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TAPintoPrinceton
Community News

Arts & Entertainment

Princeton Festival Makes a Creative Adjustment for COVID-19: It Will Move Outdoors, Under a Big Top, at Morven

Pop singer Storm Large and the Princeton Symphony Orchestra will open the revamped Princeton Festival under a big top on the grounds of Morven.
Photo by Laura Domela

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For the second time this month we are hearing about a creative reinvention of a long-standing Princeton institution in the face of ongoing concerns over COVID-19. In the first instance, the Arts Council, in concert with Princeton University, announced that it was converting Communiversity, the one-day mega-event in April, into a month-long series of events: April Arts.

On January 26, the Princeton Symphony Orchestra unveiled the remake of another longstanding Princeton arts tradition: The Princeton Festival, which has

previously consisted of multiple performances ranging from opera to classical music to pop events at several different indoor venues, from McCarter to Richardson Hall, and 185 Nassau Street, and more. This year's festival will still include different ensembles on multiple days, from June 10 through 25, but they will all be in one place, and the venue itself could be a showstopper.

The place is Morven, both the grounds and the buildings. In a press release the Festival describes the venue as "outdoors with an enormous, state-of-the art, clear-span tent. . . The performance structure is vast enough to encompass on-stage action and an orchestra pit, dressing rooms and other backstage areas, plus convertible seating plans designed to make every event a new audience experience. Lectures and receptions will take place in the Museum's Stockton Education Center, and the gardens and lawn areas will be available for picnicking and other outdoor activities, contributing to the festival vibe."

The revamped Princeton Festival came after several months of "behind-the-scenes planning following the PSO's merger with the Princeton Festival" in the summer of 2021.

"Building on the Princeton Festival's unique 17-year history, we are embarking on a new vision of a summer festival filled with wonderful performances in a unique summer setting," said Rossen Milanov, Princetonn Festival music director. "We are welcoming our audiences with a wide spectrum of exciting events ranging from orchestral and chamber music performances, fully staged operas, popular entertainment, jazz, and baroque music to events designed to be enjoyed by the whole family. I have always dreamed of PSO having a summer presence and look forward to connecting in a new and exciting way with our diverse community."

The schedule of events and performers for the June festival may be subject to some changes, but Milanov has lined up the renowned Signum Quartet, who will be presenting a two-evening cycle of Franz Schubert's late string quartets; the New York-based Baroque group, the Sebastians; and the double opera bill of Derrick Wang's Scalia/Ginsburg and Mozart's The Impresario as well as Britten's Albert Herring. There are also plans for pops concerts with the Princeton Symphony Orchestra and club-like evenings with jazz performance and cabaret nights, complete with VIP lounge.

The opening act may be a showstopper of its own: Pop singer Storm Large (that's her real name), appearing with the Princeton Symphony Orchestra. Large gained some fame as a co-lead singer with the multi-styled small orchestra/band Pink Martini, but she rose to another level in her 40s when she competed on CBS Television's reality show Rock Star: Supernova. Now in her early 50s, she also took Simon Cowell and other panelists by a, well, storm when she appeared on the show America's Got Talent, singing a smoldering rendition of "I've Got You Under My Skin" ([click here for the YouTube rendering](#)).

Additional information and a schedule of events will be released in early spring to coincide with tickets going on sale. More details will be posted at

princetonsymphony.org/festival.