

PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ROSSEN MILANOV, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2021-2022



4 November 2021 • Shai Vosner, piano • 7:30pm
VOSNER PLAYS MOZART

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2021-22

ROSSEN MILANOV, Edward T. Cone Music Director

Thursday November 4, 2021, 7:30pm
Matthews Theatre, McCarter Theatre Center

PRINCETON
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

WOSNER PLAYS MOZART

Rossen Milanov, conductor

Shai Wosner, piano

Evan Williams

The Dream Deferred

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart

Piano Concerto No. 15 in B-flat Major,
K. 450

- I. Allegro
- II. Andante
- III. Allegro

INTERMISSION

Franz Schubert

Symphony No. 4 in C Minor, D. 417

- I. Adagio molto – Allegro vivace
- II. Andante
- III. Menuetto. Allegro vivace - Trio
- IV. Allegro

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.



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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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Guest Artist



Pianist **SHAI WOSNER** has attracted international recognition for his exceptional artistry, musical integrity, and creative insight.

Mr. Wosner is Resident Artist of Peoples' Symphony Concerts (PSC) from 2020 to 2023. Among the works he performs in 2021-22 is a new PSC commission, *Variations on a Theme of FDR*. The work is a suite of five variations by five different composers—Derek Bermel, Anthony Cheung, John Harbison, Vijay Iyer, and Wang Lu. Each variation is inspired by the story of a particular immigrant chosen by each composer.

In spring 2022, he curates and launches a new annual festival at Bard College Conservatory of Music titled "Signs, Games & Messages" after the collection of pieces by György Kurtág. He was recently named to the Conservatory's piano faculty.

In addition to his performance with the PSO, Mr. Wosner's 2021–22 season includes Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto with the Jerusalem Symphony and at the Metropolitan Museum of Art with The Orchestra Now, a week-long residency at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, plus concerts with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, the East Coast Chamber Orchestra, the Albany Symphony, and performances around the U.S. as part of the Zukerman Trio with violinist Pinchas Zukerman and cellist Amanda Forsyth.

Mr. Wosner records for Onyx Classics. He is a recipient of Lincoln Center's Martin E. Segal Award, an Avery Fisher Career Grant, and a Borletti-Buitoni Trust Award. Born in Israel, he enjoyed a broad musical education from a very early age, studying piano with Opher Brayer and Emanuel Krasovsky, as well as composition, theory, and improvisation with André Hajdu. He later studied at The Juilliard School with Emanuel Ax.

shaiwosner.com

Photo credit: Marco Borggreve

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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November 4, 2021

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Basia Danilow

Concertmaster

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Cherry Yeung

Cheng-Chih Kevin Tsai

Ruotao Mao

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Rolf Haas

VIOLIN II

Krzysztof Kuznik**

The B. Sue Howard Chair

Michelle Brazier

Abigail Hong

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VIOLA

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John Grillo*

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Chair***

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Stephen Groat

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The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair

Mary Schmidt

OBOE

Roni Gal-Ed**

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Mekhi Gladden

CLARINET

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

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Hanul Park

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TIMPANI

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Program Notes



Evan Williams

(b.1988)

The Dream Deferred

Composed 2017

Drawing from inspirations as diverse as Medieval chant to contemporary pop, the music of composer and conductor Evan Williams explores the thin lines between beauty and disquieting, joy and sorrow, and simple and complex, while often tackling important social and political issues. Originally from the Chicago area, Williams currently resides in Memphis, TN, where

he is assistant professor of music and director of instrumental activities at Rhodes College. Williams' catalogue contains a broad range of work, from vocal and operatic offerings to instrumental works, along with electronic music. His work has been commissioned and performed by renowned ensembles and soloists worldwide.

Composer's note:

The Dream Deferred was commissioned by the activist orchestra, The Dream Unfinished for their 2017 season "Raise Your Hand," which draws attention to the school-to-prison pipeline. The title of the work and its movements are inspired by the Langston Hughes poem "Harlem" in which he asks, "What happens to a dream deferred?"

The school-to-prison pipeline is a prime example of a dream deferred. Young children of color, especially Black and Latino males, are promised a good education, thus enabling them to succeed in society. Instead, they are often labeled as "aggressive," "thugs," and "super-predators," are subject to disproportionate policing of their communities as their white schoolmates, and receive harsher sentencing as well. Thus the dream of "life, liberty, and pursuit of happiness" is deferred and denied.

Throughout the poem, Hughes asks various questions concerning the fate of the dream deferred: "does it dry up," "or fester like a sore," "or crust and sugar over," "or does it explode?" This angry explosion of frustration and pain begins the work, while the despair of the dried-up dream ends it.

Melodies written by students of the Corona Youth Music Project, UpBeat NYC, Washington Heights Inwood Music Project, and the Youth Orchestra of St. Luke's were incorporated into this work.

Instrumentation – strings and harp

Duration – 10 minutes



Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756-1791)

Concerto for Piano and Orchestra No. 15 in B-flat Major, K. 450

Composed 1784

Mozart composed his twenty-seven piano concertos over the full span of his life. They form a record of the compositional evolution of both his piano writing and his treatment of the orchestra. Written as a vehicle for Mozart himself at the piano, the works were both

an important tool for promoting his work as a composer and performer and a deeply personal expression of his musical personality. After moving to Vienna in 1781, Mozart began organizing subscription concerts of his music, which established his place as a leading virtuoso pianist. These concerts were extremely successful, and they afforded Mozart and his new wife Constanze a more luxurious lifestyle than they had previously enjoyed.

During his early years in Vienna, Mozart's musical style evolved rapidly. The stimulation of Viennese musical life included participation in a lively community of composers, performers, and music lovers. He also had increased exposure to the works of Bach and Handel, and met Franz Joseph Haydn and heard Haydn's latest works. Mozart's incorporation of these influences can be seen in the six string quartets he composed between 1782 and 1785, which he dedicated to Haydn.

In a letter to his father, Leopold, Mozart described his new concerto K. 450 and its companion piece K. 451 as "*both concertos to make you sweat.*" K. 450 is considered one of the most technically demanding among Mozart's piano concertos, not only among the first fifteen, but among them all. A notable feature of this concerto is Mozart's use of the winds. In prior works, the winds had been used to add color and substance to the orchestra, but

in this piece they take on a far greater independence, offering an additional level of dialogue between the solo piano, the strings, and the winds. In the last movement, a flute joins the oboes, bassoons, and horns, for even greater timbral variety.

The first movement Allegro immediately establishes the independence of the winds. They open the work with the first theme, which unfolds in a back-and-forth dialogue with the strings. What sets Mozart's music apart from that of his contemporaries is his combination of a richly balanced underlying musical architecture with seemingly endless variety at the surface level. We see this in the first movement of K. 450, in which the harmonic structure of the first eight measures is replicated in much of the melodic material throughout the movement. Mozart uses changes of key and musical texture, different styles of piano figuration, changes in instrumentation, contrast between high and low register of the piano and the orchestra, rising figures versus falling figures, dynamic contrast of loud and soft material, and contrasting characters and harmonic rhythm to provide constant interest and surprise as he plays with his material. Part of the technical difficulty of this work is the independence of the two hands of the piano, which often take on melodic and virtuosic accompanimental roles simultaneously. Unlike many of his concertos, Mozart wrote out cadenzas for K. 450, so we are treated to yet more examples of his fruitful imagination.

The second movement Andante is a comparatively simple set of variations, but with similarly stunning inventiveness. The piano plays an ornamented variation of each orchestral statement, and as the movement progresses, there is increasing variety in the dialogue between the piano and the different sections of the orchestra.

In the final Allegro we are treated to Mozart's playful humor. The piano part is especially challenging in this movement, and Mozart seems to try to trick the audience into thinking that he is struggling to keep up by composing sections in which the two hands are intentionally offset rhythmically from one another and the rhythm itself gets off-kilter. It is a work of confident, high spirited delight.

Instrumentation – solo piano, one flute, two oboes, two bassoons, two horns, and strings

Duration – 25 minutes



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Franz Schubert

(1797-1828)

Symphony No. 4 in C Minor, D. 417

Composed 1816

On June 13, 1816 Franz Schubert wrote the following entry in his journal in response to a performance of an unnamed work by Mozart that he had heard:

This day will haunt me for the rest of my life, as a bright, clear, and a lovely one. Gently, and as from a distance, the magic tones of Mozart's music sound in my ears. With what alternate force and tenderness, with what masterly power did Schlesinger's playing of that music impress it deep, deep in my heart! Thus do these sweet impressions, passing into our souls, work beneficently on our inmost being, and not time, nor change of circumstance, can obliterate them. In the darkness of this life they show a light, a clear beautiful distance, from which we gather confidence and hope. O Mozart, immortal Mozart! how many and what countless images of a brighter, better world hast thou stamped upon our souls!

It is touching to hear Schubert's reverence of Mozart, who died in Vienna just six years before his birth. When he wrote this, the nineteen-year-old Schubert had just finished his Symphony No. 4, the "Tragic" Symphony, a few months earlier in April 1816. He had already composed over four hundred works, including several of the songs for which he is famous today, such as "*Gretchen am Spinnrade*" and "*Erlkönig*." Born in Vienna into a family of amateur musicians, Schubert's talent was recognized and fostered early, with lessons on the violin, piano, organ, singing, and harmony. In 1808, Schubert was selected as a member of the imperial court chapel choir, which included the opportunity to study at the Stadtkonvikt, one of the best schools in Vienna. There he received regular composition lessons with the court composer and Kapellmeister, Antonio Salieri, a contemporary of Mozart's and a teacher of Beethoven. The school had a pickup orchestra, of which Schubert soon became concertmaster, and which he occasionally conducted. Here he was exposed to orchestral music by Haydn, Mozart, and the early Beethoven symphonies. When Schubert's voice broke in 1813, he went to work for his father as an assistant school teacher, but he didn't enjoy the work and sought a way to support himself as a musician. Despite his prodigious and brilliant compositional output, Schubert was to struggle financially throughout his brief life.

Like most of Schubert's works, the Fourth Symphony was not performed publicly during his lifetime. He inscribed the title "Tragic" on it several years later, but this title is somewhat misleading, since the symphony is not uniformly dark. I interpret the title dramatically, along the lines of a romantic hero's struggles, both internal and with society. In 1822, Schubert wrote a prose piece, "The Dream." While "The Dream" is not necessarily autobiographical, this excerpt seems an appropriate description of Schubert's own dramatic mood shifts:

For long years I felt torn between the greatest grief and the greatest love... Whenever I attempted to sing of love, it turned to pain. And again, when I tried to sing of pain, it turned to love. Thus were love and pain divided in me.

In the brooding character of the opening of the symphony, we hear echoes of Beethoven's famous C minor works, such as the Coriolan Overture and the fifth symphony. Schubert was a torchbearer at Beethoven's funeral in 1828, though at this earlier stage of his life I am more aware of Schubert's emulation of the classicism of Mozart. The four movements of the symphony follow a conventional form, beginning with an Allegro vivace preceded by a slow introduction. This is followed by the lovely slow movement Andante and a third movement Allegro vivace, which continues the more hopeful character of the second movement. The last movement Allegro thrusts the listener back into a restless C minor, though despite the "Tragic" moniker, the work concludes in C major. Schubert's fourth symphony has been overshadowed by the famous "Unfinished" and the "Great" C major symphonies, but it is a finely crafted and delightful work that deserves to be heard far more often.

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

Duration – 31 minutes

~Nell Flanders

Assistant Conductor

Princeton Symphony Orchestra, 2018-2021

Visiting Lecturer in Orchestra Studies

University of Maryland, Baltimore County, 2021-present

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