



June 22, 2022

Princeton Festival Presents “Yours Sincerely, Stephen Sondheim”; Tribute by Vocal Duo Intersperses Songs with Quotes from Letters



“YOURS SINCERELY, STEPHEN SONDHEIM”: Princeton Festival has presented “Yours Sincerely, Stephen Sondheim” in tribute to the late Broadway legend. Matthew Stephens was the music director and accompanist for the concert, which was presented June 15 in a performance tent outside Morven Museum & Garden. Above: vocal duo Alyssa Giannetti and Jason Forbach. *(Photo by Carolo Pascale)*

By Donald H. Sanborn III

Into the Woods is a musical in which familiar fairy tale characters meet, and their stories intersect. In the prologue, the characters sing about their reasons for journeying into the titular forest. Cinderella sings, “I wish to go to the festival.”

Last Wednesday she could have been referring to the Princeton Festival, which presented *Yours Sincerely, Stephen Sondheim*, a

tribute to the show's late composer and lyricist. Vocalists Alyssa Giannetti and Jason Forbach performed several of the Broadway legend's songs, interspersed with quotes from his letters — many of which his correspondents have shared via social media since his death last November. Music Director Matthew Stephens accompanied the duo.

The June 15 concert was presented in a performance tent outside Morven Museum & Garden. The seating was configured to resemble a dinner theater or cabaret; tables were set up so that audiences could enjoy drinks and light (but elegant) snacks — the latter served before the show and during intermission. A set for the Festival's subsequent production in the tent (*Albert Herring*) resembled a bar, adding to the illusion of being in a Times Square nightspot.

A classically trained singer, Giannetti made her professional debut as an understudy for the role of Christine Daaé in the first national tour of *Love Never Dies*. She was in the cast of the Paper Mill Playhouse's world premiere of *UNMASKED: The Music of Andrew Lloyd Webber*. [MORE](#)

Princeton Festival Presents Benjamin Britten Comic Opera

By Nancy Plum

Princeton Festival took on an immense operatic production this past weekend to start the second week of the Festival's cornucopia of activities. Benjamin Britten's 1946 comic chamber opera *Albert Herring* was mammoth not just because of cast size or length but in its complexity of vocal demands and orchestration. The Festival opened *Albert Herring* Friday night (the opera was repeated Sunday night) to an extremely appreciative audience in the Festival's performance tent at Morven Museum and Gardens.

Although the storyline of *Albert Herring* could be as silly as Gilbert and Sullivan at times, this opera required heavy-duty singing. For this production, Princeton Festival assembled a cast of well-trained and experienced singers to handle some very challenging roles. Three standout performers were tenor Joshua Stewart in the title role, soprano Ann Toomey as the upper crust Lady Billows, and mezzo-soprano Melody Wilson as Herring's mother.

Educated at Philadelphia's Curtis Institute of Music, Stewart has been making his mark in the opera world internationally. As the grocer Albert Herring, Stewart was a subtle lead character at first, turning his vocal prowess and full comedic skills loose in the second act dinner scene and third act soliloquy, complemented by animated facial expressions. In his operas, Britten composed rich

and complex lead tenor roles, and Stewart met every musical and dramatic challenge.

Soprano Ann Toomey has also had considerable success in the opera world and made an immediate impact on the Festival stage both with her singing and her character's sufficiently snooty demeanor. With a commanding soprano voice, Toomey lit up over the prospects for the annual May Queen festival, and then proceeded to tear the roof off vocally when things did not go her way. When discussing the May Queen prize, Toomey's singing was especially elegant and courtly while accompanied by harpist André Tarantiles. [MORE](#)

June 15, 2022

Princeton Festival Presents Storm Large in “The Seven Deadly Sins”; PSO Completes Program with “Carmen Suite,” Milanov Conducts



“THE SEVEN DEADLY SINS”: Princeton Festival has opened its 2022 season with Kurt Weill and Bertolt Brecht’s “The Seven Deadly Sins.” Above: Soloist Storm Large, left, and vocal quartet Hudson Shad were accompanied by the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, which also performed Rodion Shchedrin’s “Carmen Suite.” Rossen Milanov, right, conducted the concert. *(Photo by Carolo Pascale)*

By Donald H. Sanborn III

Princeton Festival has opened its 2022 season with *The Seven Deadly Sins*. The June 10 concert featured acclaimed singer and actor Storm Large, and vocal quartet Hudson Shad. The vocalists were accompanied by the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, which

completed the program with *Carmen Suite*. The performance took place in a large tent on the grounds of Morven Museum & Garden.

The entire program was conducted by the orchestra's Edward T. Cone Music Director Rossen Milanov. This concert marks the first collaboration between Princeton Festival and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra since the two organizations merged last year.

The Seven Deadly Sins (1933) is a ballet chanté ("sung ballet") composed by Kurt Weill (1900-1950). The work marks Weill's final collaboration with playwright Bertolt Brecht (1898-1956), whose German libretto has been translated into English by W.H. Auden and Chester Kallman.

Edward James, a wealthy British poet, commissioned the work. James stipulated that it must include his wife, dancer Tilly Losch, whom he thought to resemble singer Lotte Lenya (Weill's wife), for whom the composer was writing the piece.

This resulted in the core concept of a split-personality plot, in which Anna I (the singer) obeys the demands of her family (an all-male vocal quartet). Anna II (the dancer) initially is resistant, though she reluctantly defers to Anna I.

The title ironically refers to the fact that the wholesome, idealistic Anna II is perceived as committing the "sins," and is redirected by the worldly Anna I. The piece, which premiered in Paris the year that the Nazis rose to power, can be viewed as a meditation on authoritarian indoctrination.

Since 2013, Large has been one of the composition's foremost interpreters, having sung it at Carnegie Hall in the first of several performances with the Detroit Symphony. In performing the work, Large has been collaborating with Hudson Shad since the 2014 Ojai Music Festival. [MORE](#)

Princeton Festival Opens Opera Series with Double Bill

By Nancy Plum

Talk about the rooms where things happen. Princeton Festival presented two one-act operas this past weekend, each taking place in a single room, but the amount of action in that one space captivated the audience in the Festival's new home at Morven Museum & Gardens.

Princeton Festival has always included opera as part of its month-long season of activities, and this year, there are two presentations

— a double bill of two shorter operas and a full-length work by English composer Benjamin Britten. What has changed is the venue for these events; rather than being inside a large hall, the Festival constructed a 500-seat state-of-the-art performance tent at Morven Museum & Garden to create a “performing arts extravaganza.” With the singers, orchestra pit, and audience all under one tent, this is a new experience for Princeton Festival attendees.

The Festival’s opera series opened this past Saturday night with a performance of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart’s *The Impresario* and Derrick Wang’s *Scalia/Ginsburg*, and although these two comedic operas may seem to be unrelated, they were tied together by plotlines involving very strong and influential personalities, both fictional and real. Mozart’s 1786 *Der Schauspieldirektor* (*The Impresario*) has been described as a parody on the vanity of singers who argue over just about everything, but mainly money. This comic *singspiel*, with as much spoken dialog as sung music, may have only contained four arias, but the musical material was as technically complex as Mozart’s more monumental works.

Featuring only five characters (one of which was a speaking role), *The Impresario* took place in a fictional theatrical office in Vienna, where a hapless opera producer struggled with a conniving stage manager, underhanded banker, diva well past her prime and scheming up-and-coming singer over the potential success of a new opera. Princeton Festival’s production, which opened last Friday night (with additional performances the following Sunday and this coming week), was presented in English, accompanied by the Princeton Symphony Orchestra led by Music Director Rossen Milanov. [MORE](#)

June 8, 2022

NJSO Concludes Princeton Series with Musical Breath of Fresh Air

By Nancy Plum

New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (NJSO) wrapped up its 2021-22 Richardson Auditorium concert series with a program ranging from sublime to sprightly and highlighting three members of the Orchestra as soloists. Associate concertmaster and violinist Brennan Sweet, assistant principal violist Elzbieta Weyman, and assistant principal flute Kathleen Nester were featured in works by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Antonio Vivaldi, with performances that demonstrated their own soloistic talents and presented rarely-heard sides of these composers. Led by NJSO Music Director Xian Zhang, the musicians of New Jersey Symphony found the perfect musical vehicle to close the season and launch summer.

Friday night's concert at Richardson Auditorium began with a nimble and humorous opera overture by a youthful Gioachino Rossini. Even at a young age, Rossini knew how to create an operatic showstopper, and his 1813 "Overture" to *L'Italiana in Algeri* contained all the elements necessary to energize a 19th-century audience. One of Rossini's compositional signatures was a slowly rising crescendo to a full orchestral sound, and Zhang led the New Jersey Symphony well through these dynamic swells while allowing teasing wind solos to emerge from the texture. Like many opera overtures of this time period, Rossini's "Overture" took off in tempo after a graceful start. Wind solos conveyed saucy melodic themes, including from oboist Robert Ingliss, clarinetist Andrew Lamy, and flutist Bart Feller. The three wind soloists had quick lines to maneuver, all of which were well executed. [MORE](#)

May 25, 2022

Theatre Intime, Princeton University Players Present "Shrek The Musical"; The Reclusive Ogre and His Friends Entertain a Reunions Weekend Audience



"SHREK THE MUSICAL": Theatre Intime and Princeton University Players have presented "Shrek The Musical." Directed by Eliyana Abraham and Gabbie Bourla, it played May 20-22 at the Hamilton Murray Theater. Above, from left, Princess Fiona (Ann Webb) is rescued by unlikely friends Shrek (Rafael Collado) and Donkey (Tobi Fadugba). (Photo by Emily Yang)

By Donald H. Sanborn III

Theatre Intime and Princeton University Players have collaborated to present *Shrek The Musical*. The show entertained an enthusiastic mixed-age audience, which filled the Hamilton Murray Theater on opening night.

The 2008 Broadway musical's often witty book and lyrics are by David Lindsay-Abaire, who adapts the screenplays of the popular DreamWorks film series, which is based on William Steig's 1990 picture book. The music — which incorporates elements of pop, R&B, and traditional musical theater — is by Jeanine Tesori. The show interpolates "I'm a Believer," which is written by Neil Diamond.

This production is smoothly directed by Eliyana Abraham and Gabbie Bourla. They let the audience be a part of the action, by reserving a row of seats through which the cast often moves.

The crisp musical direction is by Giao Vu Dinh, assisted by Sam Melton and Chloe Webster. The band opens the show with a brief "Overture," consisting of a series of triumphal chords followed by a bouncy march.

"The wry "Big, Bright, Beautiful World" shows the childhood experiences of Shrek (played by Rafael Collado) and Fiona (Ann Webb). At age 7, Shrek is sent to live on his own having been warned by his parents (played by Aria Buchanan and Matt Gancayco) that he will be shunned for his looks. Eventually he finds a swamp, where he is content to live alone.

Fiona blithely re-titles the show *Fiona The Musical*, and tells her story. As a child she is shut in a tower by her parents, King Harold (Andrew Duke) and Queen Lillian (Jacquelynn Lin), to await Prince Charming. [MORE](#)

May 18, 2022

Women from Diverse Backgrounds Battle Addiction in "Group!"; Passage Theatre Succeeds with World Premiere of New Musical



“GROUP!”: Performances are underway for “Group!” Directed by Maria Patrice Amon, the musical runs through May 22 at Passage Theatre. Above, from left: Jessica (Liz Barnett) facilitates a court-ordered anti-addiction group therapy program, but her methods (such as passing around a soccer ball on which she tapes impractical ideas) scarcely help the participants, including Sandra (Nicole Stacie), Ceci (Tamara Rodriguez), and Everly (Deja Fields). (Photo by Jeff Stewart)

By Donald H. Sanborn III

Passage Theatre is presenting the world premiere of *Group!* By turns poignant and wry, the new musical portrays six women who meet at group therapy session to battle addiction.

Five of the women attend the program because of a court order. The sixth, Jessica, is the well-meaning but ill-equipped facilitator who moderates the sessions. Although Jessica appears to have little in common with the women she is trying to help, all of them are expected to succeed by a system that hinders their ability to do so.

Group! tells an original story set in present-day Trenton. The book is by Julia B. Rosenblatt; the dialogue segues seamlessly into Eloise Govedare’s lyrics. Composer Aleksandra M. Weil draws on a variety of musical styles, but uses an energetic pop rock sound to anchor the score.

Upon entering the theater we immediately see scenic designer Kayla Arrell’s set. Most of the action takes place in a room with (artfully) drab walls and uncomfortable-looking plastic chairs. A door marked “exit” is prominent, letting us wonder whether these women will successfully exit the therapy program. The walls are decorated with posters on which are written platitudes such as “change,” and “believe and succeed.”

Above the therapy room are three windows representing apartments. Moments that use that upper level — in which we see

the participants' lives away from the sessions — have some particularly effective and dramatic lighting by Alex Mannix. [MORE](#)

May 11, 2022

Princeton Symphony Orchestra Closes Season with Fiery Young Violinist

By Nancy Plum

Princeton Symphony Orchestra closed the 2021-22 season this past weekend with a classical violinist who is making his mark worldwide. Led by PSO Music Director Rossen Milanov, the Orchestra and guest violinist Stefan Jackiw performed a lesser-known and somewhat underrated 20th-century concerto, bracketed by a very contemporary work and a symphonic classic.

American violinist Jackiw began playing violin at age 4, eventually earning concurrent degrees from Harvard University and New England Conservatory of Music. In Saturday night's performance (the concert was repeated Sunday afternoon), Jackiw showed himself from the opening measures of Erich Wolfgang Korngold's Violin Concerto in D Major to be a very physical player, leaning into solo lines with a youthful and fresh sound. Korngold's *Concerto* (nicknamed the *Hollywood Concerto* when it first premiered) was definitely cinematic, full of lush music designed to pull at listeners' emotions. Korngold's colorful orchestration provided numerous solo opportunities for the wind and brass players, including oboist Lillian Copeland and hornist Gabrielle Pho.

The solo violin part in Korngold's Concerto was continuous, and Jackiw showed impassioned violin playing throughout the piece. In the second movement "romance," he was joined in an elegant duet by English horn player Gilles Cheng, with the solo line well complemented by flutists Armir Farsi and Mary Schmidt. Jackiw's solo line immediately took off in the third movement "finale," for which Korngold borrowed heavily from his own film scores. The principal theme of this song-like movement sounded as though it should be familiar, but as it was passed around among the players, the tune was jazzed up and altered (especially by the brass), leading to a spirited conclusion to the Concerto. [MORE](#)

McCarter Theatre Presents Offbeat, Uplifting Musical "Ride the Cyclone"; Artistic Director Sarah

Rasmussen Helms Colorful, Energetic Production



“RIDE THE CYCLONE”: Performances are underway for “Ride the Cyclone.” Produced by McCarter Theatre and Arena Stage, and directed by McCarter’s Artistic Director Sarah Rasmussen, the musical runs through May 29 at McCarter’s Berlind Theatre. Above, from left, are Constance (Princess Sasha Victomé), Noel (Nick Martinez), Ocean (Katerina McCrimmon), Jane Doe (Ashlyn Maddox), Ricky (yannick-robin eike), and Mischa (Eli Mayer). (Photo by T. Charles Erickson)

By Donald H. Sanborn III

In the musical *Ride the Cyclone*, six teenagers are killed in an accident while riding the titular amusement park ride. In an otherworldly warehouse they meet The Amazing Karnak, a mechanical fortune teller that is about to be destroyed by a bass-playing rat who is chewing on his power cord. The fortune teller offers to send one of the teenagers back from the dead, instigating a literal fight for their lives.

It must have been entertaining to listen to early pitches for the show, whose book, music, and lyrics are by Brooke Maxwell and Jacob Richmond. But within the eccentric, morbid plot are engaging, uplifting character arcs, conveyed by songs that are by turns eerie and exuberant. *Ride the Cyclone* is both offbeat and upbeat.

Ride the Cyclone is being presented at McCarter’s Berlind Theatre (in a co-production by McCarter and Arena Stage). In a program note, Artistic Director Sarah Rasmussen — who directs the production — recalls a quote from *Our Town*: “Does anyone ever realize life while they live it ... every minute?”

Both *Our Town* and *Ride the Cyclone* acknowledge the fragility of life; lyrics in the song “Jawbreaker/Sugarcloud” echo the line quoted by Rasmussen. Karnak fulfills a role similar to that of *Our Town*’s Stage Manager: an emcee to guide the characters.

Any similarity between the two shows generally ends there. In Wilder’s play, the dead characters are confined to chairs. In the musical, the characters sing, dance, and even spin in midair. *Our Town* usually is performed with no scenery and few props. *Ride the Cyclone* rejects this aesthetic, reveling in lavish production elements. [MORE](#)

May 4, 2022

Renowned Musical Siblings Bring Family Artistry to Princeton University

By Nancy Plum

Sibling musical prodigies can be found throughout history — brother and sister Mozart, the Haydn brothers, and a large family of Bachs — but there is nothing in classical music today quite like the Kanneh-Masons. Raised in Nottingham, England, the seven brothers and sisters of the Kanneh-Mason family each play violin, piano, and/or cello, all at a very high level. They appear professionally both individually and collectively, have won numerous awards, and are especially known for their livestreams of innovative arrangements and performances.

Two members of this acclaimed family came to Richardson Auditorium last Wednesday night as the last performance of Princeton University Concerts’ 2021-22 season. Cellist Sheku Kanneh-Mason, accompanied by his sister, pianist Isata Kanneh-Mason, played a program of four 19th and 20th-century sonatas for cello and piano, none of which were lightweight pieces and all of which showed that these two siblings have musical skills way beyond their years.

Cellist Sheku has already made history in the United Kingdom as the first cellist in history to reach the U.K. Album Chart Top 10. His popularity as a musician was instantaneous from his performance at the royal wedding of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex, and he is now in demand as a soloist throughout the world. Pianist Isata has won her own share of awards, drawing on her training at London’s Royal Academy of Music and forging her own path as a piano soloist.

Sheku and Isata mesmerized the audience at Richardson last week with the chamber music of Ludwig van Beethoven, Dmitri

Shostakovich, Frank Bridge and Benjamin Britten. One of Sheku's most striking characteristics as a performer is his range of facial expressions while playing, showing that this young artist pours emotion into every note. Opening with Beethoven's Sonata for Cello and Piano, No. 4 in C Major, the Kanneh-Masons showed consistent expressive intensity, with clarity in the accompaniment and elegant melodic lines from the cello. The first movement "andante" introduction included a graceful dialog between cello and piano, with Isata playing delicately light trills with a flowing right hand. [MORE](#)

Dangerous Court Intrigue Abounds in "The Art of Pleasing Princes"; Princeton University Players Present Staged Reading of New Musical



"THE ART OF PLEASING PRINCES": The Princeton University Players have presented a staged reading of "The Art of Pleasing Princes," performed April 28-30 at the Whitman Theater. Directed by Solomon Bergquist, the new musical takes place in a fantasy kingdom that is beset by court intrigue and labyrinthine conspiracies. Above, from left, are Maddox (Alex Conboy), Rowan (Lana Gaige), Jason (Andrew Matos), Louis (Delaney Rose), and Maya (Miel Escamilla). *(Photo by Elliot Lee)*

By Donald H. Sanborn III

Princeton University Players, a student-run organization whose website describes it as “Princeton’s home for musical theater,” has presented a staged reading of a new, student-written show, *The Art of Pleasing Princes*, at Whitman College’s Class of 1970 Theater this past weekend.

With a book and lyrics by Mel Hornyak and Elliot Valentine Lee, and music by Lee, the musical is set in a pseudohistorical fantasy kingdom — but with a viewpoint and aesthetic that are resolutely contemporary. The show subverts tropes of the fantasy genre — and to an extent, musical theater.

A rogue prince leads an unlikely group of co-conspirators in a plot to assassinate his estranged, tyrannical father. Along the way, we discover the protagonists’ secret ambitions and forbidden relationships.

The performance is classified as a staged reading, as the performers are permitted to use scripts. However, the show has the choreography, costumes, and props of a full production.

The Art of Pleasing Princes opens with a recognizable image. The king’s favorite guard, Jason Bartok (infused with affable sincerity by Andrew Matos) is kneeling at the feet of the monarch’s daughter, princess Maya Astor (Miel Escamilla), proposing marriage to her. The tableau will be seen again later, with a twist.

The opening number (“Your Day in Court”) begins with a waltz that is artfully exaggerated in its delicacy. The courtiers profess excitement at the (presumably) impending royal wedding, and set the too-perfect scene: “Every man has his duties; every servant his place; every lady her suitors ... our lives our perfect, charmed.”

Clearly, this equilibrium is just waiting to be upended. Indeed, as the musical language gradually sheds the pastiche, the lyrics describe the scene as a “careful charade.” The ensemble sings of the ruthless politics at court, “You won’t know if you’ve made a mistake here, ‘til you’re the only one kept from the ball.” [MORE](#)

April 27, 2022

Princeton University Concerts Welcomes World-Class Tetzlaff String Quartet

By Nancy Plum

Last Thursday night’s concert by the Tetzlaff String Quartet in Richardson Auditorium was a new beginning on several levels. Not only was this a reschedule of Tetzlaff’s premiere performance on

the University Concerts series from two years ago, but it was also the Quartet's first appearance in the United States in five years. Violinists Christian Tetzlaff and Elisabeth Kufferath, violist Hanna Weinmeister, and cellist Tanja Tetzlaff brought a program of Haydn, Berg, and Schubert to Princeton last week, demonstrating a unique approach to chamber music and why the ensemble is one of the most popular quartets worldwide.

Led by first violinist Christian Tetzlaff, the Tetzlaff Quartet showed a consistently amazing ability to build drama in a piece through dynamics — often collectively bringing the ensemble sound down to almost nothing to disclose a side of the piece not otherwise heard. Opening with Franz Joseph Haydn's String Quartet in F Minor, Op. 20, No. 5, the Tetzlaff musicians played phrase repetitions delicately and allowed repeated notes to gracefully and stylistically taper away. Christian Tetzlaff well maneuvered the technically demanding first violin part, which Haydn had composed for the particularly gifted concertmaster of his court orchestra.

Throughout Quartet No. 5, the Tetzlaff players well captured the nickname of this set of pieces as the “Sun” quartets, but also showed that the sun can be dark and obscure as well. Especially in the second movement “Minuet-Trio,” sequential passages were always played with direction, and the musicians well captured Haydn's folk-like and outdoorsy atmosphere in the “Trio.” First violinist Tetzlaff remained the musical leader throughout the work, executing especially complex and heavily ornamented passages, but always with the solid support of the other three players. [MORE](#)

Theatre Intime Offers Poignant Staging of “The Laramie Project”; Docudrama Explores Matthew Shepard’s Murder — and Theater Itself



“THE LARAMIE PROJECT”: Theatre Intime has staged “The Laramie Project,” presented April 15-24 at the Hamilton Murray Theater. Directed by Ethan Luk, the play explores the 1998 murder of Matthew Shepard, as well as interviewees’ reactions to the idea of being depicted in a docudrama. Above, from left, are cast members Luc Maurer, Alexis Maze, Sabina Jafri, Rilla McKeegan, Ay Marsh, Arthur Yan, and Matthew Shih. *(Photo by Rowen Gesue)*

By Donald H. Sanborn III

In October 1998 Matthew Shepard, a 21-year-old student at the University of Wyoming, was beaten and left to die near Laramie. Rescuers took him to Poudre Valley Hospital in Fort Collins, Colo., where he died of his injuries six days later.

Writing about Shepard’s attackers, a history.com entry notes, “To avoid a death sentence, Russell Henderson pleaded guilty to kidnapping and murder in April 1999 and was sentenced to life imprisonment. Later that year, Aaron McKinney attempted to use a “gay panic” defense at his own trial, claiming that Shepard’s advances disgusted him.” Both Henderson and McKinney are serving life sentences.

The history.com article adds, “Matthew Shepard’s death sparked national outrage and renewed calls for extending hate crime laws to cover violence based on a person’s sexual orientation.”

In 2000 the New York City-based Tectonic Theater Project presented *The Laramie Project* — first at Denver’s Ricketson Theatre, then off-Broadway at the Union Square Theatre. Two years later the play was presented in Laramie.

Written by Moisés Kaufman in collaboration with members of the theater company, the docudrama explores the events and viewpoints surrounding Shepard’s death. We learn that Tectonic members arrived in Laramie in November 1998, a month after the

event. Members of the theater company interviewed Laramie residents, and all of the dialogue is derived from those conversations, as well as Tectonic members' journal entries. Published news reports also are excerpted.

Princeton University's Theatre Intime has presented *The Laramie Project*. In a program note, director Ethan Luk admits to having had doubts about the play's relevance: "How does *The Laramie Project* speak to an audience more than 20 years after its premiere?" For the director, an answer can be found in events such as Florida's "Don't Say Gay" bill, and the Brooklyn subway shooting: "Violence and injustice, both in explicit and implicit forms, still run rampant ... perhaps that is why we find ourselves in front of the mirror time after time." [MORE](#)

April 20, 2022

PU Orchestra's Stuart B. Mindlin Memorial Concerts Return to Richardson Auditorium

By Nancy Plum

Each year, the Princeton University Orchestra designs its final concert of the season as both a tribute to former Orchestra percussionist Stuart Mindlin and a send-off to the ensemble's graduating seniors. Over the years, these performances have often presented a single massive orchestral work, but as with many musical events these past months, things are a little different. Led by conductor Michael Pratt, the University Orchestra performed four pieces which may have looked as though they had little in common but were in fact interconnected through their themes of common struggles against tyranny, racism, and intolerance toward diverse backgrounds. The four works of Ludwig van Beethoven, Carlos Chavez, William Grant Still and Leonard Bernstein spoke to both liberty and loss, as well as hope and love, with messages the graduating seniors can take with them as they launch their new lives outside the University.

The Orchestra opened Friday night's concert at Richardson Auditorium (the performance was repeated Saturday night) with a classic well-known to the ensemble. Beethoven's *Leonore Overture No. 3, Opus 72a* was intended for an 1806 production of Beethoven's opera *Fidelio*. In a single movement, this work travels from the despair of the prisoner Florestan to energetic fire and finally to victory through Beethoven's trademark symphonic joy. From the solid opening chords, the Orchestra was always responsive to Pratt's musical leadership, with the drama of the music building slowly through the introductory passages. Flutist Christine Deng's chipper playing aided in a smooth transition to the overture's familiar themes, with a trio of trombones and pair of

trumpets adding subtle brass color, as well as a dramatic offstage trumpet. Dynamic swells were well-executed, and drama was maintained through effective *sforzandi* and the precise playing of timpanist Elijah Shina. Flutist Deng and oboist Jeremy Chen were paired in expressive musical passages, and the Orchestra was effective in creating a fast and furious musical swirl to the closing coda. [MORE](#)

April 6, 2022

PU Chamber Choir Presents Program of Challenging Music for Today's World

By Nancy Plum

Princeton University Chamber Choir returned to live performance last Saturday night making a statement. Led by conductor Gabriel Crouch, the 48-voice chorus presented a program originally scheduled for April 2020, but which was just as profound today, both in perseverance of the singers and the creativity the canceled concert generated during the University's shutdowns. Past and present came together in the Chamber Choir's concert at Richardson Auditorium as the choristers emerged from the pandemic to find even more meaning in the works of Francis Poulenc and Mary Lou Williams. As a further acknowledgement of current times, the Chamber Choir presented this performance in collaboration with "02.24.2022," a student-driven initiative supporting students on campus affected by the war in Ukraine and raising funds to provide local currency to refugees.

Princeton University graduate Allison Spann is no stranger to University musical ensembles; her compositions have been played on campus before. Having lost a chunk of her senior year to the spring 2020 shutdown, Spann took the opportunity to create a work for the Chamber Choir which explored the connections between Poulenc's *Figure Humaine* and Williams' *St. Martin de Porres*, honoring both composers and their pursuit of divine liberation through music.

Spann commanded the stage herself for the Chamber Choir's performance of her piece *Before the light is gone*. The Choir's presentation of Spann's work had the atmosphere of a jazz club, with Spann singing the soprano solo accompanied by the expert jazz piano accompaniment of Cherry Ge and Phillip Taylor. Spann's work is mostly for solo voice (representing liberty, freedom or earth), with reaffirmation of text by the chorus (as mankind). Following a recited opening verse, Spann reached effectively into her upper register with a scatt singing effect, soaring above smooth homophonic chords sung by the Chamber Choir. An octet singing from the front of the stage showed Spann's skill at writing music for

close harmonies, with tricky dissonances well-handled and all singers conveying Spann's wish to "pave the way for hope through rest, generosity, and compassion." [MORE](#)

Award-Winning Performer Audra McDonald Sings at McCarter Theatre; Uplifting, Thoughtful Concert Features Anecdotes, Broadway Standards



AUDRA MCDONALD: National Medal of Arts winner Audra McDonald (above) performed April 2 at McCarter's Matthews Theatre, accompanied by Andy Einhorn. *(Photo courtesy of McCarter Theatre)*

By Donald H. Sanborn III

Award-winning singer and actor Audra McDonald performed at McCarter this past Saturday night. The concert, which played to a packed Matthews Theatre, featured a selection of Broadway standards. The evening was by turns uplifting and introspective. McDonald's range and stellar vocal technique, and her respect and passion for material on which she was determined to make her own, all were on display.

In addition to six Tony Awards, two Grammy Awards, and an Emmy, McDonald has received a National Medal of Arts. Her numerous

stage credits include *Ragtime* and *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune*. The Juilliard-trained soprano's opera credits include Houston Grand Opera and Los Angeles Opera. Screen credits include the HBO series *The Gilded Age*, as well as the Aretha Franklin biopic, *Respect*.

McDonald was accompanied by Broadway music director and conductor Andy Einhorn. Multiple songs heard in the concert appear on McDonald's 2018 album *Sing Happy*, for which Einhorn conducted the New York Philharmonic.

Einhorn struck one key on the piano, which was a sufficient introduction for McDonald to launch into the stirring opening number, "I Am What I Am." Early in the song Einhorn's accompaniment was comparatively spare; as McDonald's impassioned performance grew in speed and intensity, Einhorn's accompaniment grew more elaborate. [MORE](#)

March 30, 2022

PU Concerts Brings International Pianist and Orchestra to Richardson

By Nancy Plum

Music has always been considered a "universal" language, traversing worldwide cultures and geography. The Mahler Chamber Orchestra has taken this concept to a new level by creating an international ensemble of 45 instrumentalists from 20 countries to share exceptional experiences in classical music, and the world-renowned ensemble brought one of these experiences to Richardson Auditorium last Thursday night as part of Princeton University Concerts. Led by guest pianist and Mozart expert Mitsuko Uchida, the Mahler Orchestra drew a full house to Richardson for a program of piano and orchestral music by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and Henry Purcell.

Conducting piano concerti from the keyboard is a musical return to how it used to be done; Mozart composed many of his concerti for his own performance, both playing and leading an ensemble. In Thursday night's performance, Uchida's rapport with the Mahler Chamber Orchestra was immediate, with her conducting gestures from the keyboard always conveying an uplifting spirit and joy. Uchida is especially well known for her interpretation of Mozart, Schubert, and Beethoven; having been raised in Vienna, she gave her first recital at the age of 14 and has channeled the Viennese powerhouse composers ever since.

Uchida and the Mahler Orchestra began the concert with Mozart's Piano Concerto No. 23 in A Major, a work composed at the same time as Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*.

This concerto contained much of the same elegant flavor and melodic sensitivity as *Figaro*, opening with a courtly orchestral introduction. Mozart replaced the customary oboes with clarinets in this work to create a darker color, but under Uchida's guidance, the Orchestra generated its own musical charm while playing with a rich instrumental sound.

The overriding strength of the combination of Uchida and the Mahler Chamber Orchestra was the impeccable timings between the two artistic partners. As both conductor and soloist, Uchida was responsible for seamlessly weaving the solo keyboard part into the orchestral fabric. While she was expertly playing the solo lines, concertmaster Mark Steinberg fluidly took over guiding the ensemble in supporting the soloist. Uchida's solo phrases led effortlessly into the orchestral passages, with cadenzas especially exact so she could effortlessly switch to the conducting role. [MORE](#)

March 23, 2022

Boheme Opera NJ Presents Performance Of Verdi Classic at Patriots Theater

By Nancy Plum

It is difficult enough to present a professional opera production in the best of times, but over the past two years, it must have seemed almost impossible. Opera companies nationwide struggled to succeed in a medium considered a coronavirus "superspreader," and regional companies in particular have been putting their artistic toes in the water very slowly these days. Boheme Opera NJ, which has been presenting opera in the area for the past 33 years, took a big leap back into the performance arena this past weekend with a production of Giuseppe Verdi's classic *Rigoletto* at the Patriots Theater at Trenton's War Memorial. Led by conductor Joseph Pucciatti, Boheme Opera NJ's fully-staged and supertitled production brought together a talented cast of singers and instrumentalists, accompanied by innovative digital sets and well-paced music.

As popular as *Rigoletto* is today, the plot of Verdi's 1851 opera was considered surprisingly shocking in its time. Based on a Victor Hugo play and with a libretto by Francesco Maria Piave, *Rigoletto* had a storyline perceived as making fun of royalty. Verdi moved the story's location to Italy and reduced the protagonist in rank to duke, thus appeasing the Naples censors to which he was required to submit the libretto.

Celebrating more than 30 years of opera production, Boheme Opera NJ was riding a wave of artistic growth in 2020, when this

production was originally scheduled, and the company bravely moved the performance site to Patriots Theater. A two-year hiatus on live opera performance upended the company's upward momentum, yet this past weekend's performances provided an opportunity for "spring reawakenings." Friday night's production (repeated Sunday afternoon) featured six singers making Boheme Opera debuts and nine singers performing their assigned roles for the first time.

Rigoletto fit well into a 19th-century formula in which the tenor is the romantic lead and the soprano his leading lady, with a villainous bass lurking in the background. A baritone hunchback in *Rigoletto* changed the formula slightly, with Verdi adding his trademark unforgettable melodies into the musical mix. Verdi operas also often have their own signature features, such as a show-stopping coloratura soprano aria and poignant father-daughter conflict. Boheme Opera's production featured solid singing throughout, but much of the evening belonged to Robert Balonek singing the title role. As *Rigoletto*, Balonek was able to scurry through crowd scenes with elastic physicality as well as express parental tenderness toward his daughter Gilda. He was alternately sprightly, animated, and conniving, with a solid voice carrying well into the house. Balonek showed particularly sensitive dynamics in an Act I soliloquy, while both scheming with the professional assassin Sparafucile and offering protective advice to Gilda. [MORE](#)

Versatile Actor and Clown Bill Irwin Presents "On Beckett" at McCarter; Comedy Explores a Performer's Relationship to the Playwright's Works



“ON BECKETT”: McCarter Theatre Center presented “On Beckett” on March 18. Created, directed and performed by Bill Irwin, the show played at McCarter’s Matthews Theatre. Above: Irwin considers, among other questions, whether the “Waiting for Godot” playwright’s work is “natural clown territory.” (Photo by Craig Schwartz)

By Donald H. Sanborn III

Award-winning actor, writer, director, and clown Bill Irwin presented *On Beckett* at McCarter on March 18. The entertaining monologue excerpts passages from the author and playwright’s writings, interspersed with comedy routines and affable, thoughtful commentary. Early in the evening Irwin poses an overarching rhetorical question: “Is Samuel Beckett’s writing natural clown territory?”

On Beckett is the result, and culmination, of Irwin’s extensive experience performing Beckett’s works. He has acted in multiple productions of *Waiting for Godot*, including the 2009 Broadway production; and he performed in American Conservatory Theater’s 2012 production of *Endgame*.

“Mine is an actor’s relationship to Beckett’s language; but it’s also a clown’s relationship,” Irwin explains to this writer in an interview for (the March 16 edition of) Town Topics. “I’m hoping to welcome you in, and in doing so, re-welcome myself back in, because I am forever rediscovering this writing — the wit in it.”

On Beckett premiered at Irish Repertory Theatre in 2018, following development at ACT. The McCarter presentation is produced by Octopus Theatricals, in partnership with the Lewis Center for the Arts.

Irwin’s other original stage works include *The Regard of Flight*, *The Happiness Lecture*, and *Old Hats*. He won a Tony Award for Best Actor for his performances in *Who’s Afraid of Virginia Woolf* and *Fool Moon* (the latter is created by Irwin and David Shiner). Television credits include *Elmo’s World*; film credits include *Rachel Getting Married* and *The Grinch Who Stole Christmas*. [MORE](#)

March 16, 2022

Princeton Pro Musica Returns to Richardson Stage with Musical Tribute to Anne Frank

By Nancy Plum

The World War II account of Anne Frank, with its immortal story of hope amid a harsh reality, seems particularly timely in these days of current events. As a result, Princeton Pro Musica may find that its presentation this past weekend of a choral setting of Anne Frank’s diary has more impact now than its original performance date two years ago, especially as the chorus returns to live performance. Originally scheduled for the spring of 2020 to mark the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II, British composer James Whitbourn’s oratorio *Annelies* not only honors the life and legacy of Anne Frank but also finds parallels with current fears and anxiety of uncertain realities.

Anne Frank wrote in her diary, “It seems like years since Sunday morning. So much has happened. It’s as if the whole world had suddenly turned upside down.” Princeton Pro Musica Artistic Director Ryan James Brandau referenced these words when welcoming the audience back to a live Pro Musica performance after a two-year hiatus. With music by Whitbourn and a libretto by author Melanie Challenger, *Annelies* is a “musical portraiture” for chorus, orchestra, and soprano soloist providing a snapshot of Frank’s life. Joining Pro Musica and the accompanying orchestra last Sunday afternoon at Richardson Auditorium was Princeton graduate and operatic soprano Lily Arbisser.

The voice of Anne Frank was not confined to the soprano voice, but could be heard throughout the piece from orchestra, chorus, and soloist. Whitbourn incorporated musical references to the sights and sounds of 1940s Amsterdam into the work, beginning with an “Introit” capturing bells and a vibrant city atmosphere. In this opening movement, Arbisser sang as a cantor while the women of Pro Musica presented a subtle unison line. Whitbourn used choral monophony and unharmonized wordless lines sung by the chorus as a vehicle for certain words of the text, and Pro Musica’s presentation of these passages in the opening movement set well a sense of foreboding for what was to come. [MORE](#)

March 9, 2022

Princeton Symphony Orchestra Presents Dynamic Solo Cellist in Romantic Cello Concerto

By Nancy Plum

Princeton Symphony Orchestra coupled a contemporary symphonic work with a beloved 19th-century Czech composer this past weekend with a pair of performances in Richardson Auditorium on the campus of Princeton University. Led by PSO Music Director Rossen Milanov, the ensemble presented a piece recently premiered, as well as works by Antonín Dvorak and Igor Stravinsky, both of whom made their homes in the United States at some point. Joining the Orchestra in these “Edward T. Cone” performances was magnetic Spanish cellist Pablo Ferrández.

Saturday night’s concert (the performance was repeated Sunday afternoon) opened with the one-movement *Amer’ican* of Michigan-born composer James Lee III. Composed in 2019, *Amer’ican* was inspired by Dvorak’s *New World Symphony*, along with 18th-century artwork of Indigenous Americans. Lee’s piece began serenely, with Scott Kemsley’s solo flute introducing an orchestral palette in which the instruments seemed to be on their own. The winds, especially a pair of clarinets, were effective in executing swirling passages, with a varied percussion section providing musical effects evoking Americana. Flutists Kemsley and Mary Schmidt carried much of the melodic material in the work, with elegant solos provided by other winds and brass, including oboist Gilles Cheng and trombone player Carlos Jiménez Fernández. Lee was inspired by Dvorak when writing this piece, and shades of the Czech composer could be heard in the solo clarinet lines, gracefully played by Andy Cho. Conductor Milanov well-handled the work’s transitions between lyricism and driving rhythms.

Prize-winning cellist Pablo Ferrández has been acclaimed as being a captivating performer, complete with technique, spirit and expressivity. Ferrández was featured in Dvorak’s 1895 Cello

Concerto in B Minor, written while the composer was living in the United States, and subsequently revised in response to the death of a family member. [MORE](#)

March 2, 2022

Princeton University Orchestra Presents Concerto Competition Winners in Winter Concert

By Nancy Plum

Princeton University Orchestra returned to the Richardson Auditorium stage last week with a concert featuring both guest conductors and soloist winners of the University Orchestra Concerto Competition. The performance Friday night (the concert was repeated Saturday night) showed convincingly the impact of University Orchestra conductor Michael Pratt's long tenure with the Orchestra and the depth of the University music program.

Soprano Marley Jacobson, a University senior who had a leading role in last season's "pandemic" virtual opera *La Calisto*, led off the evening with a performance of a concert aria by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Mozart composed the orchestrally accompanied "Vorrei spiegarvi, oh Dio!" for soprano voice and oboe obbligato for his sister-in-law and as an interpolation into another composer's opera in which she was performing.

Orchestra conductor Michael Pratt led the ensemble in this work, demonstrating well-blended winds and horns, with an especially elegant oboe solo by Vedrana Ivezic. Jacobson sang Mozart's concert aria of plaintiveness and emotional confusion with the lyrical poise and vocal self-assuredness of the Countess in *The Marriage of Figaro*. Ivezic's contrasting oboe solo line was equally vocal in character, and the two instruments together were often delicately answered by *pizzicato* playing from the lower strings. From a 21st-century viewpoint, Mozart seemed to like torturing sopranos with huge intervallic skips, and Jacobson was well prepared for the technical challenges of this piece.

The classical music tradition of Armenia has been represented for the past 100 years by composer Aram Khachaturian. Originally intending to become a biologist, Khachaturian turned instead to music and composed works capturing the exotic colors and rhythms of the region, as well as the Mugham melodic themes which fascinated him as a child. Khachaturian composed the *Adagio pas de deux* as part of his 1956 ballet *Spartacus*, and the movement contained some of the most memorable melodies in the entire ballet. Conducting this piece in Friday night's concert was University senior Montagu James, also a violinist and composer

who has had several works commissioned by Princeton University Sinfonia. [MORE](#)

February 23, 2022

Removal of a Sculpture Sparks Debate in “The OK Trenton Project”; Passage Theatre Opens Mainstage Season with Compelling Docudrama



“THE OK TRENTON PROJECT”: Performances are underway for “The OK Trenton Project.” Written by David Lee White, Richard Bradford, and members of the OK Trenton Ensemble; and directed by Passage’s Artistic Director C. Ryanne Domingues, the play runs through February 27 at Passage Theatre. Above, from left, are Richard Bradford, Wendi Smith, Kevin Bergen, Carmen Castillo (seated), and Molly Casey Chapman. *(Photo by Jeff Stewart)*

By Donald H. Sanborn III

In August 2017 the Associated Press ran an article with the headline, “Not OK? Sculpture of hand gesture moved over gang worries.” The subject of the piece was *Helping Hands*, a metal sculpture of a hand making the “OK” sign, which was installed on a city-owned vacant lot on the corner of Trenton’s Perry and Montgomery streets.

Helping Hands was created by students (ages 12 to 15) from Camp Mercer, a summer camp operated by HomeFront, a nonprofit group. The sculpture was crafted in collaboration with artist Eric Schultz of Grounds For Sculpture, along with Trenton-based community development organization Isles, Inc.

The AP article notes that the students chose the “OK” sign “because they felt the peace sign was overused.” After the mayor’s office received anonymous complaints that *Helping Hands* resembled a gang symbol, the sculpture was removed from city property.

The controversy surrounding the removal of the sculpture — and reactions to other works of art — is explored in *The OK Trenton Project*, a new play that is being presented by Passage Theatre. The docudrama was developed through Passage’s PlayLab program, over a period of four years.

This iteration of *The OK Trenton Project* marks the first full mainstage production of “Trenton Makes,” a season that will feature plays about the city. “Both true and fictional, each piece highlights the capital city’s triumphs and challenges while celebrating its unique community,” promises a promotional email from Passage. [MORE](#)

Takács Quartet Returns to Richardson as PU Concerts Comes Back to Live Performance

By Nancy Plum

With a 22-appearance history of performing with Princeton University Concerts, the Takács Quartet has made a home at Richardson Auditorium and has become a good friend of the series. The four members of the string ensemble — violinists Edward Dusinberre and Harumi Rhodes, violist Richard O’Neill, and cellist András Fejér — returned to Richardson Auditorium last week after a nearly two-year hiatus performing in the area for an eclectic program featuring music for string quartet and an instrument rarely heard in Princeton. Joining the ensemble for last Thursday night’s concert celebrating the series’ return to live performance was bandoneón and accordina virtuoso Julien Labro, and the five musicians together created an impressive evening of innovative classical music.

Born in France, Labro has brought music for the Argentine bandoneón to the forefront of the classical and jazz arenas. Most often heard in tango ensembles, the bandoneón creates its sound by pulling and pushing actions forcing air through bellows as the player routes air through reeds by pressing buttons on either side of the instrument. Labro has been applauded for his brilliant technique and imaginative arrangements, several of which he presented with the Takács Quartet. He connected with American composer Bryce Dessner when performing on Dessner’s score to the film *The Two Popes*, and when composer and performer were further introduced

to the Takács Quartet, the seed for an imaginative commission was planted. Dessner's *Circles*, performed by Labro and the Takács Quartet, interweaved rhythms and polyphonies of all five instruments, with a great deal of free expression from all the musicians.

Dessner's *Circles* was co-commissioned by Princeton University Concerts and the consortium Music Accord, of which University Concerts is a member. The work began with the bandoneón contrasted with a chipper string accompaniment, and Labro showed particularly fast fingers on repeated motives and offbeat rhythms. The melodic ostinato became more ornamented as the piece went on, and the players together were able to cohesively move the music into other colors and shadings. [MORE](#)

February 9, 2022

Princeton Symphony Orchestra Launches a Musical Restart in Richardson Auditorium

By Nancy Plum

Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO) began 2022 with a lush “new beginning,” performing music of the late 19th and early 20th centuries to open the New Year in an opulent orchestral way. Led by guest conductor Kenneth Bean and featuring guest solo violinist Alexi Kenney, the PSO presented three works which captured the musical atmosphere of the lives and times of each of the composers.

Currently assistant conductor of the PSO, Kenneth Bean has an extensive career leading both adult and youth orchestral ensembles. Bean's conducting strength throughout the concert was clearly finding dynamic variety, drama, and theatricality in the three pieces performed. The works presented of Coleridge-Taylor, Sibelius, and Dvorak provided ample opportunity for an imaginative approach to orchestral color, and Bean took advantage of every possibility.

Beginning with Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's 1898 *Ballade in A minor*, PSO demonstrated an ability to play from refined to lush and with dynamics ranging from rich and powerful to almost imperceptible. London-born Coleridge-Taylor became well-known as a composer from at an early age, drawing the attention of 19th-century compositional powerhouse Sir Edward Elgar. Coleridge-Taylor's *Ballade* was premiered through a commission by Elgar, immediately showing the work to be cinematic and attention-getting. Bean and the PSO began the piece in dramatic fashion, with very steady horns coupled with a lean unison string color.


Bean allowed the orchestral sound to develop gradually, and the ensemble shifted musical moods well. Equal parts fanfare and simplicity, this one-movement multi-section work was played with characteristic lushness. A duet between clarinetist Andy Cho and bassoonist Brad Balliett showed elegance and precision, with flutist Julietta Curenton and Mary Schmidt adding a fluttering musical icing on the orchestral texture.

Finnish composer Jean Sibelius' 1904 Violin Concerto in D minor fit right into the opulent late 19th-century concerto tradition, but rather than being an equal partnership between orchestra and soloist, this work was clearly for the soloist. Guest violinist Alexi Kenney was well up to the challenge, leaning into melodic lines and demonstrating physical playing. Throughout his career, Kenney has been active as both soloist and commissioner of new works; his most recent recording is accompanied by a "visual album" pairing music with contemporary sculpture. [MORE](#)


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COVID Rates Are Down; Vaccines Approved For Very Young Children

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention on Saturday, June 18 recommended COVID-19 vaccines for children from 6 months to 5 years old. As of Tuesday, June 21, New Jersey parents can make vaccination appointments for their young children through covid19.nj.gov, the state's COVID-19 website.

"This is welcome news for parents concerned with ensuring their children have the strongest protection against COVID-19," New Jersey Gov. Phil Murphy and New Jersey Health Commissioner Judith Persichilli noted in a statement issued Saturday. New Jersey has ordered 61,000 doses and is distributing them to medical sites around the state, according to Murphy.

The vaccines use the same technology as vaccines for adults, but they are given at different dose sizes and number of shots. Children under 5 who receive the Pfizer vaccine will be given three doses at one-tenth the strength of adult doses. Children under 6 who receive the Moderna vaccine will receive two doses at one-quarter the strength of an adult dose.

The Pfizer vaccine was previously approved for children ages 5 to 11, but fewer than 30 percent in that age group have received the recommended two shots. In CDC nationwide surveys conducted in May, only about one-third of parents said they would vaccinate their young children. According to the most recent available Princeton Health Department statistics, 88 percent of all local residents age 5 and over are vaccinated, 90 percent of those 18 and over.

In response to a New York Times poll in April, fewer than one-fifth of parents of children under 5 said they were eager to get their children vaccinated right away. Parents gave many different reasons for hesitancy, though most health experts agree on the safety of the vaccine and recommend that all children be vaccinated.

New Jersey COVID-19 case numbers have been declining in recent weeks, as have transmission rates and hospitalizations. The rate of transmission in New Jersey on Tuesday, June 21, was 0.8. Numbers below 1 indicate that the outbreak is declining, with each new case leading to less than one additional new case.

Continued on Page 10

Opposition Grows to U.S. 1 Warehouse Project

A project that would bring nine warehouses of 5.5 million square feet to a 650-acre parcel bordering U.S. Route 1, Clarksville Road, and Quakerbridge Road in West Windsor, the former home of American Cyanamid, has many residents registering strong opposition.

A discussion of the development by the West Windsor Township Planning Board, followed by a vote, is scheduled for its in-person meeting on June 29. The issue was last considered by the Planning Board on June 1.

Traffic congestion and environmental issues are among the concerns of those urging that the development be scrapped. West Windsor Township Mayor Hernant Marathe said the former, in particular, will be addressed at the meeting.

"I have talked to a lot of people in town, and I understand their concern," he said. "Traffic is the main concern. We fully understand that, and the Planning Board is going to impose conditions so that not as many trucks can be on Clarksville Road."

The Planning Board gave preliminary approval to a plan by the developer, Atlantic Realty, in December 2020. Since then, residents have charged that ongoing discussions of the issue have not been open to the public.

"Everything was by Zoom, but the Planning Board of West Windsor did not provide a Zoom link to the public," said township resident Tirza Wahman, who ran against Marathe last November. "My perspective is that a decision was made that a Zoom link was not required for the Planning Board, which is in stark contrast to how other township entities run. The whole thing was done under cover of night."

Marathe said the process has been transparent. "We are 100 percent in person. Live, taped, and put on YouTube," he said.

Opposition to the project is not limited to West Windsor residents. The New Jersey chapter of the Sierra Club and the public advocacy group MoveOn have posted their concerns on social media. "This project brings with it potential for severe congestion on Route 1 and area roads, increased air pollution, and other problems,"

Continued on Page 11

Thousands Parade Through Princeton, Celebrating Pride In Person for 2022

Back in person for the first time since Princeton's first Pride Parade in 2019, Pride 2022 again drew a crowd of thousands of spirited marchers and supporters on Saturday, June 18, all celebrating the message of love, diversity, and inclusion.

From babies to 90-year-olds, the diverse throng "marched, ashaayed, and rolled," according to event lead organizer Robt Seda-Schreiber, up Witherspoon Street from the Municipal Building, then down Paul Robeson Place to the YMCA for an afterparty that included entertainment and remarks from several speakers.

"To get the community together again after three years apart—it was beautiful, meaningful, significant, and inspirational—as meaningful as it was fabulous," said Seda-Schreiber, chief activist of the Bayard Rustin Center for Social Justice (BRCSJ), which sponsored the event.

Seda-Schreiber noted similarities between the 2019 and 2022 events, but emphasized the importance of bringing so many people together after having been kept apart for so long. "Especially for our queer community, for all marginalized folks, not to be able to gather is a really

Continued on Page 10



PRINCETON PRIDE PARADE 2022: Thousands of marchers and supporters were in downtown Princeton on Saturday morning for the first in-person Pride Parade since 2019. An afterparty followed at the YMCA field on Paul Robeson Place. Participants share what brought them to the event in this week's Town Talk on page 6. (Photos by Charles R. FIDNY)

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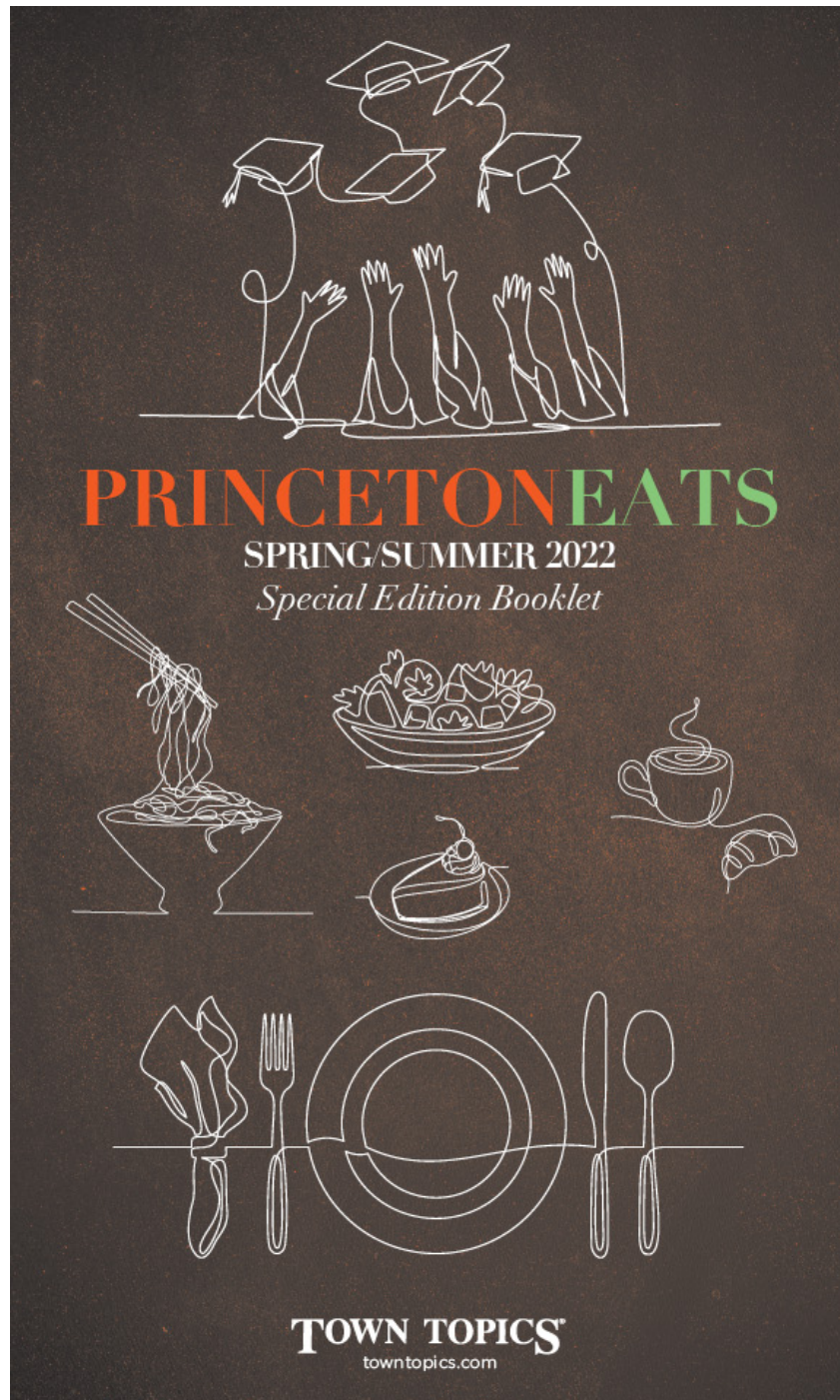
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June 22, 2022

BROWSE PAST ISSUES

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Princeton Eats



Summer Camps

Summer Camps TOWN TOPICS

AOY Art Center Summer Art Camps

This summer is the perfect opportunity for kids to express their creative side and have fun in a nurturing environment. Make new friends at Aoy Art Center, an award-winning Bucks County, Pa., summer camp. From June 20 through August 19, campers ages 5 to 16 are encouraged to explore drawing, painting, sculpting, printmaking, and so much more. We are offering over 55 week-long camps, with exciting new camps featuring character design, fashion, graphic design, oil painting, leather and woodworking, acrylic painting, jewelry making, and watercolor painting. Young artists will enjoy selecting from our many fun-themed camps.

Children receive individualized instruction from professional teaching artists. Extended child care hours are available before camp, starting at 7:30 a.m., and following camp until 6 p.m. Register for a morning camp (9 a.m. to 12 p.m.) or an afternoon camp (1 to 4 p.m.). Enjoy a free supervised lunch period when registering for both a morning and afternoon camp.

AOY Art Center is committed to the safety of your children and our instructors. Last summer 230 children enjoyed nine art-filled weeks without a single case of COVID-19 reported by our campers or staff. The

protocols we established in 2020 and employed again in 2021 will continue as long as necessary. All camps are held at the Aoy Art Center at 940 Mirror Lake Road on the beautiful Patterson Farm in Yardley, Pa., conveniently located by the I295 / Route 332 interchange. Register by March 31 for 10 percent off at aoyarts.org.

Arts Council of Princeton
Arts Council of Princeton's Summer Arts Studios encourage all young artists to let their inner creativity shine! Ages 5-16 will explore the arts in a variety of mediums from clay, textiles, drawing and painting, fashion, mixed media, and so much more. Teens and tweens will dive more deeply into various mediums to immerse themselves in a week of exploring their creative passions. ACP Summer Studios are led by incredible professional teaching artists, experienced in guiding our artists in hands-on art making with backgrounds in art history and cultural influences. For more information and to register, visit artsCouncilofprinceton.org.

The Bridge Academy
The Bridge Academy changes lives. Founded in September 2003 by educators, parents, and community members, The Bridge Academy helps students with language-based learning disabilities, including dyslexia,

dysgraphia, auditory processing, and ADHD "bridge the gap between potential and performance." This is accomplished through a nurturing learning environment, student-focused instruction, strong academic standards, and a superior teaching staff.

We are a New Jersey-state approved school for ages 8-18, and the only school in New Jersey certified by the Orton-Gillingham Academy. With a 3:1 or 4:1 ratio in reading, writing, and math, along with small group instruction for other classes, The Bridge Academy uses multi-sensory techniques throughout the curriculum. The school's academic and social programs are uniquely student centered and tailored to meet the specific needs and learning style of each student enrolled.

Dedicated, experienced teachers encourage students to thrive and blossom into the people they are destined to be. Over 87 percent of our alumni pursue college and/or technical school after graduation. For more information visit bridgeacademy.org or call (609) 844-0770. We look forward to meeting you!

The Cambridge School
Children with learning differences are often impacted by the lapse in instruction over summer months which can lead to the summer slide. Cambridge School's Summer Program offers a

unique opportunity for students to continue receiving academic instruction in the morning and participate in enrichment activities in the afternoon. Each camp day starts with morning academics — language, reading, writing, and math. The afternoon features various intensive programs. The Reading Intensive (Grades 3-5) addresses building the important elements of reading comprehension. The Adventure and Exploration Club (Grades K-5) offers nature hikes, scavenger hunts, and other outdoor experiential learning opportunities. The Executive Function Intensive (Grades 5-9) identifies and remediates students' individualized executive function challenges.

Our summer program is June 27 through July 22. Find out more about our program at thecambridge-school.org/academics/summer-program or call us at (609) 730-9553.

Color Me Mine

Color Me Mine Princeton is a Paint-Your-Own-Pottery studio located at the Princeton Shopping Center. You pick the pottery and paint it, we will glaze and fire it for you in our kilns. We offer in-studio painting plus monthly workshops for adults and kids using a variety of techniques on pottery, canvas, clay, and mixed media.

Our robust Summer Camp program spans 10 weeks from June to September

with a unique theme each week. Artists will complete eight-10 projects while learning about art and building confidence in their artistic skills. We incorporate outside play and socialization into the program too! As a bonus, we finish each week with a pizza party and an art show for the parents. Extended days are available with additional projects. Check out our School's Out workshops on our website, princeton.colormine.com, where we run programs similar to our Summer Camp Program.

We are currently offering an early bird discount for Summer Camp through May 1, and the weeks fill up fast with limited space. Color Me Mine Princeton prides itself on being a safe and clean environment. We look forward to seeing you at the studio!

Hun Summer Day Camp

Learn... Explore... Play. Let your child's first memory as part of the Hun Community be a joyful, unforgettable experience at Hun Summer Day Camp. From the time your camper is dropped off until they are picked up, your child will be engaged and playing indoor and outdoor activities with other campers and nurturing counselors from the Hun Summer Community.

During the six weeks that camp is in session, campers will explore Hun's 45-acre campus through eco-nature

walks and field games, and use some of our academic buildings for art and crafts, mini-STEM projects, performing arts, LEGO builds, and weekly design challenges. Campers will learn the Golden Rule while participating in sports, games, and swimming in small groups that are well supervised. Lunch is included and pre- and after-care options are available. Sign up for any number of the six weeks offered and have the best summer ever.

Dates: June 27-August 5; 8:30 a.m.-2:15 p.m.; ages 5-12. For more information, visit HunSchool.org/summer/hun-day-camp or email Summer@hunschool.org.

Lawrenceville Summer Scholars

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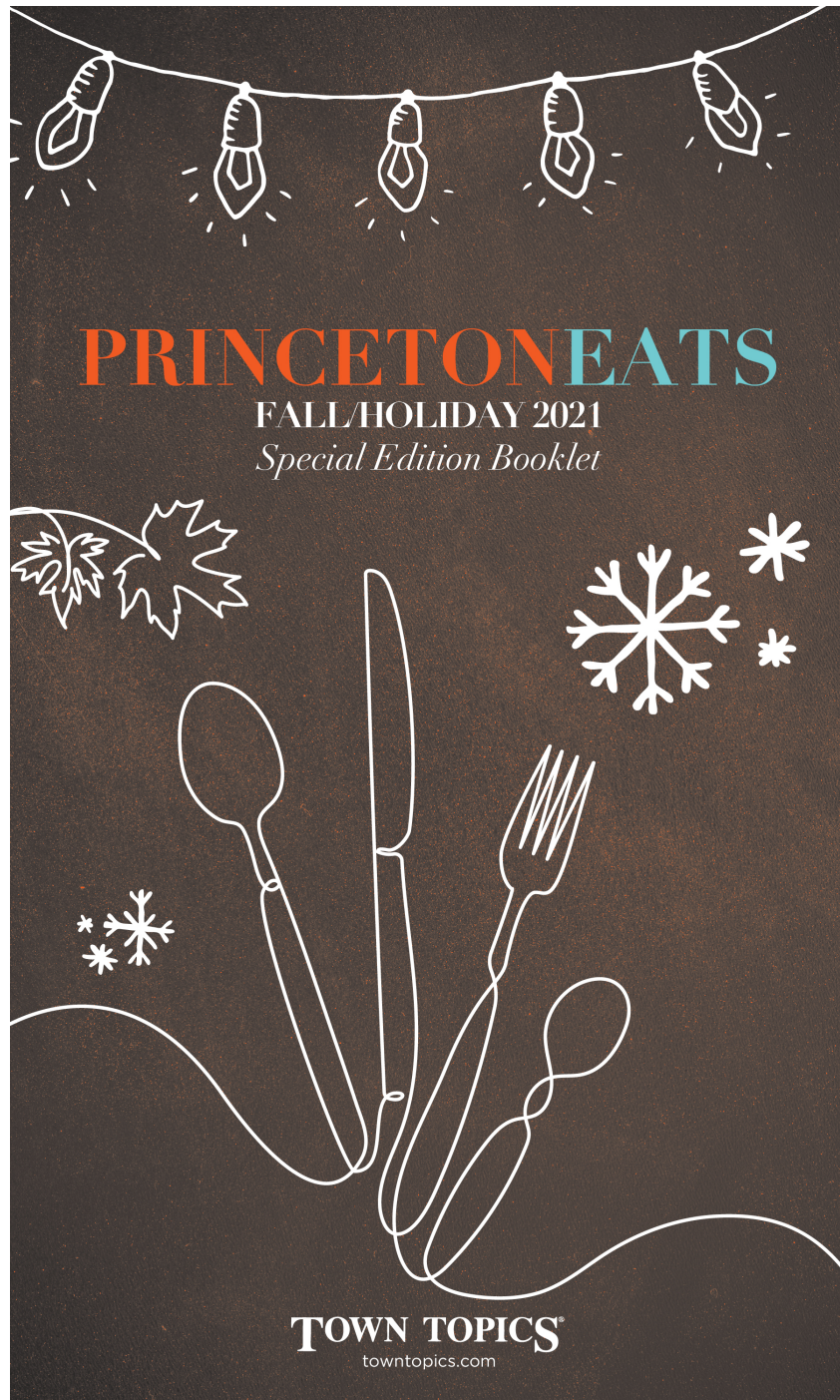


OPEN HOUSES!
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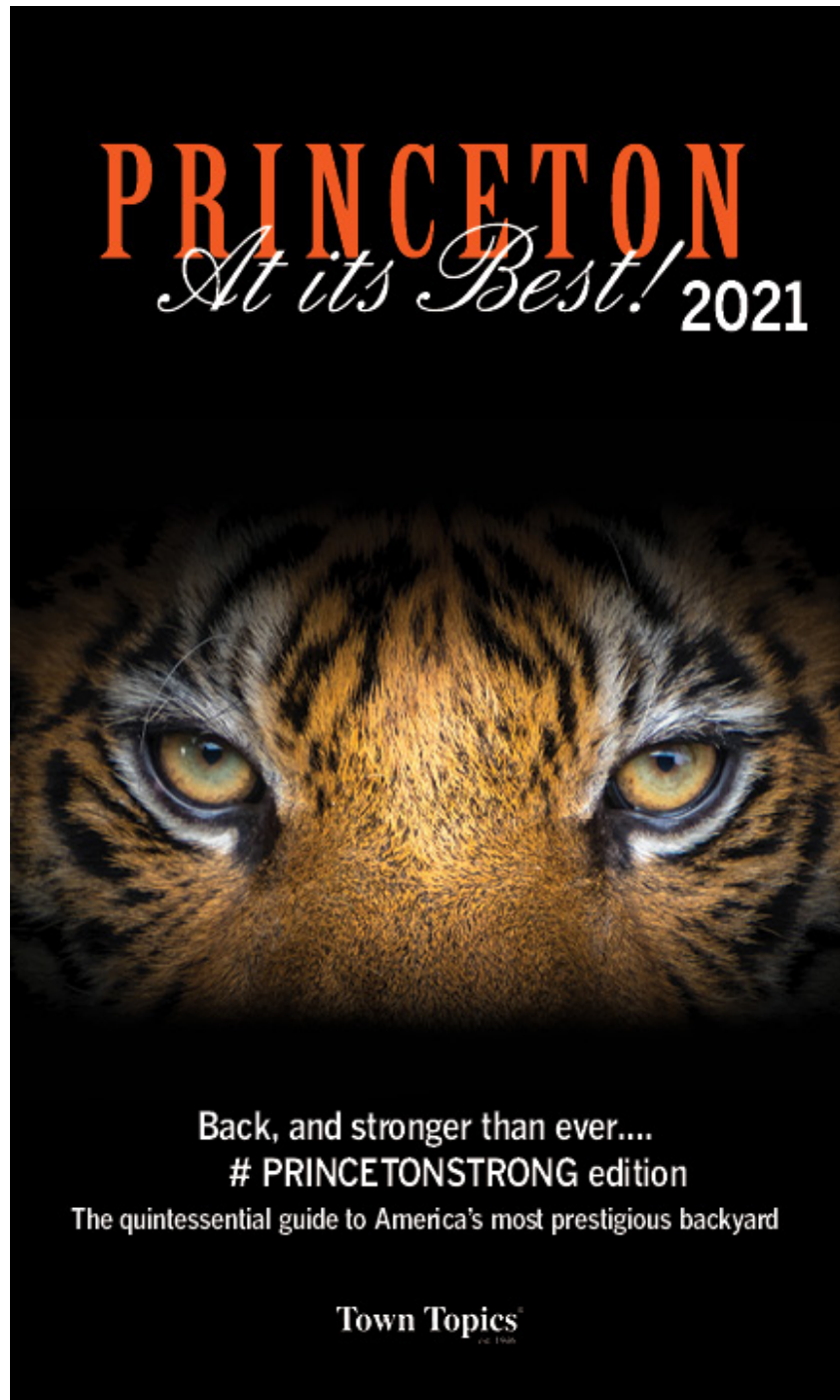
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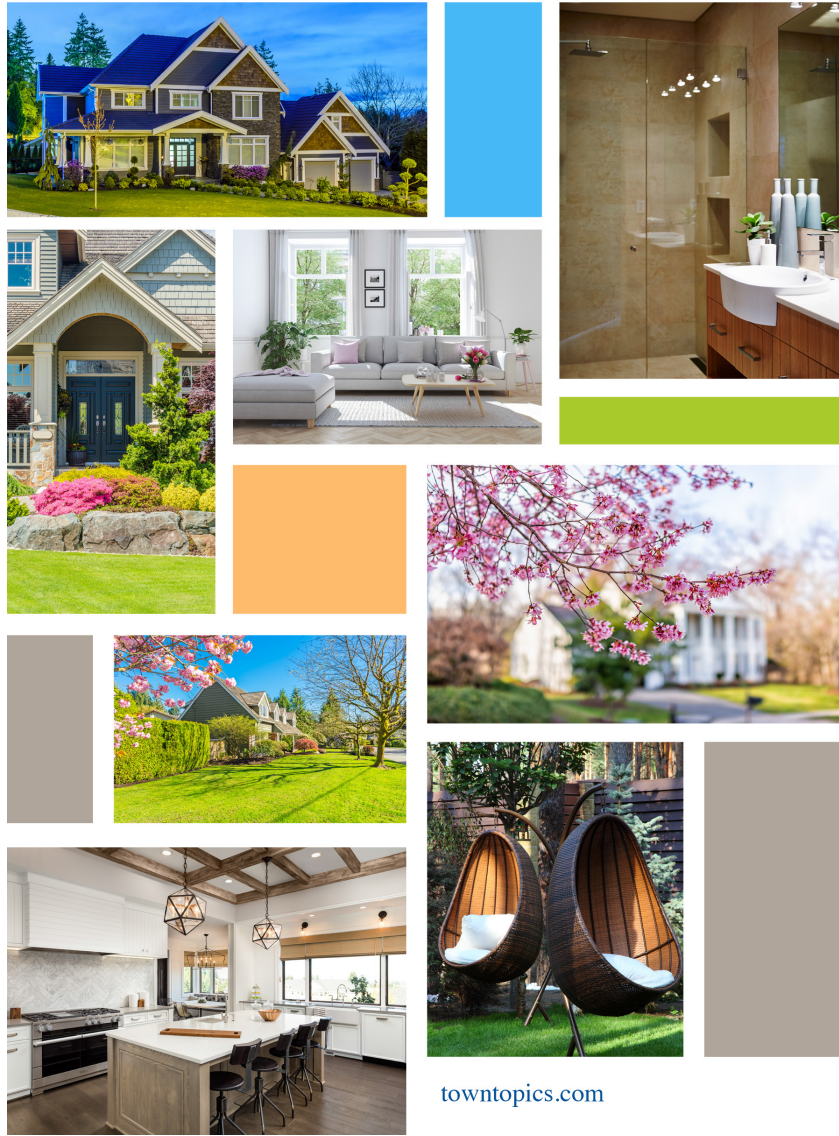


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