

• PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ROSSEN MILANOV, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2025-2026

Mendelssohn & Tchaikovsky

Maxim Lando, piano

November 8 & 9

2025-26

ROSSEN MILANOV, Edward T. Cone Music Director



Saturday November 8, 2025, 7:30pm

Sunday November 9, 2025, 4pm

Richardson Auditorium

MENDELSSOHN & TCHAIKOVSKY

Rossen Milanov, conductor

Maxim Lando, piano

Gioachino Rossini

Overture to L'italiana in Algeri

Felix Mendelssohn

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90 "Italian"

- I. Allegro vivace
- II. Andante con moto
- III. Con moto moderato
- IV. Saltarello: Presto

INTERMISSION

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky

Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Major, Op. 44

- I. Allegro brillante e molto vivace
- II. Andante non troppo
- III. Allegro con fuoco

*Many thanks to Hiltons Princeton for their sponsorship of
Saturday evening's performance.*

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.



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



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 (NJSCA), 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 regularly performs at historic Richardson Auditorium on the campus of Princeton University.

Music Director_____



Edward T. Cone Music Director

ROSSEN MILANOV looks forward to collaborating in 2025-26 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



American pianist **MAXIM LANDO** was lauded by Anthony Tommasini in *The New York Times* for his "brilliance and infectious exuberance." Maxim first made international headlines performing together with Lang Lang, Chick Corea, and The Philadelphia Orchestra led by Yannick Nézet-Séguin at Carnegie Hall's 2017 Opening Night Gala. Since then, he has performed with major orchestras around the world including Cleveland Orchestra, Pittsburgh Symphony, Toronto Symphony, Israel Philharmonic, Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Mariinsky Theater Orchestra, Vancouver Symphony, Zurich Chamber Orchestra, St. Petersburg Symphony, and over 60 other orchestras across the United States and Europe.

Recent and upcoming highlights of 2025-26 include a 9-city-USA tour with the Czech National Symphony Orchestra; appearances with the Arizona Musicfest Festival Orchestra, Frankfurt Opera Museum Orchestra, Orquesta Clásica Santa Cecilia, Belgrade Philharmonic, Sophia Philharmonic, and the Baltimore, Buffalo, Columbus, Charleston, Anchorage, and Princeton Symphony Orchestras.

Awarded the 2025 Khaledi Prize for Excellence and Innovation in Classical Music from Festival Napa Valley, Maxim is also winner of the 2022 New York Franz Liszt International Competition, 2022 Vendome Grand Prize, and top prizes at both the 2024 Cleveland International Piano Competition and 13th International German Piano Award. Maxim is the recipient of a Gilmore Young Artist Award, and won the Young Concert Artists Susan Wadsworth International Auditions at age 16.

A frequent guest artist on the music festival scene, recent appearances have included The Gilmore, Aspen, Caramoor, Moritzburg, Dresden Music Festival, Kissinger Sommer, Mecklenburg-Vorpommern Festival, and Gower Festival in Wales, among others. He was invited by Lang Lang to perform for the historic opening of Steinway and Sons in Beijing.

Together with violinist Tassilo Probst, his album *Into Madness*, recorded by Bavarian Radio on Berlin Classics, was awarded a 2023 International Classical Music Award (ICMA) as best chamber music recording of the year.

Maxim is a Laureate of Artemisia Foundation, an alumnus of the Lang Lang International Music Foundation, and studies with long-time mentor Hung-Kuan Chen at The Juilliard School.

Program Notes



Gioachino Rossini (1792-1868)

Overture to *L'italiana in Algeri*

Composed 1813

Few composers could match Gioachino Rossini when it came to writing overtures that dazzle with humor, energy, and panache. His overtures have become beloved concert pieces, known for their effervescent spirit, sharp contrasts, and irresistible build-ups.

Among the most entertaining is the Overture to *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, composed in a matter of weeks and premiered in Venice on May 22, 1813, when Rossini was just 21 years old.

By that point, Rossini had already premiered the successful opera *Tancredi* earlier that year, and *The Italian Girl in Algiers* confirmed his status as the rising star of Italian opera. Though Rossini would go on to make important contributions to serious opera, his comic works—*The Barber of Seville*, *The Italian Girl in Algiers*, and others—remain his most enduring. Their clever plots, vibrant characters, and especially their overtures, have long outlived their origins on the operatic stage and continue to inspire performers and audiences around the world today.

The overture begins with a deceptive calm: pizzicato strings and a sudden orchestral jolt set the tone for the mischief to come. A plaintive oboe solo follows, tinged with exoticism to match the opera's North African setting. Then the allegro bursts forth, led by woodwinds in playful, galloping lines. Rossini's signature crescendo—a repeating figure that builds steadily in volume and intensity—makes several appearances, each more thrilling than the last.

Colorful, witty, and rhythmically propulsive, the overture reflects the opera's farcical plot involving shipwrecks, harems, mistaken identities, and a clever Italian heroine outwitting a blustering bey. Its infectious melodies and theatrical flair have made it a favorite of concertgoers, musicians, and cartoon soundtracks alike. In less than ten minutes, Rossini gives us a miniature comedy—no words needed—brimming with joy, charm, clever timing, and sheer musical fun for all listeners.

Instrumentation – one flute, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, timpani, and strings

Duration – 9 minutes



Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Symphony No. 4 in A Major, Op. 90 "Italian"

Composed 1833, revised 1834

In 1830, Felix Mendelssohn set off on a grand tour of Europe, encouraged by his family and the poet Goethe to experience firsthand the cultural richness of the continent. After exploring Scotland and England, he made his way to Italy, arriving in Venice in October. Over the next 10 months, Mendelssohn

soaked in the beauty of Florence, Rome, Naples, and the surrounding countryside. These experiences would ultimately inspire his "Italian" Symphony, which he described in a letter to his sister Fanny as "the jolliest piece I have ever written."

Completed in 1833 for the Philharmonic Society of London, the Symphony is a vivid impression of Mendelssohn's Italian journey. Though not strictly programmatic, the work captures the composer's joyful response to Italian sunshine, art, and landscapes, with the most overt cultural reference appearing in the finale. Mendelssohn conducted the premiere himself to enthusiastic acclaim, yet he remained dissatisfied with the piece, revising it several times before his death. The version we hear today was published posthumously in 1851 and remains one of his most frequently performed orchestral works.

The Allegro vivace opens with jubilant, bouncing rhythms and transparent textures, evoking the brilliant clarity of the Italian sky. Woodwinds and pizzicato strings play a major role, with lively themes unfolding in a sonata form that includes subtle innovations and unexpected transitions.

The second movement, Andante con moto, presents a somber yet lyrical procession, likely inspired by religious parades Mendelssohn observed in Naples. A chant-like theme in the woodwinds and violas moves steadily over a walking bass line.

A flowing Con moto moderato follows, reminiscent of a gentle minuet. Its elegant contours and graceful trio section conjure images of classical architecture and the refined beauty of Renaissance Italy.

The finale, Presto, is a whirlwind saltarello—a fiery, leaping folk dance. Energetic from start to finish, it drives the symphony to an exuberant, exhilarating close, bursting with brilliance and vitality. Mendelssohn's ability

to blend Classical structure with Romantic color makes this symphony a vivid musical postcard of his Italian adventure.

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

Duration – 27 minutes



Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

Piano Concerto No. 2 in G Major, Op. 44

Composed 1879-1880

While Tchaikovsky's first piano concerto has long held a firm place in the standard repertoire, his Piano Concerto No. 2 remains a relative rarity—though undeservedly so. Composed between October 1879 and April 1880, the second concerto is a rich, imaginative, and often surprising work full of virtuosic

challenges, emotional nuance, and orchestral sophistication. It was born not of commission or external pressure, but from Tchaikovsky's own desire to stay creatively engaged during a quiet period in his career. "I find myself absolutely incapable of living long without work," he confessed in a letter to his brother. And so, he began composing the new concerto during a stay at his sister's country estate in Kamenka, Ukraine—a beloved retreat where many of his major works were born.

Initially conceived in reverse—Tchaikovsky sketched the finale first—the concerto was written in fits and starts while traveling through Moscow, Paris, and Rome. The completed score was ready by May 1880, and Tchaikovsky dedicated the work to his friend and former critic Nikolai Rubinstein, who had previously panned the composer's first concerto only to later champion it. Tragically, Rubinstein died in 1881 before he could premiere the piece. The debut instead fell to Tchaikovsky's student Sergei Taneyev, who performed the Russian premiere in Moscow. The world premiere, however, occurred in New York in 1881, making it the second of Tchaikovsky's piano concertos to be introduced to the world by American audiences.

The concerto's expansive first movement, *Allegro brillante e molto vivace*, opens with a formal, martial theme in the orchestra, immediately echoed by the solo piano. Tchaikovsky's boldness is on full display in a striking cadenza that arrives midway through the development section—an unusual placement

that throws listeners off balance but thrillingly reorients the form. The piano writing is episodic yet electrifying, a muscular challenge for any soloist.

The slow movement, *Andante non troppo*, is the most unconventional of the three. Here, the piano takes a back seat while the spotlight turns to the concertmaster and principal cellist, who perform extended, lyrical solos in duet. This unexpected chamber music interlude gives the movement the intimacy of a triple concerto and a deeply human quality—lush, expressive, and introspective.

The finale *Allegro con fuoco* shifts gears completely. Dotted rhythms and galloping energy channel the spirit of a Russian dance, as Tchaikovsky whirls through three themes in a modified rondo form. The piano and orchestra engage in a lively dialogue, now fully integrated after the fragmented textures of the first movement. It's a movement of charm and drive, bringing the concerto to a brilliant close.

Despite early praise, the concerto was later altered by pianist Alexander Siloti, who shortened the work, simplified the solo part, and even changed the order of some sections. Tchaikovsky strongly objected to these changes, calling them “mutilations.” Unfortunately, the edited version became standard for many decades. Only in more recent years has the original version—more dramatic and structurally daring—been restored to performance, allowing audiences to appreciate the concerto as Tchaikovsky envisioned it. This original version is what will be heard in these concerts.

While the second piano concerto lacks the instantly recognizable melodies of its predecessor, it compensates with architectural boldness, orchestral inventiveness, and rhythmic vitality. Its unique character has even inspired choreography: in 1941, choreographer George Balanchine created *Ballet Imperial* using Siloti's version. The music, Balanchine said, “may not be the greatest, but it's perfect for dancing.”

Today, Tchaikovsky's Piano Concerto No. 2 is enjoying a well-deserved revival. Its sweeping gestures, technical demands, and heartfelt lyricism confirm that there is far more to Tchaikovsky's concerto writing than his famous first for piano. In the second, we hear a composer willing to take risks—sometimes sprawling, always passionate, and utterly individual.

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

Duration – 44 minutes

~ Kenneth Bean

Georg and Joyce Albers-Schonberg Assistant Conductor
Princeton Symphony Orchestra

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

November 8-9, 2025

VIOLIN I

Basia Danilow*

Concertmaster

The George W. Pitcher Chair,

ENDOWED IN PERPETUITY

Krzysztof Kuznik

The Yvonne Marcuse Chair,

In Memory of Mark M. Rutzky

Linda Howard

Ruotao Mao

Cheng-Chih Kevin Tsai

Margaret Banks

Cameron Chase

Tara A. Pagano-Toub

Coco Ziyao Sun

Ria Honda

VIOLIN II

Emma Richman**

The B. Sue Howard Chair

Tiffany Chang

Cheng-Hsun Tsai

Dexter Mott

Josephine Kim

Virgil Moore

VIOLA

Stephanie Griffin*

The Harriet & Jay Vawter Chair

Hannah Burnett

Chieh-Fan Yiu

Beth Meyers

Yizilin Liang

CELLO

Alistair MacRae*

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

Elizabeth Loughran

Jasmine Pai

Robin Park

Gloria Lee

Brian Gadbow

BASS

John Grillo*

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

Dan Hudson

Devin Howell

Luke Rogers



FLUTE

Sooyun Kim*

The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair

Hilary Jones

OBOE

Liam Boisset**

The Cynthia & Rob Hillas Chair

Erin Gustafson

CLARINET

Pascal Archer*

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

Gi Lee

BASSOON

Brad Balliett*

The Cynthia & Rob Hillas Chair

Davey Hiester

HORN

Steven Harmon*

The Dr. Michael L. Barnett Chair

Jonathan Clark

Colby Kleven

Colin Weyman

TRUMPET

Jerry Bryant*

The Donna & Donald Deieso Chair

Grace O'Connell

TIMPANI

Jeremy Levine*

The Anne VanLent Chair

*Principal player

**Guest principal player