

• PRINCETON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
ROSSEN MILANOV, MUSIC DIRECTOR

2025-2026

**Copland, Saint-Saëns & Prokofiev**

EDWARD T. CONE CONCERT

Maja Bogdanović, cello

May 9 & 10



## **EDWARD T. CONE**

(1917-2004)

The Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO) is honored to present the Edward T. Cone Concert as an annual tribute to the memory of this remarkable and generous man and his exceptional role in sustaining and guiding the development of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra from its inception. We also honor Mr. Cone for his many other kind and generous acts as a patron of the arts in Princeton and beyond.

Edward T. Cone was a composer, pianist, author, and teacher. He enjoyed a distinguished career as a professor of music at Princeton University, and he produced several scholarly books, many of them classics in their field. At the time of his receipt of an honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Princeton University, Mr. Cone was cited as the "ideal embodiment of composer, performer, teacher, and scholar.... The knowing beauty of his compositions, the graceful power of his piano playing, and the inviting elegance of his critical essays teach us to think well of music's place in human affairs.... His genial voice remains the melody so many of us hear when we ponder music."

**We thank the trustees of the Edward T. Cone Foundation,  
T. Randolph Harris and Barbara A. Sloan, for their support of the  
Princeton Symphony Orchestra.**

# 2025-26

ROSSEN MILANOV, Edward T. Cone Music Director



Saturday May 9, 2026, 7:30pm

Saturday May 10, 2026, 4pm

Richardson Auditorium

## COPLAND, SAINT-SAËNS & PROKOFIEV

### EDWARD T. CONE CONCERT

**Rossen Milanov**, conductor

**Maja Bogdanović**, cello

**Aaron Copland**

*Letter from Home*

**Camille Saint-Saëns**

Cello Concerto No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 33

- I. Allegro non troppo
- II. Allegretto con moto
- III. Allegro non troppo

#### INTERMISSION

**Sergei Prokofiev**

Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major, Op. 100

- I. Andante
- II. Allegro marcato
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro giocoso

*This concert is made possible through the significant support of the Edward T. Cone Foundation with a generous gift from Len and Laura Berlik.*

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



# Music Director

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Edward T. Cone Music Director

**ROSSEN MILANOV** looks forward to collaborating in 2025-26 with established and emerging artists of the orchestral world and helping 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

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Following her recital debut at Carnegie's Weill Hall, *The Strad* hailed cellist **MAJA BOGDANOVIĆ** for "an outstanding performance of exceptional tonal beauty." She has since taken her place among today's foremost cellists as a soloist, chamber musician, and educator.

An avid chamber musician, Maja Bogdanović is a frequent guest at the world's leading chamber music festivals such as the Kuhmo Festival in Finland, Cello Biënnale Amsterdam, Festival Radio France Occitanie Montpellier, Folle Journée/Nantes, Storioni Festival, and the Stift International Chamber Music Festival in The Netherlands. In 2023, the new Arethusia Quartet was born. It brings Maja together with the like-minded spirits of violinists Daniel Rowland and Floor Le Coultre, and violist Dana Zemtsov.

Maja has released several internationally praised albums for the Lyrinx, Nimbus, DUX, and Orchid Classics labels. Her releases for Challenge Records include *Pas de Deux* with violinist Daniel Rowland, which features world premiere recordings of works by Penderecki, Vasks, Sollima, and Nisinman. It was described as "a magical meeting of cello and violin" by Dutch daily *NRC Handelsblad*.

Born in Belgrade, Serbia, Maja began playing the cello at a very early age, studying with Professor Nada Jovanovic in Zemun. She went on to graduate with a First Prize from the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique de Paris, where she completed her postgraduate course with Michel Strauss. While there, she also studied chamber music with Itamar Golan and Pierre-Laurent Aimard. Following her studies in Paris, she pursued further training at the Universität der Künste Berlin with Professor Jens Peter Maintz. Laureate of numerous international competitions, Maja won First Prize at the third Aldo Parisot Cello Competition in South Korea and received the Second Prize and Special Audience Award at the Gaspar Cassado International Competition in Tokyo. She was awarded the Special Prize at the Concours Rostropovich in Paris.

Maja's instrument was custom made for her by French luthier Frank Ravatin. She lives in Amsterdam with her husband Daniel Rowland and their two daughters.

[majabogdanovic.com](http://majabogdanovic.com)

# Program Notes

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## Aaron Copland (1900-1990)

### *Letter from Home*

Composed 1944

Written during the final year of World War II, *Letter from Home* is Aaron Copland's deeply personal reflection on separation, memory, and longing. Commissioned by bandleader Paul Whiteman for a patriotic broadcast on the Philco Radio Hour, the piece was premiered on October 17, 1944. Whiteman had invited several notable composers—including Duke Ellington, Leonard Bernstein, and even Igor Stravinsky—to contribute works that could uplift a wartime audience. Copland, by then a household name thanks to *Appalachian Spring* and *Fanfare for the Common Man*, responded with a small but resonant gem.

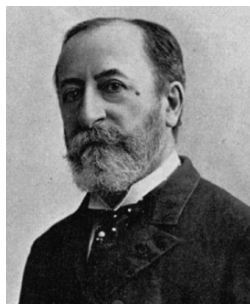
Though intended to evoke the universal experience of receiving a letter from home, Copland was also channeling his own grief and isolation. While composing the work in rural Mexico, he learned of his mother's death and his father's declining health through letters from his sister. His brother Ralph was serving in the army. These emotional burdens subtly shaped the music's introspective tone, giving the piece a depth of honesty and intimacy rarely found in wartime commissions.

The score opens with a nostalgic clarinet melody, soon joined by warm, middle-register strings and winds. Solo trumpet and oboe lines, gently echoed by the ensemble, create a call-and-response effect—like memories surfacing from a quiet reverie. The music swells into a brief but powerful climax, suggesting the overwhelming emotions a soldier might feel when reading a letter from home. This tension soon dissolves into tranquil cadences, closing with a sense of resolution, gratitude, and tenderness.

Copland later orchestrated the piece for full concert performance, preserving its intimate character. *Letter from Home* stands as one of Copland's most lyrical and heartfelt works—a musical portrait not just of wartime America, but of the quiet emotional toll carried by those far from loved ones. Its warmth still resonates today.

*Instrumentation* – two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets and bass clarinet, two bassoons, two horns, two trumpets, two trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, and strings

*Duration* – 6 minutes



## Camille Saint-Saëns (1835-1921)

### Cello Concerto No. 1 in A Minor, Op. 33

*Composed 1872*

Camille Saint-Saëns, child prodigy and polymath, was a master craftsman whose deep respect for form and clarity set him apart during a century increasingly defined by expressive excess. He composed prolifically across genres, writing concertos for nearly every major instrument, many of which remain staples of the repertoire. His Cello Concerto No. 1, composed in 1872 and dedicated to cellist Auguste Tolbecque, remains one of his most enduring and beloved concert works.

Though the concerto follows a fast-slow-fast format, it is cast in a single continuous movement—a formal innovation that echoes the influence of Liszt, whom Saint-Saëns greatly admired. This unified structure, along with the thematic interconnections among its sections, places the concerto firmly in the Romantic tradition of expanding and evolving Classical form.

The solo cello leaps into the spotlight from the very first bars with a bold, triplet-driven theme that recurs throughout the work. A contrasting lyrical theme soon follows, accompanied by chordal strings, allowing the cello to sing with expressive warmth. These two ideas form the core of a dramatic and technically dazzling first section.

A graceful minuet-like interlude follows, featuring muted strings and a lighter orchestral texture. Here, the cello spins delicate lines with refined elegance, showcasing the instrument's lyrical side. In lieu of a full cadenza, Saint-Saëns offers a short but touching solo passage that leads seamlessly back into the energetic outer material.

The final section begins quietly, with the return of the opening theme, now transformed. The cello takes the lead in building momentum through vibrant thematic development and flourishes, eventually giving way to a triumphant, major-key coda that ends the piece with brilliance and verve.

Saint-Saëns' Cello Concerto No. 1 combines structural ingenuity with virtuosic writing, balancing elegance and intensity. Its lasting popularity is a testament to the composer's ability to blend Classical restraint with Romantic expressiveness in a distinctly French voice.

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

*Duration – 19 minutes*



## Sergei Prokofiev (1891-1953)

### Symphony No. 5 in B-flat Major, Op. 100

*Composed 1944*

To describe Sergei Prokofiev's *Symphony No. 5* as a product of its time is an understatement. Written in the summer of 1944 at the height of World War II, it stands not only as a stirring musical achievement but also as a powerful cultural statement. For Prokofiev, it marked both a culmination of past experience and, tragically, a summit before a long and painful decline.

By 1944, Prokofiev had returned full-time to the Soviet Union after nearly two decades of self-imposed exile in the West. Initially drawn back by patriotic impulse and the promise of opportunity, he quickly found himself navigating the narrow, shifting boundaries of Soviet cultural policy. Stalin's regime demanded that music be "accessible," ideologically sound, and emotionally uplifting. Modernist innovation was dismissed as "formalism," and composers such as Prokofiev and Shostakovich lived under constant scrutiny.

Ironically, the war years offered a brief reprieve. As Moscow came under threat, the Soviet government relocated its top artists to safe rural retreats. It was at one such sanctuary in Ivanovo—150 miles from Moscow—that Prokofiev, alongside other composers including Shostakovich and Khachaturian, wrote his Fifth Symphony. Working with remarkable focus, he completed the initial draft in just one month.

Prokofiev described the symphony as "a hymn to free and happy Man, to his mighty powers, his pure and noble spirit." Though this aligns with Soviet ideals, it may also reflect Prokofiev's deeper personal longing—for peace, for dignity, or for artistic freedom.

The premiere took place on January 13, 1945, with the composer himself conducting. As he raised his baton, celebratory artillery fire erupted outside—marking the Red Army's advance across the Vistula River. Pianist Sviatoslav Richter recalled the moment as "symbolic," saying, "It was as if all of us—including Prokofiev—had reached a shared turning point."

The symphony opens unconventionally with a broad *Andante*, introducing a noble melody in the flute and bassoon. This theme anchors a sonata form structure rich in harmonic color, Prokofiev's trademark key shifts, and striking orchestration. The movement's fiery coda, driven by militaristic rhythms, earned spontaneous applause at its premiere.



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The second movement, *Allegro marcato*, is a biting scherzo full of rhythmic energy. Clarinet and piano exchange jabs, percussion punctuates with force, and the music bristles with sardonic humor. The trio section, more whimsical, features folk-like melodies in the winds. Upon return, the scherzo grows darker and more intense.

The third movement, *Adagio*, is perhaps the emotional heart of the work. A hauntingly lyrical theme unfolds over a gently pulsing accompaniment. The mood becomes increasingly somber, culminating in a dissonant climax. A restatement of the opening theme follows, subdued and mournful, capped by an upward-reaching clarinet line. It's a deeply affecting movement, evoking loss, reflection, and resilience.

The finale, *Allegro giocoso*, begins with echoes of the first movement before launching into an exuberant, almost playful main theme. The clarinet leads a colorful parade of dancing melodies, interspersed with sudden dark outbursts. Just when triumph seems certain, Prokofiev introduces a chaotic whirlwind of sound. At the last moment, order prevails, and the symphony closes in a blaze of color.

Symphony No. 5 remains one of Prokofiev's most beloved and frequently performed works—a masterpiece that combines sweeping lyricism, biting wit, and profound humanity. Sadly, it was the last piece he would conduct. A fall days later led to a head injury from which he never fully recovered. After the war, political censorship tightened, and his music was soon banned. He died in 1953, the same day as Stalin, his voice silenced too soon. Yet in this symphony, it rings out—bold, defiant, and unforgettable.

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

*Duration – 46 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**

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**May 9-10, 2026**

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## **VIOLIN I**

Julia Schilz\*\*

### **Concertmaster**

*The George W. Pitcher Chair,*

ENDOWED IN PERPETUITY

Krzysztof Kuznik

*The Yvonne Marcuse Chair,*

In Memory of Mark M. Rutzky

Cameron Chase

Cheng-Chih Kevin Tsai

Ruotao Mao

Margaret Banks

Tiffany Chang

Tara A. Pagano-Toub

Julia Hwang

Caroline Smoak

## **VIOLIN II**

Sam Parrini\*\*

*The B. Sue Howard Chair*

Sage Park

Josephine Kim

Cheng-Hsun David Tsai

Virgil Moore

Linda Howard

Audrey Park

Isabella Egawa

Vincent Cart-Sanders

## **VIOLA**

Stephanie Griffin\*

*The Harriet & Jay Vawter Chair*

Beth Meyers

Jacqueline Watson

Sofia Gilchenok

Cameren Anai Williams

Daniel Spink

## **CELLO**

Glenn Fischbach\*\*

*The Julian Grant & Peter Lighte  
Family Chair*

Elizabeth Loughran

Iona Batchelder

Jasmine Pai

Robin Park

## **BASS**

John Grillo\*

*The Stephanie & Robert Wedeking  
Chair*

Dan Hudson

Stephen Groat

Devin Howell

## **FLUTE**

Denis Savelyev\*\*

*The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair*

Hilary Jones

Anastasia Samsel

## **OBOE**

Lillian Copeland\*

*The Cynthia & Rob Hillas Chair*

Erin Gustafson

Becca Nelson



## **CLARINET**

Pascal Archer\*

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

Gi Lee

Colby Bond

Yasmina Spiegelberg

## **BASSOON**

Joshua Butcher\*\*

*The Cynthia & Rob Hillas Chair*

Zach Feingold

Lauren Hallonquist

## **HORN**

Colby Kleven\*\*

*The Dr. Michael L. Barnett Chair*

Megan Hurley

Colin Weyman

Stephanie Fritz Ferguson

## **TRUMPET**

Jerry Bryant\*

*The Donna & Donald Deieso Chair*

Thomas Cook

Kenny Leeper

## **TROMBONE**

Nicole Abissi\*\*

*The David A. Tierno Chair*

Lars Wendt

*The Lor & Michael Gehret Chair*

Felix Padilla

## **TUBA**

Brian Brown\*\*

*The Liza & Schuyler Morehouse  
Chair*

## **TIMPANI**

Jeremy Levine\*

*The Anne VanLent Chair*

## **PERCUSSION**

Phyllis Bitow\*

*The Lunder/Ezekowitz Family Chair*

Greg Giannascoli

Matt Smallcomb

Eric Borghi

## **HARP**

André Tarantiles\*

*Anonymous Chair, given by a  
PSO friend in honor of all parents*

## **PIANO**

Ruoting Li\*\*

\*Principal player

\*\*Guest principal player