

● PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ROSSEN MILANOV, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2024-2025



Rachmaninoff with Natasha Paremki

Natasha Paremki, piano Westminster Symphonic Choir

May 10 & 11

2024-25

ROSSEN MILANOV, Edward T. Cone Music Director

Saturday May 10, 2025, 8pm

Sunday May 11, 2025, 4pm

Richardson Auditorium



RACHMANINOFF WITH NATASHA PAREMSKI

Rossen Milanov, conductor

Natasha Paremski, piano

Westminster Symphonic Choir

Donald Nally, director

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

"Hymn of the Cherubim" from *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Op. 41

Johannes Brahms

Text by Friedrich Hölderlin

Schicksalslied, Op. 54 (Song of Destiny)

INTERMISSION

Sergei Rachmaninoff

Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30

- I. Allegro ma non tanto
- II. Intermezzo
- III. Finale

This concert is made possible in part through a generous gift from Thomas Bieler.

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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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 helming 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



With her consistently striking and dynamic performances, pianist **NATASHA PAREMSKI** reveals astounding virtuosity and voracious interpretive abilities. She continues to generate excitement from all corners as she wins over audiences with her musical sensibility and powerful, flawless virtuosity.

Ms. Paremski is a regular return guest of many major orchestras, including the San Francisco Symphony, Minnesota Orchestra, Oregon Symphony, Buffalo Philharmonic, and the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, among others.

In Europe, she has toured extensively, appearing with such orchestras as the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, the Tonhalle Orchester in Zurich, and the Moscow Philharmonic. She has given recitals in San Francisco, Seattle, Kansas City, at the Ravinia Festival, and abroad in Paris, London, Tokyo, and Buenos Aires.

The 2024-25 season finds Ms. Paremski appearing with the orchestras of San Antonio, Knoxville, Nashville, Rochester, Duluth, and Tallahassee, among others.

Natasha Paremski was awarded several prestigious prizes at a very young age, including the Gilmore Young Artists prize in 2006 at the age of eighteen. Her first recital album was released in 2011 to great acclaim and was re-released on the Steinway & Sons label. In 2012, she recorded Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 1 and Rachmaninoff's Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini with the Royal Philharmonic on the orchestra's label distributed by Naxos.

Natasha began her piano studies at the age of four and then studied at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and at the Mannes College of Music, from which she graduated. At the age of fifteen, she debuted with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and recorded two discs with the Moscow Philharmonic Orchestra.

Natasha is based in New York where she is artistic director of the New York Piano Society, a non-profit organization that supports pianists whose professions lie outside of music.

natashaparemski.com

Westminster Symphonic Choir



Recognized as one of the world's leading symphonic choral ensembles, the **WESTMINSTER SYMPHONIC CHOIR**, conducted by Donald Nally, has recorded and performed with major orchestras under virtually every internationally acclaimed conductor of the past 90 years.

The choir first performed in Princeton in 1934 when it joined The Philadelphia Orchestra and Leopold Stokowski to

perform Bach's Mass in B Minor in the Princeton University Chapel to celebrate the move of Westminster Choir College to New Jersey. Recent seasons have included a performance of Holst's *The Planets* with The Philadelphia Orchestra conducted by Cristian Măcelaru; the premiere of Machover's *Philadelphia Voices* with The Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Yannick Nézet-Séguin; Mozart's Mass in C Minor with the Orchestra of St. Luke's conducted by Pablo Heras-Casado; Handel's *Messiah* with the New York Philharmonic conducted by Andrew Manze; and Beethoven's Symphony No. 9 and Mozart's Requiem with the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Rossen Milanov. The choir can be heard on recordings with Leonard Bernstein and the New York Philharmonic, and most notably, Bernstein's MASS with The Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, released on the Deutsche Grammophon label, and the Benjamin Britten *War Requiem* with the New York Philharmonic, conducted by Kurt Masur.

Recently, the choir performed Handel's *Messiah* with the Orchestra of St. Luke's using a new libretto in Spanish, under the baton of Reuben Valenzuela of the Bach Collegium San Diego. The choir also performed Orff's *Carmina Burana* under conductor Jenny Wong of the LA Master Chorale. The Westminster Symphonic Choir was featured on the 30th Anniversary broadcast of *Christmas with Westminster: An Evening of Readings and Carols* available across 350 public television stations nationwide and on PBS Passport during the holiday season, in addition to the release of a 2-CD set of the complete performance. In spring 2024, the choir performed Orff's *Carmina Burana* in Carnegie Hall with the Orchestra of St. Luke's and the Young People's Chorus of New York under the direction of Tito Muñoz.

Donald Nally, director

Annie McCasland and **Katelyn Reinhard**, graduate assistant conductors

Nidhi Advani	Claire Fritz	Abigail A. Rose
Nathan Anderson	Jiayun Gao	Ricky Sazon Salazar
Emilie Beals	Sean D. Haugh	Kev Schneider
Jessica Bella	Lucas Heredia	Bailey Shay
Mackenzie J. Bella	Grisha P. Ivanov	Benjamin Shively
Elizabeth Berger	Christian Gray Johnson	Bennett Spotts
Mackenzie Berry	Ben Kirk	Jennie Mae Sprouse
Katrina Blowitski	Maddy Kushan	Alastair Stewart
Cherisse R Bonefont	Jessica Koscak	Arseniy Vasilyev
Victoria Borrelli	Alyssa M. Lester	Sarah Vawdrey
Maxwell Brey	Duomi Liu	Julia Wilder
William Burton	Josh Lisner	Jackson Williams
Jacqueline Burkholder	Michael Martin	
Kevin Catalon	Annie McCasland	
Emma Clark	Alex Meakem	
Grace Comeau	Samuel Messenger	
Maya Cooper	Kianna Mitchner	
Abi Culkin	Jessica Moreno	
Roy DeMarco	Tim Morrow	
Jessie Zixi Deng	James Moyer	
Skylar Derthick	Sarah Ounsworth	
Olivia Dixon	Daniel Piver	
Diego Dominguez	Juliana Rappaport	
Alexa Farah	Katelyn Reinhard	
Sarah Febonio	Brenna Richard	

Sung Texts

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

"Hymn of the Cherubim"

from *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Op. 41

Херувимская песнь

Иже херувимы тайно образующе,
и Животворящей Троицѣ трисвятую пѣснь припѣвающе,
Всякое нынѣ житейское отложимъ попеченіе.
Яко да Царя всѣхъ подѣнимъ,
ангельскими невидимо доприносима чинми.
Аллилуіа.

Cherubic Hymn

Let us who mystically represent the Cherubim,
and who sing to the life-giving trinity the thrice-holy hymn,
let us now lay aside all earthly cares
that we may receive the King of all,
escorted invisibly by the angelic orders.
Alleluia.

Sung Texts *cont'd* _____

Johannes Brahms

Schicksalslied, Op. 54 (Song of Destiny)

"Hyperions Schicksalslied" (Hyperion's Song of Destiny)

by Friedrich Hölderlin (1770-1843)

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Ihr wandelt droben im Licht
Auf weichem Boden, selige Genien!
Glänzende Götterlüfte
Rühren euch leicht,
Wie die Finger der Künstlerin
Heilige Saiten.

Schicksallos, wie der schlafende
Säugling, atmen die Himmlischen;
Keusch bewahrt
In bescheidener Knospe,
Blühet ewig
Ihnen der Geist,
Und die seligen Augen
Blicken in stiller
Ewiger Klarheit.

Doch uns ist gegeben,
Auf keiner Stätte zu ruh'n;
Es schwinden, es fallen
Die leidenden Menschen
Blindlings von einer
Stunde [zur]1 andern,
Wie Wasser von Klippe
Zu Klippe geworfen,
Jahrlang in's Ungewisse hinab.

You wander above in the light
on soft ground, blessed genies!
Blazing, divine breezes
brush by you as lightly
as the fingers of the player
on her holy strings.

Fateless, like sleeping
infants, the divine beings breathe,
chastely protected
in modest buds,
blooming eternally
their spirits,
and their blissful eyes
gazing in mute,
eternal clarity.

Yet there is granted us
no place to rest;
we vanish, we fall -
the suffering humans -
blind from one
hour to another,
like water thrown from cliff
to cliff,
for years into the unknown depths.

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

May 10-11, 2025

VIOLIN I

Basia Danilow*

Concertmaster

The George W. Pitcher Chair,

ENDOWED IN PERPETUITY

Giancarlo Latta

The Yvonne Marcuse Chair,

In Memory of Mark M. Rutzky

Cameron Chase

Cheng-Chih Kevin Tsai

Sam Parrini

Margaret Banks

Fengwan Chen

Erica Tursi

Linda Howard

Coco Ziyao Sun

VIOLIN II

Sammy Andonian**

The B. Sue Howard Chair

Tara A. Pagano-Toub

Hava Polinsky

Virgil Moore

Cheng-Hsun David Tsai

Messiah Ahmed

Diana Dohyung Kim

Yuyu Ikeda

VIOLA

Stephanie Griffin*

The Harriet & Jay Vawter Chair

Rosemary Nelis

Beth Meyers

Jacqueline Watson

Cameren Anai Williams

Carlos Walker

CELLO

Sofia Nowik**

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

Elizabeth Loughran

Iona Batchelder

Nagyeom Jang

Jasmine Pai

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

Gilles Cheng**

The Cynthia & Robert Hillas Chair

Matthew Maroon

CLARINET

Pascal Archer*

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

Gi Lee

BASSOON

Jensen Bocco**

The Cynthia & Robert Hillas Chair

Zach Feingold

HORN

Colby Kleven**

The Dr. Michael L. Barnett Chair

Rachel Nierenberg

Jisun Oh

Joshua Schwartz

TRUMPET

Jerry Bryant*

The Donna & Donald Deieso Chair

Grace O'Connell

TROMBONE

Connor Rowe*

The David A. Tierno Chair

Lars Wendt

The Lor & Michael Gehret Chair

James Rogers

TUBA

Jonathan Fowler*

TIMPANI

Elliot Beck**

The Anne VanLent Chair

PERCUSSION

Phyllis Bitow*

The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair

Greg Giannascoli

*Principal player

**Guest principal player

Program Notes



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

(b. 1840-1893)

"Hymn of the Cherubim" from *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Op. 41

Composed 1878

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky's "Hymn of the Cherubim," from his *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom*, Op. 41, is one of the most sublime and deeply spiritual works in the choral repertoire. Composed in 1878, this setting of the ancient Orthodox text exemplifies Tchaikovsky's ability to fuse traditional Russian liturgical music with his own expressive harmonic language, creating a work that is both reverent and emotionally resonant.

The *Liturgy of St. John Chrysostom* is one of the principal services of the Eastern Orthodox Church, and Tchaikovsky's setting was groundbreaking as one of the first concert-style choral works based on the Russian liturgical tradition. Though initially met with resistance from ecclesiastical authorities, who deemed it too modern for sacred use, the work has since become a cornerstone of Orthodox choral music and opened the door for future composers – like Rachmaninoff and Gretchaninov – to explore similar territory with greater freedom.

The "Hymn of the Cherubim" is the most well-known movement of the liturgy, capturing the essence of divine worship with its rich, flowing textures and profound sense of serenity. The text – "Let us who mystically represent the Cherubim" – calls upon worshippers to lay aside all earthly cares in preparation for the Eucharist. Tchaikovsky's setting achieves a transcendent quality through long, arching phrases, lush harmonies, and a gradual build toward an ethereal climax before dissolving into contemplative stillness, as if suspended in sacred space.

Unlike his symphonic and operatic works, this piece reveals a different side of Tchaikovsky – one deeply connected to faith, introspection, and the Russian

choral tradition. Scored for unaccompanied mixed choir and relying on the depth of the basso profundo voices typical in Russian liturgy, the “Hymn of the Cherubim” remains a masterpiece of sacred choral music, evoking a timeless sense of awe and reverence that continues to move audiences and performers alike across centuries and cultures.

Instrumentation – SATB choir

Duration – 7 minutes 30 seconds



Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Schicksalslied

Composed 1868-71

Brahms began *Schicksalslied* in the summer of 1868 while visiting composer Albert Dietrich in Oldenburg, Germany. One morning, while waiting to tour the shipyards at Wilhelmshaven – a curious fascination of his, despite his lifelong reluctance to set foot on a ship – he discovered Friedrich Hölderlin’s novel *Hyperion* and was deeply moved by the poem “*Hyperions Schicksalslied*.” That very day, Brahms was found sitting alone by the sea, sketching what would become the first drafts of the piece. Although inspired immediately, he wrestled for several years with how to reconcile the poem’s form and message with his own musical instincts.

Hölderlin’s poem is divided into two stanzas: a luminous portrayal of divine beings who dwell in eternal light, followed by a grim depiction of humankind, suffering blindly under the weight of fate. Brahms found it difficult to end the piece with the poem’s bleakness. He initially considered reprising the opening choral section, but conductor Hermann Levi convinced him otherwise.

Program Notes continued _____

Instead, Brahms concluded the work with a purely orchestral epilogue – a transformed restatement of the opening material – that suggests solace without denying sorrow.

The structure is as compelling as the music itself. The serene opening, in E-flat major, evokes the timeless realm of the gods. The second section, shifting abruptly to C minor and a more urgent tempo, portrays the turbulence of human existence. The final orchestral return, unexpectedly set in C major, introduces ambiguity: does the music suggest divine grace touching the human world, or does it emphasize the distance between the two realms?

This ending reflects Brahms's worldview – philosophical, agnostic, yet deeply compassionate. Like his German Requiem, *Schicksalslied* offers consolation not through doctrine, but through beauty and understanding. Combining rich orchestration, emotional depth, and a bold formal approach, *Schicksalslied* stands as a profound and enduring achievement—short in duration but monumental in spirit.

Instrumentation – two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, three trombones, timpani, strings, and SATB choir

Duration – 18 minutes



Sergei Rachmaninoff

(1873-1943)

Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30

Composed 1909

Composed in 1909 and premiered that November in New York with Walter Damrosch conducting, Rachmaninoff's Third Piano Concerto has earned a reputation as one of the most formidable and emotionally powerful concertos

in the piano repertoire. The story behind its composition is filled with mystery and quiet urgency. Rachmaninoff, never one to speak easily about his creative process, made no mention of the piece to his family until it was finished. It was likely composed at Ivanovka, his beloved summer retreat in the Russian countryside, a place of renewal where natural beauty often stirred his musical imagination. "They come: all voices at once," he once wrote of his inspiration, "Not a bit here, a bit there. All."

Part of his motivation may have been pragmatic. The dreaded prospect of an American tour loomed – a financially rewarding but emotionally taxing journey that he faced with growing reluctance. The new concerto became both a creative outpouring and a necessity. While the premiere with Damrosch was respectable, it was the second New York performance, conducted by Gustav Mahler, that Rachmaninoff remembered vividly: "He devoted himself to the concerto until the accompaniment, which is rather complicated, had been practiced to the point of perfection."

Despite Mahler's advocacy, the piece was long neglected due to its notorious difficulty. Even the great Joseph Hofmann, to whom the work was dedicated, never performed it publicly. It wasn't until the 1930s, when Vladimir Horowitz took it up, that the concerto began to receive the recognition it deserved. Today it stands as a cornerstone of the Romantic concerto tradition, its reputation for technical challenge matched only by its sweeping lyricism and emotional range.

The work opens with a simple, haunting theme played in octaves by the soloist. "It simply 'wrote itself,'" Rachmaninoff recalled. This melody – subdued, even tentative – becomes the seed from which the entire piece grows. The first movement unfolds in waves, alternating between introspection and explosive virtuosity. A second, more lyrical theme offers contrast, and the massive cadenza, among the most difficult in the repertoire, weaves together both themes into a thundering, climactic moment. The movement ends with a quiet coda, a moment of breath after a long ascent.

The second movement, marked *Intermezzo: Adagio*, opens with a sighing theme in the winds. The piano enters with a chromatic lament, soon evolving into something warmer and dreamlike. The middle section – *Scherzando* – is light, animated, and filled with dazzling figuration for the soloist. This material,

however, grows out of the first movement's main theme, giving the concerto a sense of thematic unity. As the second movement closes, it flows seamlessly into the finale.

The third movement bursts forth with energy. Its principal theme, based on a bold rhythmic motive, recalls a Russian dance. But true to Rachmaninoff's architectural instinct, the development is anything but straightforward. The movement is a set of variations – not just on new material, but on ideas from earlier in the concerto, especially the lyrical second theme of the first movement. This cyclical structure lends the piece a sense of organic wholeness, as if the music has grown naturally from a single seed. The climactic reprise is thrilling: soaring piano lines, pounding chords, and a relentless drive culminate in a blazing Presto coda, ending with a rhythmic signature that many believe mimics the syllables of the composer's name.

Rachmaninoff's Third is not only a staggering display of pianistic prowess; it is also a deeply expressive, soul-searching journey. The work reveals the composer's capacity to merge discipline with passion, architecture with emotional immediacy. It is music of longing, grandeur, and fire – and a monument to the Romantic spirit in a rapidly changing world.

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

Duration – 39 minutes

~ Kenneth Bean
Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor
Princeton Symphony Orchestra