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# Princeton Symphony Orchestra opens spring season for first time in 2 years

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Saturday, February 5, 2022 - Kenneth Bean, the (PSO) Princeton Symphony Orchestra's recently appointed Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor, makes his debut on the podium at the opening of the PSO 2022 spring season at Richardson Auditorium. Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com



By **Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com**

Winter weather be damned! The Princeton Symphony Orchestra begins its spring season this weekend at Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall on the campus of Princeton University, with full COVID safety measures in place, of course.

It marks the first time in two years that The Princeton Symphony Orchestra has graced the stage at Richardson. Some members of the brass and percussion sections had performed an outdoor concert on Palmer Square in October 2020.

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Kenneth Bean, the Princeton Symphony Orchestra's recently appointed Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor, leads the orchestra for both concerts, one on Saturday night and the other on Sunday afternoon.

"I was drawn to the piano, you know, playing at my grandmother's house," Bean said in a recent interview with [NJ.com](#). "But then in school, I was introduced to the trumpet ... You know, playing the trumpet, being around all my friends and just having that experience of just getting better and better at the instrument was great."

Throughout high school and college, Bean's musical horizons expanded and he gained "at least a very basic level of proficiency on lots of instruments from each family."

Bean is a conductor but also an educator, with a strong connection in his musical life with young people. His resume includes serving as conductor of the [Youth Orchestra](#) of Central Jersey's Symphonic Orchestra, [Junior String Philharmonic](#) and [Young People's Philharmonic](#), both of Lehigh Valley.

And he currently serves as assistant conductor of the [Symphony in C](#) Youth Orchestra in Collingswood and director/conductor of the [Young Musicians Debut Orchestra](#) of the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra Music Institute.

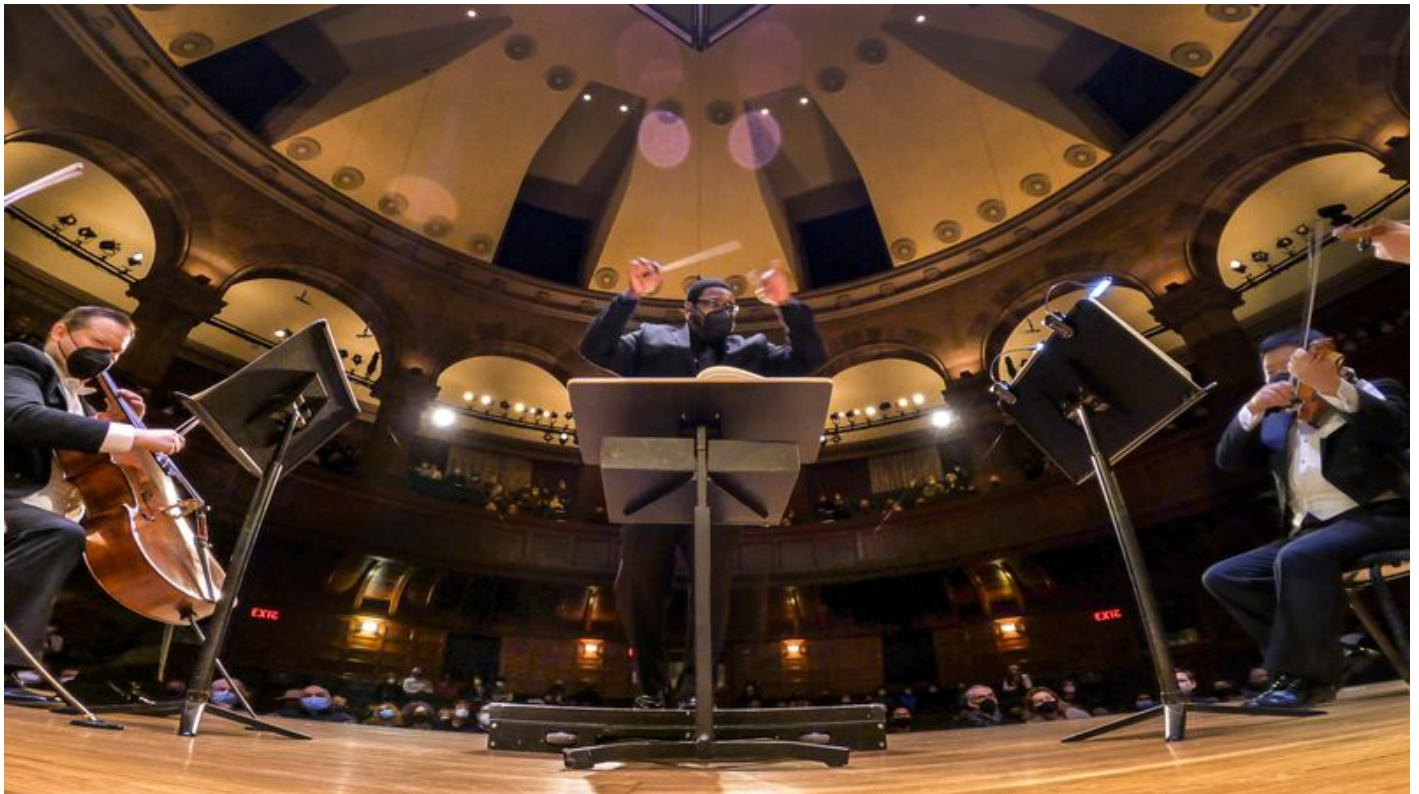
"During my college years, I was able to get my first conducting appointment of assistant conductor of the [Northern Ohio Youth Orchestra](#)," he said. "And I was very happy to get that position because I was able to really start giving back in the way that my teachers instilled this knowledge and this love of music in *me*."

A 2016 [industry-wide study](#) by The League of American Orchestras reports that African-Americans make up 1.8 percent of orchestras nationwide, so for Bean, being a conductor of color really means something to him. "Absolutely it does," he said. And again for him, it relates back to his calling of working with young people.

“We all know. It’s not something that you see every day,” he said. “A leadership role in front of an orchestra - it’s just not something many Black people are doing. So as an educator being in front of all these youth orchestras, I feel like it’s doing them quite a big service.”

He believes that seeing a person of color at the podium will help young people change their mindset and be able “to expect women, to expect Black people, to expect brown people, to expect any *one* to be able to step into this sort of role and just not having it be just like a white-oriented or white-led field.

“I think it’s very important that I’m able to do this,” he said.



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Saturday, February 5, 2022 - Kenneth Bean, left, the (PSO) Princeton Symphony Orchestra's recently appointed Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor making his debut on the podium at the opening of the PSO 2022 spring season at Richardson Auditorium, conducts guest Alexi Kenney likewise making his PSO debut with his interpretation of Jean Sibelius' Violin Concerto. Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

The two concerts also mark the PSO debut of violinist Alexi Kenney, presenting his interpretation of Jean Sibelius' Violin Concerto.

Bean called Jean Sibelius' Violin Concerto one of his favorites, which he has performed for many years as a trumpet player in orchestras.

Also on the program will be Samuel Coleridge-Taylor's Ballade in A Minor, Op. 33 and Antonín Dvořák's Symphony No. 9, "From the New World."

Bean was keen to include those two works, he says, because of the relationship between the two composers. "Dvořák was a big, big influence on Coleridge-Taylor," he said.

"From the New World" provides a window into Dvořák's interpretations of musical elements he encountered during visits to the United States in the late 19th century. And the present-day meaning of the title isn't lost on the conductor.



“We’re coming out of this pandemic era into really, this new world,” Bean said. “So just like that sort of idea, the new world symphony ushering in this new era that we find ourselves in. That sort of combined message is what I had in mind.”



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Saturday, February 5, 2022 - Kenneth Bean, the (PSO) Princeton Symphony Orchestra's recently appointed Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor, acknowledges applause as he takes the stage to make his debut on the podium at the opening of the PSO 2022 spring season at Richardson Auditorium. Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

### Kenneth Bean Conducts PSO in 2022 Season Opener



Tickets for the Feb. 6 performance at Richardson Auditorium start at \$20, youth (ages 5-17) are half price, and may be ordered through the Princeton Symphony Orchestra [website](#) or by calling 609-497-0020.