

• PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
ROSSEN MILANOV, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2023-2024



## BEETHOVEN'S FIRST PIANO CONCERTO

Saturday, May 11, 2024 - 8pm  
Sunday, May 12, 2024 - 4pm

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ROSSEN MILANOV, MUSIC DIRECTOR



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Richardson Auditorium

## BEETHOVEN'S FIRST PIANO CONCERTO

Rossen Milanov, conductor  
Sara Davis Buechner, piano

John Luther Adams  
(b. 1953)

*Become River*

Ludwig van Beethoven  
(1770-1827)

Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15

- I. Allegro con brio
- II. Largo
- III. Rondo: Allegro

INTERMISSION

Robert Schumann  
(1810-1856)

Symphony No. 4 in D Minor, Op. 120

- I. *Ziemlich langsam - Lebhaft*
- II. *Romanze: Ziemlich langsam*
- III. *Scherzo: Lebhaft*
- IV. *Langsam - Lebhaft*

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This concert is made possible in part through a generous gift from Cecilia and Michael Mathews.

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



## ABOUT THE ARTISTS



**Rossen Milanov**, conductor  
*Edward T. Cone Music Director*

Internationally renowned conductor and Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO) Edward T. Cone Music Director **Rossen Milanov** looks forward to collaborating in 2023-24 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, Chautauqua Symphony Orchestra, and chief conductor of the RTV Slovenia Symphony Orchestra in Ljubljana. 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's programming at the PSO embraces the standard repertoire, rarities, and premieres, performed by superb soloists and featuring celebrated American composers. His exuberant and acclaimed performances are characterized by sharp musical intellect, poetic eloquence, and artistic ingenuity.

Noted for his versatility, Mr. Milanov is also a welcomed presence in the worlds of opera and ballet. He has collaborated with Komische Oper Berlin (Shostakovich's *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk*), 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*). 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.



**Sara Davis Buechner, piano**

**Sara Davis Buechner** is one of the leading concert pianists of our time, praised worldwide as a musician of *“intelligence, integrity and all-encompassing technical prowess”* (New York Times). Japan’s *InTune* magazine says: *“When it comes to clarity, flawless tempo selection, phrasing and precise control of timbre, Buechner has no superior.”*

In her twenties, Ms. Buechner was the winner of a bouquet of prizes at the world’s première piano competitions – Queen Elisabeth of Belgium, Leeds, Salzburg, Sydney, and Vienna. She won the Gold Medal at the 1984 Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition, and was a Bronze Medalist of the 1986 Tchaikovsky International Piano Competition in Moscow.

With an active repertoire of more than 100 piano concertos ranging from A (Albeníz) to Z (Zimbalist) – one of the largest of any concert pianist today – she has appeared as soloist with many of the world’s première orchestras. Audiences throughout North America have applauded Ms. Buechner’s recitals in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, and the Hollywood Bowl; and she enjoys wide success throughout Asia where she tours annually.

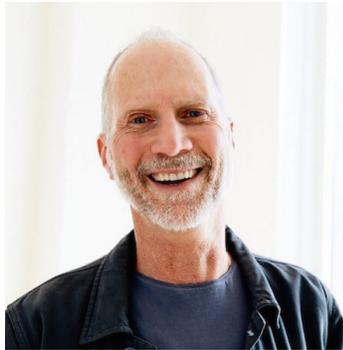
Sara Davis Buechner’s numerous recordings have received prominent critical appraisal. Her extensive discography includes music by Bach, Brahms, Busoni, Dvořák, Mozart, Stravinsky, and Turina; Hollywood piano concertos by Bernard Herrmann and Franz Waxman; rare American music of George Gershwin, Dana Suesse, Pauline Alpert, and Joseph Lamb; and the complete piano music of Miklós Rózsa. Her piano artistry may also be heard on the recent DVD of Carl Dreiser’s 1925 silent film *Master of the House*, available through the Criterion Collection.

Sara Davis Buechner is the most prominent transgender musician appearing on the classical concert stage today. She received the Eleanor Roosevelt Award of Brandeis University, and is a member of the National Museum of Women in the Arts. She often presents talks and workshops to LGBTQIA+ groups, and has received praise for her solo autobiographical theater show "Of Pigs and Pianos," which premièred at New York City's TheaterLab in 2021 to rave reviews.

Dr. Buechner is a professor of piano at Temple University in Philadelphia, and formerly taught at New York University and the University of British Columbia. She has presented lectures and masterclasses worldwide, is a regular adjudicator of prominent international piano competitions, and served as chief music editor for Dover Publications International. In 2022, Sara Davis Buechner marked her 35th year as a dedicated Yamaha artist.

*Photos by Yukiko Onley*

## NOTES ON THE MUSIC



**John Luther Adams**  
(b. 1953)

***Become River***  
Composed 2010

*Become River* is a contemporary classical composition that stands as a part of John Luther Adams' larger "Become" trilogy, which also includes *Become Ocean* and *Become Desert*. These works reflect Adams' deep engagement with nature, specifically his concern for the environment and climate change, as well as his interest in the vast, open spaces and elemental forces of nature.

Adams, whose work often draws inspiration from his many years living in Alaska, creates music that immerses listeners in a sensory and conceptual experience of the natural world. *Become River* was commissioned by the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and premiered in 2013. Like its companions in the trilogy, *Become River* explores thematic elements of nature's processes and cycles.

The composition is a flowing, evolving soundscape that suggests the journey of a river from its sources in the high mountains, through valleys and plains, to its confluence with the ocean. The music is characterized by its slowly evolving textures and harmonies, creating an immersive auditory experience that encourages listeners to contemplate their relationship with the natural environment. The work is structured to create a sense of movement and transformation, mirroring the course of a river's flow. Adams employs a spatial and temporal approach to composition, where the instruments are orchestrated in a way that their sounds seem to move and change across the performance space, echoing the way a river traverses and shapes the landscape.

*Become River* is notable for its minimalist aesthetic, with Adams utilizing sparse, yet evocative musical materials to build a piece that is both expansive and intimate. The composition invites listeners to reflect on the passage of time, the beauty of the natural world, and the interconnectedness of all things. In this way, *Become River* not only serves as a piece of music but also as an environmental statement, urging awareness and action in the face of global climate challenges. Through *Become River* and its companion pieces, John Luther Adams continues to solidify his reputation as a composer deeply inspired by and concerned with the natural world.

The composer says the following about the work:

Steven Schick and I were having dinner together.

I was just beginning work on a large-scale piece for the Seattle Symphony.

So when Steve asked me if I might be interested in composing a new piece for the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, I must have hesitated. Deftly, Steve asked me to tell him a little about the Seattle piece.

I went on at length about the music I'd begun to imagine, finally concluding: "It's called *Become Ocean*. The title comes from a poem that John Cage wrote in honor of Lou Harrison." Cage observes that the breadth and variety of Harrison's music make it "resemble a river in delta." He concludes that:

LiStening to it  
we becOme  
oceaN.

"So you're already composing a symphonic ocean," Steve said.

"Maybe for a smaller orchestra you could go ahead and compose that river in delta."

Steve had me, and I knew it. Within a week I'd begun work on *Become River*. From a single high descending line, this music gradually expands into a delta of melodic streams flowing toward the depths.

I now imagine this river and its related ocean as part of a larger series of pieces encompassing desert, mountain, tundra and perhaps other landscapes and waterscapes.

~John Luther Adams

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Instrumentation – *two flutes and two piccolos, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, timpani, percussion, and strings*

Duration – *16 minutes*

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**Ludwig van Beethoven**  
(1770-1827)

**Piano Concerto No. 1 in C Major, Op. 15**  
Composed 1795-95; completed 1800

The genesis of Beethoven's Piano Concerto in C Major traces back to a vibrant period of his life, following his permanent move to Vienna in 1794. This work, a monumental testament to Beethoven's evolving compositional voice, distinguishes itself with a blend of classical influences and unmistakable originality.

The concerto unfolds with an unadorned yet bold declaration in C major, an audacious start that strips away the ornate trappings of Beethoven's predecessors, leaving the raw materials of musical creation exposed. This simplicity serves as a foundation, from which Beethoven constructs a movement rich in thematic innovation and dynamic contrast.

Amidst the echoes of French Revolutionary martial music, the concerto navigates through a series of thematic explorations and key shifts, each unveiling a new facet of Beethoven's musical argument. The soloist's entry, an exercise in understated elegance, juxtaposes the orchestral assertiveness with introspective motifs. This dialogue between piano and orchestra evolves into a complex narrative, with the piano's cascading arpeggios and the reimagined second theme highlighting Beethoven's mastery in blending lyrical beauty with structural ingenuity.

The Largo, set in the serene key of A-flat major, offers a respite from the vigorous first movement. It is a realm of profound tranquility, where the clarinet engages in a poignant conversation with the piano. This movement, with its subtle shifts and delicate textures, emphasizes Beethoven's innovative use of sonority and harmonic direction. The interplay between soloist and orchestra, devoid of the second theme in its reprise, culminates in a coda that is both ethereal and introspective, showcasing Beethoven's ability to evoke a deep emotional landscape through restrained means.

The finale, composed under the pressure of an imminent premiere, is anything but an afterthought. It is a whirlwind of inventive motifs and rhythmic playfulness, marked by an "Allegro scherzando" that hints at the movement's jesting spirit. The main theme, a contredanse tinged with asymmetrical phrases and unexpected harmonic turns, is a testament to Beethoven's fondness for musical jokes and surprises. This movement traverses a wide emotional and thematic terrain, from the mischievous interludes to the pastoral reminiscences, culminating in a finale that is both exhilarating and unexpected.

Beethoven's first piano concerto, while marked as such in publication, was actually written second. It reveals a composer on the cusp of defining his own musical path, distinct from his predecessors Mozart and Haydn. The work not only showcases Beethoven's virtuosic prowess as a pianist but also his ambitious vision as a composer. Through its blend of classic form and innovative orchestration, the concerto stands as a pivotal piece in Beethoven's oeuvre, foreshadowing the revolutionary approach to form and harmony that would define his later works.

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Instrumentation – *flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, strings, and solo piano.*

Duration – *36 minutes*

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**Robert Schumann**  
(1810-1856)

**Symphony No. 4 in D Minor, Op. 120**  
Composed 1841; revised 1851

Robert Schumann's Symphony No. 4 in D Minor, Op. 120, embodies the essence of Romanticism, interweaving the threads of personal struggle, triumph, and the indomitable spirit of creative exploration. This work, originally composed in 1841 and

significantly revised a decade later, serves not only as a testament to Schumann's artistic evolution but also as a mirror reflecting the tumultuous journey of his life and the broader Romantic quest for deep emotional expression and innovative form.

Schumann's journey into the depths of symphonic composition was marked by significant personal and professional milestones. His early ambition to become a virtuoso pianist was tragically thwarted by a hand injury, leading to a period of deep despair. However, 1840—the year Schumann married the love of his life, Clara Wieck—marked a turning point, ushering in a year prolific in songwriting and laying the groundwork for his orchestral ambitions.

The Fourth Symphony's initial composition in 1841 was driven by a newfound confidence and a desire to explore beyond the conventional symphonic form. Inspired by his "year of song," Schumann sought to imbue the symphony with a lyrical, narrative quality, attempting to fuse the traditional four-movement structure into a cohesive, uninterrupted musical journey. However, the original version's premiere did not achieve the acclaim Schumann had hoped for, leading him to set the piece aside.

Ten years later, in 1851, Schumann revisited and extensively revised the symphony, enriching its orchestration and strengthening the thematic links between movements. This revised version, which premiered to great success and is the one most commonly performed today, showcases Schumann's matured vision and his innovative approach to thematic transformation—a technique that would influence future generations of composers.

The Fourth Symphony opens with a brooding introduction, setting a tone of introspective depth that permeates the entire work. Schumann's genius in thematic development is immediately evident, as motifs introduced in this somber opening reappear, transformed across the symphony's movements, binding the work together in a narrative of emotional and musical exploration.

The second movement, marked *Romanze*, presents a poignant contrast with its tender, song-like melodies. Here, the symphony delves into realms of delicate emotion, with solo passages for oboe and cello evoking a sense of intimate conversation.

The third movement, a vigorous *Scherzo*, reintroduces themes from the preceding movements, further illustrating Schumann's thematic interweaving. This movement sparkles with energy and playfulness, providing a counterbalance to the introspective moments that precede and follow it.

The finale is a triumphant resolution to the symphony's journey, merging the dramatic intensity of the opening with a sense of jubilant closure. Schumann's mastery of form and motif is on full display, as themes from earlier movements reemerge, transformed and unified in a major-key affirmation of joy and resilience.

Schumann's Symphony No. 4 stands as a pivotal work in the Romantic repertoire, bridging the lyrical expressiveness of early Romanticism with the thematic complexity and formal innovations that would characterize later developments in the symphonic tradition. Beyond its technical achievements, the symphony is a deeply personal work, reflecting Schumann's struggles, his moments of joy, and his unyielding commitment to artistic exploration.

In crafting this symphony, Schumann not only navigated his own creative and personal challenges but also contributed to the evolving narrative of Romantic music. The Fourth Symphony invites listeners into a world where the boundaries between life and art blur, where music serves as both a reflection of the soul and a canvas for innovation.

As we listen to Schumann's Fourth Symphony, we are reminded of the power of music to capture the depths of the human experience, to transform personal struggle into artistic beauty, and to continue to inspire generations of listeners and creators alike.

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

Duration – *28 minutes*

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

*Program continued...*

# MUSICIAN ROSTER

## 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 11 - 12, 2024

### VIOLIN I

Basia Danilow\*

*Concertmaster*

***The George W. Pitcher Chair,***

ENDOWED IN PERPETUITY

Matthew Hakkarainen

***The Yvonne Marcuse Chair,***

*in memory of Mark M. Rutzky*

Erica Tursi

Cheng-Chih Kevin Tsai

Ruotao Mao

Margaret Banks

Emma Richman

Justus Ross

Linda Howard

Diana Dohyung Kim

### VIOLIN II

Qianru Elaine He\*\*

***The B. Sue Howard Chair***

Iris Chen

Giancarlo Latta

Rita Wang

Cheng-Hsun David Tsai

Sammy Andonian

Andrew Semarasekara

Rachel Da Young Lim

### VIOLA

Stephanie Griffin\*

***The Harriet & Jay Vawter Chair***

Chieh-Fan Yiu

Beth Meyers

Jacqueline Watson

Hannah Burnett

Torron Pfeffer

### CELLO

Alistair MacRae\*

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

Elizabeth Loughran

Iona Batchelder

Talia Schiff

Alex Cox

Nicco Mazziotto

### BASS

John Grillo\*

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

Dan Hudson

Devin Howell

Sam Zagnit

### FLUTE

Sooyun Kim\*\*

***The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair***

Hilary Jones

### OBOE

Lillian Copeland\*

***The Cynthia & Rob Hillas Chair***

Erin Gustafson

### CLARINET

Pascal Archer\*

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

Gi Lee

### BASSOON

Joshua Butcher\*\*

***The Cynthia & Rob Hillas Chair***

Hanul Park

### HORN

Colin Weyman\*\*

***The Dr. Michael L. Barnett Chair***

Paige Quillen

Colby Kleven

Jisun Oh

### TRUMPET

Jerry Bryant\*

***The Donna & Donald Deieso Chair***

Donald Batchelder

### TROMBONE

Connor Rowe\*\*

***The David A. Tierno Chair***

Lars Wendt

***The Lor & Michael Gehret Chair***

James Rogers

**TIMPANI**

Jeremy Levine\*

*The Anne VanLent Chair***PERCUSSION**

Jeff Sagurton\*\*

*The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair*

Greg Giannascoli

The Princeton Symphony Orchestra is a member of the League of American Orchestras. Named musician chairs are made possible through meaningful gifts to the Orchestra's endowment and innovation funds.

\* Principal player

\*\* Guest principal player

## Fourth Annual Princeton Community Pride Picnic – May 31, 2024



**Princeton Community Pride Picnic**

**May 31, 2024**

**4:30 – 7:30pm**

Hinds Plaza, outside Princeton Public Library

Rain location: inside the library

Stop by our marketing table at this year's Pride Picnic at Princeton's Hinds Plaza for a chance to win tickets to the PSO's June 7-22 Princeton Festival! We look forward to welcoming newcomers and connecting with other organizations during this fun and festive outdoor event.

For details, visit <https://princetonlibrary.org/brochures/pride-picnic/>

## Save the Dates – June 7-22, 2024!



**The Princeton Festival**  
**June 7-22, 2024**  
At Morven Museum & Garden

Tickets are now available for the 2024 Princeton Festival, New Jersey's premier performing arts extravaganza. Enjoy beautiful music, opera, and more within our tented pavilion on the grounds of beautiful Morven Museum & Garden. With opportunities for picnicking, socializing, and exploring the Museum's main building and superb garden before events, the Princeton Festival is the place to be for relaxed, summertime entertainment!

For details, visit [princetonsymphony.org/festival](http://princetonsymphony.org/festival)

## Thank You for a Successful Gala!



**A Regency Gala REFASHIONED**  
**April 13, 2024**  
**Jasna Polana**

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this year's Gala at Jasna Polana. It was a tremendous evening and was our most successful fundraiser yet! Congratulations to our Gala Co-Chairs Jennifer Bednar and Alicia Merse; Steering Committee members Debora Haines and Stephanie Wedeking; and to PSO's Gala Committee for a fantastic event. Many thanks to our corporate sponsors and individuals who helped us surpass our fundraising goals.

*Pictured above: Executive Director Marc Uys, Gala Co-Chairs Jennifer Bednar and Alicia Merse, and Edward T. Cone Music Director Rossen Milanov (photo by T. Kevin Birch)*