

PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ROSSEN MILANOV, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2021-2022



SIBELIUS VIOLIN CONCERTO
2.5.22 ● Alexi Kenney ● 2.6.22

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2021-22

ROSSEN MILANOV, Edward T. Cone Music Director



Saturday February 5, 2022, 8:00pm

Sunday February 6, 2022, 4:00pm

Richardson Auditorium

SIBELIUS VIOLIN CONCERTO

Kenneth Bean, conductor

Alexi Kenney, violin

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor Ballade in A Minor, Op. 33

Jean Sibelius

Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 47

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Adagio di molto
- III. Allegro, ma non tanto

INTERMISSION

Antonín Dvořák

Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, Op. 95
"From the New World"

- I. Adagio – Allegro molto
- II. Largo
- III. Molto vivace
- IV. Allegro con fuoco

No one will be admitted during the performance of a piece. No audio or video recording or photography permitted. Dates, times, artists, and programs subjects to change.



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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. Its flagship summer program **The Princeton Festival** brings an array of performing arts and artists to Princeton during multiple weeks in June. 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



Internationally renowned conductor and Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO) Edward T. Cone Music Director **ROSSEN MILANOV** looks forward to collaborating in 2021-22 with established and emerging artists of the orchestral world and helping the PSO's popular June performing arts celebration – The Princeton Festival.

Respected and admired by audiences and musicians alike, he has established himself as a conductor with considerable national and international presence. In addition to leading the PSO, Mr. Milanov is the music director of the Columbus Symphony Orchestra, Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, and chief conductor of the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra in Ljubljana. During his eleven-year tenure with The Philadelphia Orchestra, Milanov conducted more than 200 performances. In 2015, he completed a 15-year tenure as music director of the nationally recognized training orchestra Symphony in C in New Jersey and in 2013, a 17-year tenure with the New Symphony Orchestra in his native city of Sofia, Bulgaria.

Mr. Milanov has collaborated with Komische Oper Berlin (Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtzensk*), Opera Oviedo with the Spanish premiere of Tchaikovsky's *Mazepa* and Bartók's *Bluebeard's Castle* (awarded best Spanish production for 2015), and Opera Columbus (Verdi's *La Traviata*). He has been seen at New York City Ballet and collaborated with choreographers such as Mats Ek, Benjamin Millepied, and most recently Alexei Ratmansky in the critically acclaimed revival of *Swan Lake* in Zurich with Zurich Ballet and in Paris with La Scala Ballet.

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! School Day concerts. He was named Bulgaria's Musician of the Year in 2005; he won a 2011 ASCAP award for adventurous programming of contemporary 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.

rossenmilanov.com



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Conductor



KENNETH BEAN is an instructor and conductor in the Philadelphia area, as well as an active freelance trumpeter. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music and a Master of Music Education degree from Jackson State University. He has taught at many festivals and schools, including the School District of Philadelphia, Settlement Music School, the Premier Orchestral Institute of the Mississippi Symphony, and Play On Philly. He was appointed Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor of the

Princeton Symphony Orchestra in October 2021, and as such serves as conductor of the Youth Orchestra of Central Jersey's Symphonic Orchestra.

Although he enjoys teaching and performing, Kenneth's passion is on the podium. He has appeared as a guest conductor for the Marywood String Festival, Berks County Orchestra Festival, and the Oberlin Conservatory of Music. His past music director/conductor appointments include the Junior String Philharmonic of the Lehigh Valley, the Young People's Philharmonic of the Lehigh Valley, and Luzerne Music Center.

Kenneth currently serves as assistant conductor of Symphony in C, conductor of the Symphony in C Youth Orchestra in Collingswood, NJ, and director/conductor of the Young Musicians Debut Orchestra, the newest full orchestra within the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra Music Institute. In the summers, he serves as co-director of the Symphony in C Summer Camp and conductor at Kinhaven Music School Junior Session in Weston, VT.

Photo by James Thoma



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Guest Artist



The recipient of a 2016 Avery Fisher Career Grant and a 2020 Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award, violinist **ALEXI KENNEY** is building a career that defies categorization. He is equally at home creating experimental programs and commissioning new works, soloing with major orchestras in the USA and abroad, and collaborating with some of the most celebrated musicians of our time.

In the 2021/22 Season, Alexi debuts as soloist with the Pittsburgh Symphony, Orchestra de la Suisse Romande, Virginia Symphony, Reno Philharmonic, Eugene Symphony, New Haven Symphony, and Princeton Symphony, returns to the Indianapolis Symphony, California Symphony, and Santa Fe Symphony, and appears at Wigmore Hall, Princeton University Concerts, Philadelphia Chamber Music Society, and with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center.

In 2021, Alexi released his first recording, Paul Wiancko's *X Suite for Solo Violin*, accompanied by a visual album that pairs each of the seven movements of *X Suite* with seven contemporary sculptures, filmed on location at the Donum Estate in Sonoma, California.

In recent seasons, Alexi has performed as soloist with the Detroit Symphony, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, Sarasota Orchestra, Orchestre de Chambre de Lausanne, and in a play-conduct role as guest leader of the Mahler Chamber Orchestra.

Winner of the 2013 Concert Artists Guild Competition and laureate of the 2012 Menuhin Competition, Alexi has been profiled by *Musical America*, *Strings Magazine*, and *The New York Times*, and has written for *The Strad*.

Born in Palo Alto, California in 1994, Alexi is a graduate of the New England Conservatory in Boston, where he received his Artist Diploma as a student of Miriam Fried and Donald Weilerstein. Previous teachers include Wei He, Jenny Rudin, and Natasha Fong. He plays a violin made in London by Stefan-Peter Greiner in 2009 and a bow by François-Nicolas Voirin.

Photo by Mike Grittani

Princeton Symphony Orchestra

Rossen Milanov, Edward T. Cone Music Director

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Kenneth Bean, Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor

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February 5-6, 2022

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Ruotao Mao**

Concertmaster

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Margaret Banks

The Yvonne Marcuse Chair,

in memory of Mark M. Rutzky

Qianru Elaine He

Cheng-Chih Kevin Tsai

Keiko Tokunaga

Christine Wu

Gregory Lewis

Linda Howard

Jeremiah Blacklow

Jeremy Hao

VIOLIN II

Matthew Hakkarainen**

The B. Sue Howard Chair

Michelle Brazier

Cheng-Hsun Tsai

Anna Tsukervanik

Abigail Hong

Iris Chen

Carmina Gagliardi

VIOLA

Stephanie Griffin*

The Harriet & Jay Vawter Chair

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Hanul Park

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Rachel Nierenberg

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**Guest principal player



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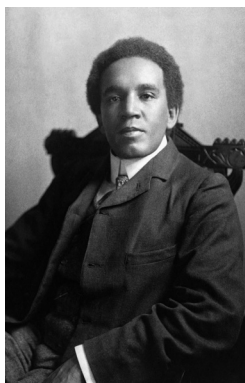
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Program Notes



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

(1875-1912)

Ballade in A Minor, Op. 33

Composed 1898

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was an English composer and conductor. Born of mixed racial heritage, his mother, Alice Hare Martin, was English and his father, Daniel Peter Hughes Taylor, was a Krio from Sierra Leone. Named after the poet Samuel Taylor Coleridge, he was raised in Croydon, a large town in South London, by his mother and grandfather.

Coleridge-Taylor showed early evidence of musical talent. As a young boy he had a very fine boy-soprano voice. He also showed promise on the violin and piano, and was admitted into the Royal College of Music at the young age of 15. His friends and colleagues included contemporaries like Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst. In college, he became interested in composition and began studying under Charles Stanford, a prominent British composer whose compositional style would later influence Coleridge-Taylor, along with Brahms and Dvořák.

A number of Coleridge-Taylor's works were published while he was still a student. His primary publisher was the Novello & Co. publishing company, where his editor and mentor was A.J. Jaeger. Jaeger, also a dear friend of Edward Elgar and later eternalized in the "Nimrod" movement of Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, made Elgar aware of the music and talent of Coleridge-Taylor. Prompted by a recommendation from Elgar, Coleridge-Taylor received his first commission, which was to compose a new piece for orchestra for the annual Three Choirs Festival in Gloucester, England. The commission resulted in *Ballade in A Minor, Op. 33*.

Coleridge-Taylor was able to overcome racial prejudice to become enormously popular during his lifetime. He was undoubtedly the most prominent Black composer of his time. He made three successful tours to the United States during his career. The first took place in 1904 when a group of African American singers from Washington D.C. called the Coleridge-Taylor Choral Society sponsored the tour. He performed and conducted his own choral works sung by the choral society, accompanied by the United States Marine band, and was received by President Theodore Roosevelt at the White House.

His most popular work was *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast* which is based on the Henry Wadsworth Longfellow poem "The Song of Hiawatha." This work was known worldwide and sold hundreds of thousands of copies. Unfortunately, having no idea of the future success of the work, he sold the rights to a publisher for 15 guineas and was not able to fully profit from it. This mistake caused him to struggle financially for the remainder of his life. While being extremely popular, accepting concerts, teaching and conducting appointments in an effort to support his family, he continued to struggle financially. English musicians, after learning of his life of poverty and untimely death, created the Performing Rights Society, an organization that still exists today to protect copyrights of musicians.

Ballade, Op. 33 premiered on September 12, 1898 and was conducted by Coleridge-Taylor. Elgar once commented on the premiere performance:

The performance was a very promising, early milestone for the gifted 22-year-old composer who, tragically, died of pneumonia less than fifteen years later...the Ballade is "a work full of wonderful high-spirits, passion and warmth. Above all it's a harbinger of what might come, given time and opportunity."

Instrumentation – two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, and strings

Duration – 13 minutes



Jean Sibelius

(1865-1957)

Violin Concerto in D Minor, Op. 47

Composed 1904, Revised 1905

Jean Sibelius was widely recognized as Finland's greatest composer and is often credited with helping to give Finland a national voice while gaining its independence from Russia. He began studying piano at the age of 7, taught by his aunt Julia. He never quite took to the piano, often earning "raps across the knuckles" as punishment for improvising instead of practicing études. When Jean turned 10, his uncle

Pebr gave him a violin and over the next few years he completely fell in love with it. He once wrote, *“When I play, I am filled with a strange feeling; it is as though the insides of the music opened up to me.”* He would often fantasize about being a virtuoso violin soloist.

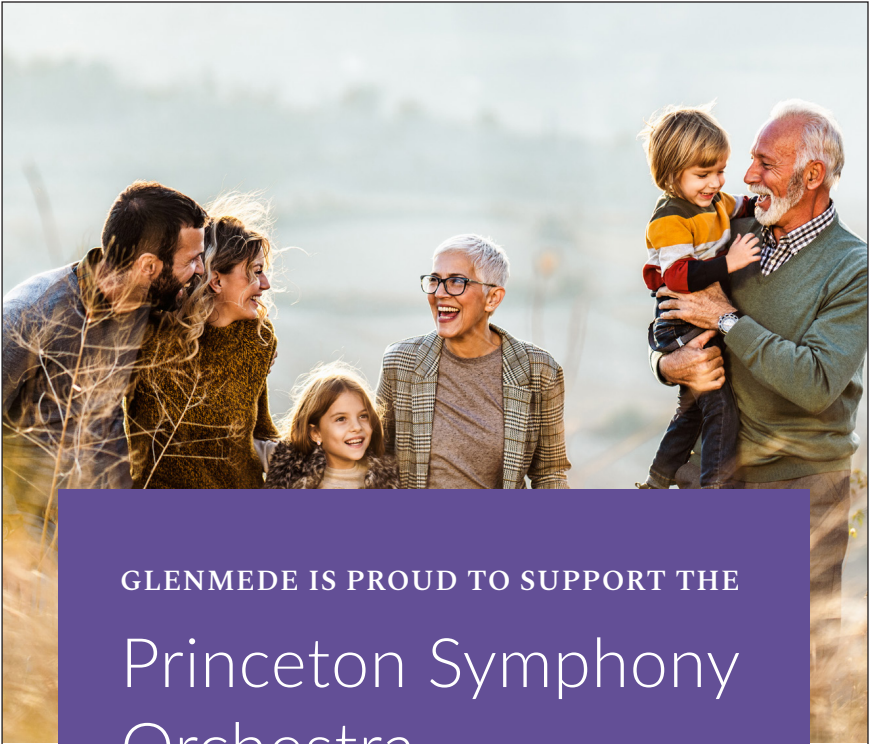
Sibelius became quite an accomplished violinist, but failed to reach the virtuoso caliber he dreamed of as a young boy. After his musical focus shifted fully to composition, he eventually abandoned his dream of becoming a violinist saying:

My tragedy was that I wanted to be a celebrated violinist at any price. Since the age of 15 I played my violin practically from morning to night. I hated pen and ink — unfortunately I preferred an elegant violin bow. My love for the violin lasted quite long and it was a very painful awakening when I had to admit that I had begun my training for the exacting career of a virtuoso too late.

After being encouraged by violinist William Burmester to write a concerto for violin, Sibelius slowly began working on the piece. Burmester was the concertmaster of the orchestra in Helsinki, and hoped to give the premiere performance of the concerto. As he worked on the concerto, Sibelius would keep Burmester abreast of its progress and implied he might dedicate the work to him. When he was near completion, he sent it to Burmester who wrote, *“Wonderful! Masterly! Only once before have I spoken in such terms to a composer, and that was when Tchaikovsky showed me his concerto!”*

Sibelius scheduled its first public performance for February 8th, 1904. Unfortunately, this was a time when Burmester could not be in town. This timeframe barely gave Sibelius enough time to fully complete the work and make all the parts for the orchestra. An undistinguished local violin teacher was chosen as a replacement soloist. The premiere performance turned out to be a flop as a result of the lack of preparation time. Overlooking the unfavorable initial public reception of the work, Burmester again offered to play the concerto, writing *“All my twenty-five years’ stage experience, my artistry and insight will be placed to serve this work...I shall play the concerto in Helsingfors in such a way that the city will be at your feet!”* However, Sibelius would not allow another performance and withdrew the piece.

The following year he completed a revised version. The premiere performance was given by the Berlin Philharmonic with Karl Halir, the orchestra’s concertmaster and a former member of the Joachim Quartet, as soloist and Richard Strauss conducting. The concerto was later dedicated to yet another violinist, Ferenc von Vecsey, a Hungarian-born prodigy, who in his younger years was one of the concerto’s earliest champions.



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Despite a successful premiere of the new version, it took roughly thirty years before it was fully accepted into the standard repertoire. This took place after the great violin virtuoso Jascha Heifetz made the concerto's first recording in 1935.

Instrumentation – two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings, and solo violin

Duration – 31 minutes



Antonín Dvořák

(1841-1904)

Symphony No. 9 in E Minor, Op. 95 "From the New World"

Composed 1892-93

In 1892, Dvořák was invited by Jeanette Thurber to become director of the National Conservatory of Music of America, an offer he accepted to the surprise of many as he was arguably the world's most famous living composer. During his three-year stint in the United States, Dvořák became extremely interested in Native American and African American melodies and harmonies. He was introduced to spirituals by his student Harry T. Burleigh, who would sing these melodies on his frequent visits to the Dvořák home. With a good amount of persuasion by Mrs. Thurber, and finding inspiration in American folk music, Dvořák began the work that would later become Symphony No. 9, "From the New World."

The symphony was written in 1892-93 and premiered by the New York Philharmonic on December 15th, 1893 with Anton Seidl conducting a public rehearsal. The official premiere took place the following evening at Carnegie Hall.

The premiere was met with tremendous success. Soon after it was published, the symphony was performed regularly by orchestras all over the world and instantly became part of the standard repertory. There is still some debate over whether or not the symphony sounds specifically "American" or not. Certainly, there are moments within the symphony

that have an American sound, but people from Dvořák's native country, Czechoslovakia, would say the same about the same passages. This, I believe, is due to the similar harmonic structure of American and bohemian folk music. Still, many people hear hints of the African American spiritual "Swing Low, Sweet Chariot" in the first movement. Also, the second movement, an original melody, sounded so much like a spiritual that it was later turned into one by one of Dvořák's pupils and titled "Goin' Home." Dvořák himself tells us that inspiration for the inner movements of the symphony can be attributed to the poem by Henry Longfellow, "The Song of Hiawatha."

Dvořák was thoroughly convinced that the future of American music had to be founded on African American melodies. He said, "...*This must be the real foundation of any serious and original school of composition to be developed in the United States.*" He undoubtedly was thinking about the melodies he had heard from his student Burleigh. What he didn't know is this would come to pass with the emergence of jazz.

Instrumentation – two flutes, two oboes (2nd doubling English horn), two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, and strings

Duration – 40 minutes

~Kenneth Bean
Assistant Conductor
Princeton Symphony Orchestra

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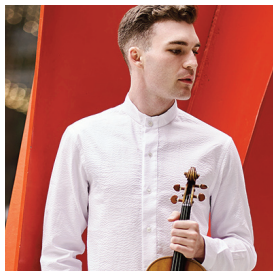
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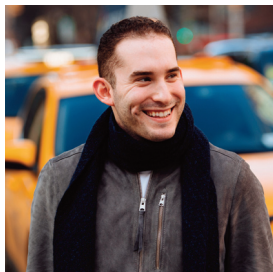
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