self-consciously slipping back into the opening material.

Sergei Rachmaninoff*

Born April 1, 1873, Semyonovo
Died March 28, 1943, Beverly Hills

Symphonic Dances, Op. 45

Arranged for solo piano by Inon Barnatan

*Notes for this work by Eric Bromberger in collaboration with Inon Barnatan (for La Jolla Summerfest)

Composed
1940 in Orchard Point, Long Island
Original Premiere
1941 – Philadelphia Orchestra; Eugene Normandy, conductor
Livestream Premiere as Piano Solo
July 2020 – Caramoor Center for Music and the Arts
Instrumentation
solo piano
Duration
34 minutes

Rachmaninoff spent the summer of 1940 at Orchard Point, a seventeen-acre estate on Long Island that had groves, orchards, and a secluded studio where he could work in peace. There, very near the East and West Eggs of Fitzgerald's *The Great Gatsby*, Rachmaninoff set to work on what would be his final complete work, a set of dances for orchestra. By August, he had the score complete in a version for two pianos, and–because he regarded this as a dance score–he consulted with choreographer Mikhail Fokine, a neighbor that summer. Rachmaninoff tentatively titled the piece *Fantastic Dances* and gave its three movements names–"Noon," "Twilight," and "Midnight"–that might suggest a possible scenario. Fokine liked the music when Rachmaninoff played it for him, and they began to look ahead to a ballet production, but Fokine's death shortly thereafter ended any thought of that. Even by the end of the summer, though, Rachmaninoff appears to have rethought the character of this music. By the time he completed the orchestration on October 29, he had changed its name to *Symphonic Dances* and dropped the descriptive movement titles, and when Eugene Ormandy and the Philadelphia Orchestra gave the premiere on January 3, 1941, it was as a purely orchestral composition. Rachmaninoff himself seemed surprised by what he had created, and

when friends congratulated him on the energy of this music, he said, *"I don't know how it happened–it must have been my last spark."* Two years later he was dead.

The orchestral version of *Symphonic Dances* has become one of the most popular of Rachmaninoff's late works. This concert, however, offers the unique opportunity to hear this music in a version for solo piano. Rachmaninoff's own version for two pianos has become well-known, but it appears that Rachmaninoff also made a version for solo piano. He played this for Ormandy as a way of helping the conductor prepare for the orchestral premiere, and a recording of that session became the inspiration for Inon Barnatan's own arrangement of *Symphonic Dances* (the manuscript of Rachmaninoff's arrangement has not survived). Barnatan has discussed his intentions in making his arrangement for solo piano:

> I started making my arrangement shortly after we went into lockdown. It has been an arrangement I had wanted to do for a long time, and it was further spurred on by a recording I heard of Rachmaninoff. It is a private recording that only came out a few years ago, and in it he plays through almost the entire piece on one piano for Ormandy. It's an extraordinary document of his playing, and it confirmed my suspicion that it would sound good on one piano. The two-piano version is written in a way that is quite different from his two-piano suites, and much of it is handed from one piano to the other, so some of it was straightforward, but there are many spots where I had to find creative solutions. I heard a saying that translations are like lovers, they are either faithful or beautiful, but I believe in this arrangement that nothing is really lost, and I love the freedom that being able to play it on one piano gives me.
>
> The *Symphonic Dances* are remarkable for Rachmaninoff's subtle compositional method. Rather than relying on the Big Tune, he evolves this music from the most economical of materials–rhythmic fragments, bits of theme, simple patterns–which are then built up into powerful movements that almost overflow with rhythmic energy. Rachmaninoff may have been 67 and in declining strength in 1940, but that summer he wrote with the hand of a master.
>
> As he finished each of his symphonies, Joseph Haydn would write *Laus Deo*–"Praise God"–at the end of the manuscript. At the end of the manuscript of *Symphonic Dances*, Rachmaninoff–perhaps aware that this would be his last work–wrote (in Russian) the simple phrase: "I thank Thee, Lord."

~Nell Flanders, Assistant Conductor
Princeton Symphony Orchestra

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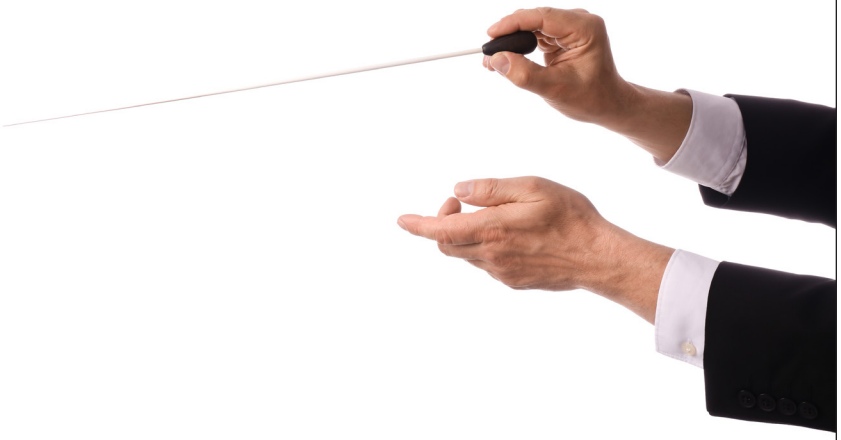

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