

● PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ROSSEN MILANOV, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2024-2025



Beethoven's Sixth & Sō Percussion

Sō Percussion, percussion quartet

March 8 & 9

2024-25

ROSSEN MILANOV, Edward T. Cone Music Director

Saturday March 8, 2025, 8pm

Sunday March 9, 2025, 4pm

Richardson Auditorium



BEETHOVEN'S SIXTH & SÖ PERCUSSION

Rossen Milanov, conductor

Sö Percussion, percussion quartet

Carlos Simon

Four Black American Dances

- I. Ring Shout: Soulfully
- II. Waltz: With ebb and flow, rubato
- III. Tap!: Jubilantly
- IV. Holy Dance: Mysteriously

Viet Cuong

Re(new)al - Percussion Quartet Concerto

- I. Hydro
- II. Wind
- III. Solar

INTERMISSION

Ludwig van Beethoven

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68 "Pastoral"

- I. *Erwachen heiterer Empfindungen bei der Ankunft auf dem Lande*
(Awakening of Cheerful Feelings upon the Countryside)
- II. *Szene am Bach* (Scene by the Brook)
- III. *Lustiges Zusammensein der Landleute*
(Merry Gathering of Country Folk)
- IV. *Gewitter, Sturm* (Thunder, Storm)
- V. *Hirtengesang, frohe und dankbare Gefühlenach dem Sturm*
(Shepherd's song; joyful and thankful Feelings after the Storm)

**This concert is made possible in part through a generous gift
from Pete Taft, in honor of Mara Connolly.**

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.



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



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 Artists



SŌ PERCUSSION are celebrated for a dazzling range of work: for live performances in which “telepathic powers of communication” (The New York Times) bring to life the vibrant percussion repertoire; for an extravagant array of collaborations in classical music, pop, indie rock, contemporary dance, and theater; and for their work in education and community.

Committed to the creation and amplification of new work, Sō’s collaborative composition partners include David Lang, Julia Wolfe, Nathalie Joachim, Dan Trueman, Kendall K. Williams, Angélica Negrón, Shodekeh Talifero, Claire Rousay, Leilehua Lanzilotti, Bora Yoon, Olivier Tarpaga, Bobby Previte, Matmos, and many others.

The 2024-25 season hears Sō and Caroline Shaw (as well as Ringdown, Shaw’s duo) perform a program highlighting their 2025 Grammy® Award-winning album, *Rectangles and Circumstance*, at East Coast venues and in Europe.

Recent Sō highlights have included performances at Carnegie Hall, the Elbphilharmonie Hamburg, Big Ears, Cal Performances, at the Palau de la Musica Catalana in Barcelona, the Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, Penn Live Arts in Philadelphia, and more.

Their latest album, *Rectangles and Circumstance*, with Caroline Shaw, was released earlier this year on Nonesuch Records, following their debut co-written album with Shaw, *Let the Soil Play its Simple Part*. These add to a catalog of more than twenty-five albums featuring landmark recordings of works by David Lang, Steve Reich, Steven Mackey, and many more.

The members of Sō Percussion are the Edward T. Cone Performers-in-Residence at Princeton University. Rooted in the belief that music is an elemental form of human communication, and galvanized by forces for social change, Sō enthusiastically pursues a range of social and community outreach through their nonprofit umbrella, including an ongoing partnership with Pan in Motion; the Sō Laboratories concert series; a studio residency program in Brooklyn; and the Sō Percussion Summer Institute, an intensive two-week chamber music seminar for percussionists and composers.

Sō Percussion is Jason Treuting, Adam Sliwinski, Josh Quillen, and Eric Cha-Beach.

Program Notes



Carlos Simon

(b. 1986)

Four Black American Dances

Composed 2022

Dance has always been central to cultural identity, particularly in Black American communities, where it is woven into the fabric of social gatherings. From the era of slavery to Reconstruction and beyond, countless dances have emerged, reflecting the unique social and cultural experiences of Black Americans. This orchestral piece explores the music associated with four significant dance forms: the Ring Shout, Waltz, Tap Dance, and Holy Dance, each representing the diversity within Black American communities.

I. Ring Shout

The Ring Shout, a religious ritual rooted in the traditions of enslaved Africans, involves ecstatic, circular movements paired with shuffling feet and rhythmic clapping. To evoke its celebratory nature, the percussionist uses a large stick on a wooden board, complemented by fast, intricate string and woodwind passages.

II. Waltz

While cotillion balls were exclusive to white aristocracy, debutante balls became part of Black social circles in the 1930s through efforts by Black sororities and fraternities. The waltz, emblematic of these events, is highlighted in this movement with its elegance and refinement.

III. Tap!

Tap dance, characterized by rhythmic percussive footwork, is emulated in this piece through snare drum rim sounds and short, syncopated string and brass passages. Drawing on jazz harmonies, the movement captures the lively spirit of tap dance.

IV. Holy Dance

Vibrant worship traditions in Black Pentecostal and Holiness churches inspire the final movement. Mimicking the joyous spontaneity of praise breaks, the

orchestra creates a semi-improvised, ecstatic sound, led by the trombones and culminating in a climactic plagal “Amen” cadence.

This piece celebrates the rich history and enduring spirit of dance within Black American communities, honoring its profound cultural significance.

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

Duration – 15 minutes



Viet Cuong

(b. 1990)

Re(new)al - Percussion Quartet Concerto

Composed 2017-18

Composer's Note:

I have tremendous respect for renewable energy initiatives and the commitment to creating a new, better reality for us all. *Re(new)al* is a percussion quartet concerto that is similarly devoted to finding unexpected ways to breathe new life into traditional ideas, and the solo quartet therefore performs on several “found” instruments, including crystal glasses and compressed air cans. And while the piece also features more traditional instruments, such as snare drum and vibraphone, I looked for ways to either alter their sounds or find new ways to play them. For instance, a single snare drum is played by all four members of the quartet, and certain notes of the vibraphone are prepared with aluminum foil to recreate sounds found in electronic music. The entire piece was conceived in this way, and even the accompaniment was written these ideas in mind.

Cooperation and synergy are also core themes of the piece, as I believe we all have to work together to move forward. All of the music

Program Notes *continued*

played by the solo quartet is comprised of single musical ideas that are evenly distributed between the four soloists (for those interested, the fancy musical term for this is a *hocket*). The music would therefore be dysfunctional without the presence and dedication of all four members. For example, the quartet divvies up lightning-fast drum set beats in the second movement and then shares one glockenspiel in the last movement.

Re(new)al is constructed of three continuous movements, each inspired by the power of hydro, wind, and solar energies. The hydro movement transforms tuned crystal glasses into ringing hand bells as the wind ensemble slowly submerges the soloists in their sound. The second movement turns each member of the quartet into a blade of a dizzying wind turbine, playing seemingly-impossible 90's-inspired drum and bass patterns over a bass line that quotes and expands upon a few bars from one of my favorite drum and bass tracks by DJ Hype. The closing movement simulates a sunrise and evokes the brilliance of sunlight with metallic percussion instruments.

–Viet Cuong

Instrumentation – two flutes and two piccolos, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, piano, strings, and solo percussion quartet

Duration – 16 minutes



Ludwig van Beethoven

(1770-1827)

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68 "Pastoral"

Composed 1808

Beethoven's Symphony No. 6, the Pastoral Symphony, is a masterful fusion of musical expression and nature's imagery. One of only two symphonies to receive titles from the composer himself, it offers listeners an evocative

journey through the countryside—a landscape Beethoven held dear. Premiered on December 22, 1808, in a monumental concert at the Theater an der Wien, the symphony debuted alongside the Fifth Symphony, the Fourth Piano Concerto, the *Choral Fantasy*, and excerpts from the Mass in C Major. Despite the frigid hall and a four-hour runtime, the audience applauded with enthusiasm, captivated by Beethoven's profound artistry.

In the concert program that evening, Beethoven offered a rare guide:

Pastoral Symphony, more an expression of feeling than painting. First piece: pleasant feelings awakened on arriving in the countryside. Second piece: scene by the brook. Third piece: merry gathering of country people, interrupted by the fourth piece: thunder and storm, which breaks into the fifth piece: salutary feelings combined with thanks to the Deity.

These notes, though sparse, highlight the symphony's narrative progression. Beethoven, however, maintained that such titles were supplementary, remarking, "Anyone who has an idea of country life can make out for himself the intentions of the author without a lot of titles." His goal was not literal depiction but rather an evocation of the emotions inspired by nature.

The opening *Allegro ma non troppo* paints a serene arrival in the countryside. Its primary theme—a simple, cheerful melody introduced by the violins—is developed with playful repetition, embodying the unhurried joy of rural life. Owen Downes aptly observed that Beethoven transforms even the most minimal motifs into moments of "inexhaustibly fertile imagination." Repetition, far from being mundane, creates a captivating pastoral atmosphere, immersing the listener in the landscape.

The second movement, *Scene by the Brook*, continues this idyllic atmosphere, set in sonata-allegro form. Murmuring triplets in the second violins mimic the gentle flow of water, while flutes, oboes, and clarinets imitate the songs of a nightingale, quail, and cuckoo in a passage Beethoven humorously described as "nothing but a joke." Yet, the movement's tranquil beauty and layered orchestration capture the essence of a serene afternoon by a flowing stream. The delicate interplay between instruments evokes a vivid sense of natural wonder, underscoring Beethoven's affinity for outdoor life.

The Merry Gathering of Country Folk follows, offering a lively scherzo that parodies rustic village dances. Beethoven's ear for the humorous shines here, as Anton Schindler recounted the composer mimicking the disjointed playing of amateur musicians. Notable is a comic bassoon line, caricaturing

an inept performer. This movement is interrupted by the *Thunderstorm*, a dramatic *Allegro in F minor*. Violent dissonances, timpani thunderclaps, and shrill piccolo lines create a tempest both natural and personal, reflecting Beethoven's inner turmoil as his deafness progressed.

With the storm's end, the final movement, *Joyful and thankful Feelings after the Storm*, brings a sense of calm and reverence. Beginning with a pastoral melody in the clarinet and horn, this movement unfolds into a hymn of thanksgiving. Its themes, rooted in simplicity, are imbued with warmth and optimism, echoing Beethoven's pantheistic view of nature as a reflection of the divine.

Ultimately, the Pastoral Symphony transcends mere depiction, balancing narrative suggestion and musical abstraction. It invites listeners to immerse themselves in Beethoven's deep love for nature and its ability to inspire awe, serenity, and gratitude. More than two centuries later, it continues to remind us of the timeless beauty found in both music and the natural world.

Instrumentation – two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, timpani, and strings

Duration – 39 minutes

~ Kenneth Bean

Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor
Princeton Symphony Orchestra

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

March 8-9, 2025

VIOLIN I

Basia Danilow*

Concertmaster

The George W. Pitcher Chair,

ENDOWED IN PERPETUITY

Emma Richman

The Yvonne Marcuse Chair,

In Memory of Mark M. Rutzky

Giancarlo Latta

Cheng-Chih Kevin Tsai

Ruotao Mao

Margaret Banks

Tara A. Pagano-Toub

Coco Ziyao Sun

Linda Howard

Virgil Moore

VIOLIN II

Cameron Chase**

The B. Sue Howard Chair

Yebin Yoo

Sam Parrini

Julia Hwang

Fengwan Chen

Christine Wu

Cheng-Hsun David Tsai

Diana Dohyung Kim

VIOLA

Stephanie Griffin*

The Harriet & Jay Vawter Chair

Chieh-Fan Yiu

Beth Meyers

Jacqueline Watson

Hannah Burnett

Cameren Anai Williams

CELLO

Branson Yeast**

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

Elizabeth Loughran

Robin Park

Nagyeom Jang

Jasmine Pai

Jumi Lee

Noah Chen

BASS

John Grillo*

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

Stephen Groat

Devin Howell

Luke Rogers

FLUTE

Sooyun Kim**

The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair

Hilary Jones

Frances Tate



OBOE

Lillian Copeland*

The Cynthia & Robert Hillas Chair

Erin Gustafson

CLARINET

Pascal Archer*

The Richard J. & Neil Ann S. Levine Chair

Gi Lee

BASSOON

Brad Balliett*

The Cynthia & Robert Hillas Chair

Zach Feingold

HORN

Steven Harmon*

The Dr. Michael L. Barnett Chair

Jonathan Clark

Colin Weyman

Emily Buehler

TRUMPET

Jerry Bryant*

The Donna & Donald Deieso Chair

Thomas Cook

Matt Gasiorowski

TROMBONE

Nicole Abissi**

The David A. Tierno Chair

Lars Wendt

The Lor & Michael Gehret Chair

James Rogers

TUBA

Jonathan Fowler*

TIMPANI

Jeremy Levine*

The Anne VanLent Chair

PERCUSSION

Greg Giannascoli**

The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair

Eric Borghi

Mika Godbole

HARP

André Tarantiles*

Anonymous Chair, given by a PSO friend in honor of all parents

PIANO

Ruoting Li**

*Principal player

** Guest principal player