

● PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ROSSEN MILANOV, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2024-2025



Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto

Aubree Oliverson

September 14 & 15

2024-25

ROSSEN MILANOV, Edward T. Cone Music Director

Saturday September 14, 2024, 8pm

Sunday September 15, 2024, 4pm

Richardson Auditorium



TCHAIKOVSKY'S VIOLIN CONCERTO

Rossen Milanov, conductor

Aubree Oliverson, violin

Gemma Peacocke

Manta

with members of the
Youth Orchestra of Central Jersey

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

- I. Allegro moderato
- II. Canzonetta: Andante
- III. Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

Johannes Brahms

Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 98

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

Assistive listening devices and large print programs are available in the lobby.

No one will be admitted during the performance of a piece. No audio or video recording or photography permitted. Dates, times, artists, and programs subject 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 (NJSCA), 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 regularly performs at historic Richardson Auditorium on the campus of Princeton University.

Music Director



Edward T. Cone Music Director

ROSSEN MILANOV looks forward to collaborating in 2024-25 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 and the Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra.

During his eleven-year tenure with The Philadelphia Orchestra, he 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 Bartok's *Bluebeard's Castle* (awarded best Spanish production for 2015), and Opera Columbus (Verdi's *La Traviata* and *Rigoletto* and Tchaikovsky's *Eugene Onegin*). He has been seen at New York City Ballet and collaborated with some of the best-known choreographers of our time 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! concerts for thousands of school children. 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.

Guest Artist



Praised for her evocative lyricism and joyful, genuine approach, young American violinist **AUBREE OLIVERSON** is proving to be one of the most compelling artists of her generation, distinguishing herself with clear, honest, and colorful performances, which have been described as “powerful... brimming with confidence and joy” by the *Miami New Times*.

Acclaimed as a “masterful” soloist (San Diego Story), Aubree’s most recent solo appearances in 2023-24 include season openings of the Chamber Orchestra of New York at Carnegie Hall (di Vittorio), Utah Symphony at Abravanel Hall (Morlot), Peace Orchestra Project (Mengoli), and Ridgefield Symphony with a pairing of the Barber and Esmail violin concertos. Other season highlights include performances with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic (Teychenné), Columbus Symphony (Miller), Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra (Hoving), North Carolina Symphony (Prieto), Pacific Symphony (St. Clair), Des Moines Symphony (St. Clair), Amarillo Symphony (Jackson), Moldavian Philharmonic (Macek), Excelentia Madrid (Braunstein), Slovak Sinfonietta (Foron), Rousse Philharmonic Orchestra (Sachedina), New Haven Symphony (So), Puerto Rico Symphony (Valdés), and the Kontrapunktus Baroque Ensemble; in works by Brahms, Dvorak, Barber, Bruch, Korngold, Mendelssohn, Tchaikovsky, Weinberg, Haydn, Saint-Saens, Esmail, and Bach.

A dynamic recitalist and sensitive chamber musician, Aubree recently toured Europe with Jean-Yves Thibaudet, Clive Greensmith, and Tatjana Masurenko and collaborates this season with Anne Akiko Meyers and the Philharmonic Society of Orange County in duo works of Bach, Philip Glass, and Handel-Halvorsen. Other engagements include festivals such as the Aix-en-Provence Easter Festival with Gil Shaham, the Rome Chamber Music Festival, Oropa Music Festival, Moab Music Festival, ChamberFest West, and recitals at the Grand Teton Music Festival and SOKA Performing Arts Center, among many others. Ms. Oliverson has collaborated with world-renowned artists such as Robert McDuffie in Harris Hall at the Aspen Music Festival, Gil Shaham on tour in Mexico, Renaud Capuçon in France, Joseph Silverstein in Salt Lake City, and Lynn Harrell, Orli Shaham, Robert Chen, and Andrew Marriner in Los Angeles.

aubreeoliverson.com

Princeton Symphony Orchestra

Rossen Milanov, Edward T. Cone Music Director

ENDOWED IN PERPETUITY

Kenneth Bean, Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor

ENDOWED IN PERPETUITY

September 14-15, 2024

VIOLIN I

Basia Danilow*

Concertmaster

The George W. Pitcher Chair,

ENDOWED IN PERPETUITY

Qianru Elaine He

The Yvonne Marcuse Chair,

In Memory of Mark M. Rutzky

Emma Richman

Cheng-Chih Kevin Tsai

Ruotao Mao

Margaret Banks

Erica Tursi

Tara Pagano-Toub

Coco Ziyao Sun

Linda Howard

VIOLIN II

Cameron Chase**

The B. Sue Howard Chair

Michelle Brazier

Iris Chen

Fengwan Chen

Cheng-Hsun Tsai

Justus Ross

Diana Dohyung Kim

VIOLA

Stephanie Griffin*

The Harriet & Jay Vawter Chair

Hannah Burnett

Beth Meyers

Jacqueline Watson

Cameren Anai Williams

Rosemary Nelis

CELLO

Alistair MacRae*

***The Julian Grant & Peter Lighte
Family Chair***

Elizabeth Loughran

Jasmine Pai

Jumi Lee

Iona Batchelder

Elizabeth Thompson

BASS

John Grillo*

***The Stephanie & Robert Wedeking
Chair***

Dan Hudson

Stephen Groat

Devin Howell

FLUTE

Sooyun Kim**

The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair

Hilary Jones

OBOE

Lillian Copeland*

The Cynthia & Robert Hillas Chair

Erin Gustafson

CLARINET

Nuno Antunes**

*The Richard J. & Neil Ann S. Levine
Chair*

Gi Lee

BASSOON

Brad Balliett*

The Cynthia & Robert Hillas Chair

Hanul Park

Zach Feingold

HORN

Steven Harmon*

The Dr. Michael L. Barnett Chair

Colin Weyman

Jonathan Clark

Stephanie Fritz

TRUMPET

Jerry Bryant*

The Donna & Donald Deieso Chair

Thomas Cook

TROMBONE

Connor Rowe**

The David A. Tierno Chair

Lars Wendt

The Lor & Michael Gehret Chair

James Rogers

TIMPANI

Jeremy Levine*

The Anne VanLent Chair

PERCUSSION

Phyllis Bitow*

The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair

*Principal player

** Guest principal player

Program Notes



Gemma Peacocke (b. 1984)

Manta

Composed 2023

Gemma Peacocke is a composer from Aotearoa New Zealand. She has a particular interest in interdisciplinary projects. Her first album, *Waves & Lines*, which sets poems by Afghan women, was released on New Amsterdam in March 2019.

Gemma is co-founder of the Kinds of Kings composer collective which is focused on amplifying and advocating for under-heard voices in classical music. A joint Ph.D. candidate in Music and Humanistic Studies at Princeton University, Gemma previously studied with Julia Wolfe at NYU Steinhardt and at the New Zealand School of Music.

Gemma has been commissioned by the Auckland Philharmonia, Christchurch Symphony Orchestra, Rochester Philharmonic, Third Coast Percussion, PUBLIQuartet, Bang on a Can, Rubiks Collective, Stroma, and Alarm Will Sound. She lives in Princeton with her family and her biggest fan, a standard poodle called Mila. She also spends as much time as possible in New Zealand.

Gemma says the following about her piece *Manta*:

During the summer months, oceanic manta rays swim in the seas around Aotearoa New Zealand, especially in the Outer Hauraki Gulf Tikapa Moana – Te Moananui-ā-Toi. They are known for their intelligence, enormous wingspan, and graceful, acrobatic movements through the water. Manta rays must keep moving to stay alive, and will perform somersaults in order to stay in one place to feed on clouds of krill. They are usually solitary creatures but will come together in areas where there is plenty of food before going on their separate journeys. So little else is known about manta rays that it is unclear whether they are present in Aotearoa year-round or migrate here only in the warmer months.

In Māori mythology, whai (stingrays) are often portrayed as *kaitiaki* (guardians), and in writing *Manta*, I was inspired by Wiremu Grace's story *Whaitere* about an enchanted stingray who visits her parents in the underworld before returning as a *kaitiaki* of the sea.

Instrumentation – two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings, and youth string orchestra

Duration – 5 minutes, 40 seconds



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

Composed 1878

In the tranquil setting of Clarens, Switzerland, during March 1878, Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky composed his only concerto for violin. This work would become one of the most beloved and challenging pieces in the violin repertoire. It emerged from a time of personal and emotional upheaval for Tchaikovsky, blending his profound musicality with his intense personal experiences.

The genesis of this concerto is intertwined with Tchaikovsky's complicated relationship with Iosif Kotek, a former student and close friend. Their time together in Switzerland, playing through various violin compositions, sparked the creation of the concerto. Tchaikovsky, recovering from a disastrous marriage and seeking solace, found in Kotek both a muse and a source of critical feedback.

The concerto opens with a lush orchestral introduction, leading to the solo violin's entrance with a melody that is both lyrical and emotionally charged. This theme, soon evolves into sections of increasing virtuosity, showcasing the violin's range and the performer's technical prowess.

The second movement, Canzonetta, offers a serene contrast with its simple, song-like melody. This movement, characterized by its sweet melancholy, serves as an emotional interlude before the dynamic finale. Initially, Tchaikovsky had written a different slow movement, but upon Kotek's suggestion, he replaced it with the now-beloved Canzonetta.

The final movement bursts forth with the energy and spirit of Russian folk music. The solo violin drives the movement forward with lively, dance-like themes and complex passages. This movement encapsulates Tchaikovsky's ability to combine lyrical beauty with rhythmic vitality and technical brilliance.

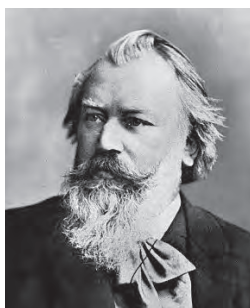
Despite its eventual acclaim, the concerto faced initial resistance. Tchaikovsky intended to dedicate it to Kotek but, fearing gossip, chose the renowned violinist Leopold Auer instead. Auer, however, deemed the concerto unplayable. The piece did not receive its premiere until 1881, performed by Adolph Brodsky in Vienna. Although the premiere was met with mixed reviews, including some harsh criticism, the concerto quickly gained popularity.

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Today, Tchaikovsky's Violin Concerto is celebrated for its emotional depth, lyrical melodies, and technical demands. It stands as a testament to Tchaikovsky's genius and his ability to transform personal turmoil into a work of profound beauty and enduring appeal.

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

Duration – 33 minutes



Johannes Brahms (1833–1897)

Symphony No. 4 in E Minor, Op. 98

Composed 1884-85

In his 1947 essay "Brahms the Progressive," Arnold Schoenberg extolled Johannes Brahms for his exceptional blend of inspiration and intellectual rigor. This unique combination is strikingly evident in Brahms' Fourth Symphony, a masterpiece seamlessly integrating emotional depth with structural complexity.

The 19th-century musical landscape was sharply divided between adherents of Richard Wagner and those of Brahms. Wagner, with his revolutionary "Music of the Future," pushed musical boundaries into new territories, believing Beethoven had exhausted the possibilities of symphonic form and urging future composers to innovate in other genres. Conversely, Brahms was often seen as a traditionalist, adhering to established forms and harmonic structures. However, this view overlooks Brahms' subtle yet profound innovations. Rather than abandoning established forms, Brahms reimagined them from within, combining Bach's contrapuntal techniques with Beethoven's harmonic explorations.

Brahms was deeply committed to the symphonic form, which he believed was in decline after Beethoven. His four symphonies were his efforts to demonstrate the genre's enduring relevance and potential for innovation. Composed during the summers of 1884 and 1885 in Müzzzuschlag, Austria, the Fourth Symphony stands as a testament to this commitment. In a letter to conductor Hans von Bülow, Brahms humorously compared the symphony to the local cherries, which he found unpalatable, expressing his doubts about the work. Despite these misgivings, von Bülow recognized its brilliance, describing it as possessing a "steely individuality" and unparalleled energy.

The premiere of Brahms' Fourth Symphony, performed by Hans von Bülow's Meiningen Orchestra on October 25, 1885, was warmly received. Eduard Hanslick, a prominent critic and lifelong supporter of Brahms, praised the

symphony for its inventive symphonic structure, mastery of counterpoint, harmony, and instrumentation. The audience's enthusiastic reception included requests for encores of the first and third movements, which Brahms obliged, conducting with even greater intensity.

The first movement exemplifies Brahms' economy of material. The main theme, constructed from a simple four-note motif, is developed with endless inventiveness. This lyrical melody is transformed and expanded throughout the movement, showcasing Brahms' genius for thematic development. Hanslick famously remarked that he felt as though he had been "beaten by two intelligent people," capturing the movement's intellectual rigor and emotional impact.

The second movement opens with a somber horn melody, transitioning from E minor to E major. This movement features excursions into the Phrygian mode, an ancient scale that imparts a unique, archaic quality. The initial austerity of the horns' melody gradually softens into the warm, lush harmonies characteristic of Brahms, culminating in a passionate cello melody.

Marked by its energetic and humorous character, the third movement is a scherzo that pays homage to Beethoven's lively spirit. Opening with a vigorous burst of sound, it continues with robust rhythms and playful digressions, allowing Brahms' sense of humor to shine through.

The final movement is a chaconne, inspired by the Baroque form of continuous variation. Brahms admired this form for its emotional depth and structural possibilities. In an 1877 letter to Clara Schumann, he expressed his fascination with the chaconne, noting its capacity to evoke "the deepest thoughts and most powerful feelings." The movement opens with powerful brass chords and unfolds through 32 variations and a coda, showcasing Brahms' mastery of form and his ability to blend structural rigor with profound expressiveness. The variations explore a wide range of emotions and textures, culminating in a powerful and exhilarating conclusion.

Brahms' Fourth Symphony is a cornerstone of the symphonic repertoire. It continues to captivate audiences with its structural innovations and deep emotional resonance. As Schoenberg highlighted, Brahms' work embodies a perfect balance of heart and mind, tradition and innovation. This symphony, performed countless times each year, remains a testament to Brahms' genius and enduring legacy in the world of classical music.

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

Duration – 39 minutes



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