



PRINCETON, NJ (June 21, 2021) — Princeton's two leading non-profit music organizations, [Princeton Symphony Orchestra \(PSO\)](#) and [The Princeton Festival](#), are thrilled to announce their strategic merger under the legal entity of Princeton Symphony Orchestra, Inc. The Princeton Festival will retain its name and continue going forward as an artistic program of the PSO alongside the Princeton Symphony Orchestra's classical, pops, chamber music, and PSO BRAVO! education programs. Once the merger takes effect this summer, the Princeton Symphony Orchestra will possess greater resources than ever before, igniting a brighter future for Princeton filled with live musical performances of the highest quality.

Both organizations successfully pivoted to online platforms during the pandemic while being mindful of budgets and continued fundraising efforts. PSO Executive Director Marc Uys says, *"The merger capitalizes on the strong positions and proven resiliency of both organizations coming out of the pandemic. With strong artistic leadership, we will pave the way to a new era of creativity, making high-quality performing arts more available to our community and beyond."*

The Princeton Festival Board Chair Benedikt von Schröder views the merger as a positive move. He says, *"The merger will create a formidable combined organization with the creative, artistic, and financial strength providing a foundation for future growth in a challenging and much changed environment for the arts."*

Multiple Festival board members were nominated to the PSO board this month, and a Festival Advisory Board created. Two full-time members of the Festival staff will join the orchestra's veteran administrative team.

PSO Edward T. Cone Music Director Rossen Milanov says, *"We look forward to a cross-pollination of ideas and resources. Together, our creative team will capture the imagination and spark community dialogue with new music, cutting-edge operas, and fresh musical theater productions. We're well-poised to earn Princeton a national reputation for live arts innovation."*

The merger came about through the efforts of Mr. Uys, Mr. von Schröder, Mr. Milanov and other members of the merger committee including Costa Papastephanou, former Festival Board Chair, Yvonne Marcuse, PSO Board Chair, Stephanie Wedeking, PSO Board Vice Chair, and Michael S. Mathews, PSO Trustee. Boards of both organizations formally committed to the merger on Thursday, June 10.

ABOUT THE PRINCETON FESTIVAL

The Princeton Festival is an award-winning, multi-genre festival of the performing arts. Its highly varied seasons have played a vital role in the cultural life of its community since 2005. The Festival offers professional productions of multiple events each June, including opera, musical theater, jazz, dance, choral music, Baroque concerts, chamber music, recitals, pop concerts, an annual piano competition, poetry readings, and more. Its series of free lectures, events, and workshops draw over a thousand attendees each year. The Festival is a recipient of five NEA grants for its innovative programs, which have been praised by the *Philadelphia Inquirer*, *New York Times*, *Opera News*, and other major media outlets. It is also a five-time winner of NJArts.com's *People's Choice* poll as "Favorite Opera Company." The Princeton Festival's mission is to enrich the communities it serves through distinctive and diverse programs that excite, inform, inspire, and invite discovery and engagement.

ABOUT THE 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.

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