

• PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ROSSEN MILANOV, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2025-2026



Aubree Oliverson Plays Dvořák

Aubree Oliverson, violin October 25 & 26

2025-26

ROSSEN MILANOV, Edward T. Cone Music Director



Saturday October 25, 2025, 7:30pm

Sunday October 26, 2025, 4pm

Richardson Auditorium

AUBREE OLIVERSON PLAYS DVOŘÁK

Rossen Milanov, conductor

Aubree Oliverson, violin

Dobrinka Tabakova

Orpheus' Comet

Antonín Dvořák

Violin Concerto in A Minor, Op. 53

I. Allegro; ma non troppo

II. Adagio; ma non troppo

III. Finale: Allegro giocoso; ma non troppo

INTERMISSION

Johannes Brahms

Piano Quartet No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25

orch. Arnold Schoenberg

I. Allegro

II. Intermezzo: Allegro; ma non troppo

III. Andante con moto

IV. Rondo alla zingarese: Presto

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.



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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 (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



AUBREE OLIVERSON is proving to be one of the most compelling artists of her generation. Her 2025-26 season features debut performances with the Thailand Philharmonic Orchestra, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, and Florida Orchestra, as well as return engagements with the Princeton Symphony Orchestra and Pacific Symphony Orchestra.

Past and recent performances include season openings at the Chamber Orchestra of New York at Carnegie Hall, Utah Symphony at Abravanel Hall, and Ridgefield Symphony. Other highlights include performances with Columbus, North Carolina, Pacific, and New Haven Symphonies, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic, Orquesta Sinfónica de Navarra, Excelentia Madrid, Moldavian Philharmonic, Slovak Sinfonietta, Rousse Philharmonic Orchestra, Puerto Rico Symphony, and the Kontrapunktus Baroque Ensemble. She has collaborated with artists such as Stefan Jackiw, Robert McDuffie, Gil Shaham, Lynn Harrell, Orli Shaham, Robert Chen, Andrew Marriner, and Clive Greensmith.

Passionate about music education, Aubree has presented digital masterclasses for organizations including the Orchestra of the Americas, Music to Save Humanity, and Kontrapunktus Baroque. She participated in masterclasses with the Esperanza Azteca Youth Orchestra in Mexico and most recently with the Princeton Symphony Orchestra and Youth Orchestra of Central Jersey.

Aubree won the Special Prize of Merit for violin at Verbier Festival Academy, the Aspen Music Festival Dorothy Delay competition, a National YoungArts Foundation award, was honored as a United States Presidential Scholar in the Arts, and named the 2023 Francis Rosen Prize recipient at the Colburn Conservatory, where she also received a BA and Artist Diploma. Aubree graduated from the Colburn Music Academy in Los Angeles in 2016, and is a former student of Debbie Moench, Eugene Watanabe, Danielle Belen and Boris Kuschnir at the Musik und Kunst Privatuniversität der Stadt Wien. Aubree went on to study under Robert Lipsett, the Jascha Heifetz Distinguished Violin Chair, at the Colburn Conservatory of Music, LA, where she graduated in 2023.

Aubree plays a Giovanni Battista Guadagnini violin, loaned to her by Irene R. Miller through the Beare's International Violin Society, and a Jean "Grand" Adam bow on loan from the Metzler Violin Shop.

Program Notes



Dobrinka Tabakova (b. 1980)

Orpheus' Comet

Composed 2017

Composer's Note:

Orpheus' Comet was the first official piece written during my residency with the BBC Concert Orchestra.

Commissioned by both the BBC and the European Broadcasting Union, it was written for the 50th

anniversary of the regular Music Exchanges and the opening of Monteverdi's opera *L'Orfeo*—the signature melody of Euroradio—was at the heart of the concept for the work. It is a regal, upbeat opening—exactly what you would wish from a fanfare—and in my reimagining, it becomes the culmination of this tribute to Euroradio.

In my research for *Orpheus' Comet*, I came across one of the earliest mentions of the Orpheus legend, which is found in Book IV of Virgil's *Georgics*. Essentially these are books about agriculture but, the fourth book begins with a detailed study on the life of bees. The final chapter then turns to the legend of Orpheus and tells of Aristaeus (a shepherd and bee-keeper) who chased Euridice, causing her to trip, be bitten by a serpent and ultimately die. As the piece began to take shape, it was the buzzing bees that left a strong impression on me and transformed into musical material.

At the very opening of the piece, the buzzing begins in the horns, gradually evolving into nebulous chord clusters and accent sparks that pass around the rest of the orchestra. This dialogue continues until a solemn chorale appears out of the busy texture. The chorale is taken up by the strings and grows to include the buzzing ideas, which are transformed to almost hypnotic rhythmic loops. A soaring melody in the flute and clarinet hovers above as momentum starts to build. Trombones underpin this build-up and prepare for the finale, and the arrival of Monteverdi's theme, with a modern twist.

- Dobrinka Tabakova

Instrumentation – two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings

Duration – 5 minutes



Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Violin Concerto in A Minor, Op. 53

Composed 1879-82

Dvořák's Violin Concerto is a brilliant fusion of virtuosity, lyricism, and national spirit, born of a high-profile collaboration that never quite materialized. Commissioned by the great Austro-Hungarian violinist Joseph Joachim—who had recently premiered Brahms' concerto—the piece was shaped

through extensive correspondence between composer and soloist from 1879 to 1882. Dvořák revised the score significantly in response to Joachim's suggestions, but despite a private rehearsal in 1882, Joachim never embraced the work publicly.

The concerto's premiere was given by Czech violinist František Ondříček on October 14, 1883, in Prague. Ondříček's performance marked the beginning of the concerto's gradual acceptance, as he introduced it across Europe to growing acclaim.

While less well-known than Dvořák's Cello Concerto, the Violin Concerto is equally rich in tunefulness, dramatic contrasts, and technical brilliance. Though trained as a violist, Dvořák had a deep understanding of the violin and wrote with flair and insight for the instrument. He also infused the work with the essence of Czech folk music—not through direct quotation, but by channeling its rhythms and moods. "Only in this way," he said, "can a musician express the true sentiment of his people."

The opening *Allegro ma non troppo* bypasses a traditional orchestral introduction: the soloist enters almost immediately, presenting a graceful version of the main theme. The music flows with improvisatory freedom, alternating between bold gestures and intimate lyricism. The *Adagio ma non troppo* follows without pause, offering one of Dvořák's most heartfelt melodies, framed by lush harmonies and subtle orchestral colors.

The final movement, *Allegro giocoso*, bursts with joy. Rooted in the furious, a lively Czech dance, it sparkles with rhythmic wit and exuberant interplay between soloist and orchestra. Syncopations, shifting meters, and folk-like themes lend the finale an infectious vitality. A rush of brilliance leads to four emphatic chords that cap the work with bold finality.

Despite its rocky path to the stage, Dvořák's Violin Concerto remains a radiant testament to his gifts: a master melodist, an orchestrator of warmth and clarity, and a composer who gave voice to the soul of his homeland.

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

Duration – 32 minutes



Johannes Brahms (1833-1897)

Piano Quartet No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25 orch. Arnold Schoenberg

Composed 1861; orchestrated by Schoenberg 1937

In 1937, Arnold Schoenberg—the revolutionary composer known for twelve-tone technique and daring harmonic language—made an unexpected artistic choice: he orchestrated Johannes Brahms’ *Piano Quartet No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 25*. While

Schoenberg is often cast as a radical and Brahms as a conservative, this orchestration reveals a deep kinship. Schoenberg saw in Brahms a kindred spirit, a structural innovator who built vast expressive landscapes from the tiniest motifs. “Brahms the Progressive,” Schoenberg titled a lecture series begun in 1933, arguing against the common perception of Brahms as a backward-looking classicist. “He did not live on inherited fortune,” Schoenberg claimed. “He made one of his own.”

Brahms composed the quartet during the summer of 1861 while living in Hamm, a peaceful village outside Hamburg. At 28, Brahms was entering a prolific and optimistic period. Having just moved out of his family’s home, he spent his days immersed in composition and chamber music. The *G Minor Piano Quartet* reflects this spirit—full of bold structural ideas, rich character, and passionate energy. The work was first performed later that year in Hamburg with Clara Schumann at the piano.

For Schoenberg, this quartet was not just a favorite piece—it was a perfect example of what he called *developing variation*, a process in which thematic material is constantly transformed, right from the beginning of a movement. Unlike classical sonata form, where development is confined to a middle section, Brahms’s approach allowed themes to evolve organically. This technique, Schoenberg believed, laid the foundation for modern compositional thinking.

The first movement begins with a bold, four-note motif that undergoes continual transformation throughout. Rather than relying on sharp contrasts

between themes, Brahms crafts unity through variation. The *Intermezzo* replaces a scherzo with something subtler—lyrical, poised, and quietly witty. In the *Andante con moto*, Brahms offers a movement of radiant lyricism. Schoenberg opens it with a solo violin line that evokes the composer's symphonic slow movements. Then comes the *Rondo alla Zingarese* finale, the quartet's most extroverted moment—a spirited, rhythmically charged dance that channels Hungarian folk music through Brahms' refined compositional lens.

Schoenberg's orchestration is both homage and reimagining. He wrote to critic Alfred Frankenstein that he arranged the work because he loved it, and because it was "always very badly played." In chamber settings, the piano often overwhelms the strings. "I wanted once to hear everything—and this I achieved." His orchestration uses a full complement of instruments, including several Brahms never employed—E-flat clarinet, bass clarinet, contrabassoon, xylophone—creating a sound world that is richer, denser, and often more modern than Brahms' own.

Despite this, Schoenberg claimed he tried to remain faithful to Brahms' style, imagining what the composer might have done with access to a 20th-century orchestra. In some movements, the orchestration is surprisingly restrained, enhancing textures without overwhelming them. In others—particularly the finale—Schoenberg lets loose with full percussion, bringing the rhythms to vibrant, technicolor life.

The orchestration was premiered in 1938 by the Los Angeles Philharmonic under Otto Klemperer, who praised it highly, remarking that "you can't even hear the original quartet, so beautiful is the arrangement." While some critics debated whether Schoenberg had remained "true" to Brahms, most agreed the orchestration revealed new depths in the original.

Schoenberg's version stands as a vivid illustration of how tradition and innovation need not be opposites. By reframing Brahms through modernism, Schoenberg makes a compelling case: Brahms was not the last of the Romantics, but the first of the moderns. His music, full of logic and transformation, laid the groundwork for the 20th century—and Schoenberg, in orchestrating this quartet, repays that legacy in full.

Instrumentation – three flutes and piccolo, three oboes and English horn, E-flat clarinet, two clarinets, and bass clarinet, three bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings

Duration – 43 minutes

~ Kenneth Bean
Georg and Joyce Albers-Schoenberg 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

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October 25-26, 2025

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Emma Richman**

The B. Sue Howard Chair

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Theo Espy

VIOLA

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