

Friday, May 10, 2019 at 7:30 PM  
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

**PRINCETON UNIVERSITY SINFONIA**

Ruth Ochs, *Conductor*

Lou Chen '19, *Associate Conductor*

**PROGRAM**

*An Outdoor Overture*

AARON COPLAND  
(1900-1990)

Lou Chen '19, conductor

*Celtic Prelude* for String Orchestra

CHARLES CALLAHAN  
(b. 1951)

*New Jersey Premiere*

*Airsong* for Wind Quintet

EMILY LIUSHEN '22  
(b. 1999)

Kathy Fan '19, *Flute*  
Kouta Ohyama '19, *Oboe*  
Jason Hong '22, *Clarinet*  
Mina Yu '22, *Bassoon*  
Ned Furlong '21, *Horn*

*World Premiere*

~~ INTERMISSION ~~

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64

Andante—Allegro con anima

Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza

Valse: Allegro moderato

Finale: Andante maestoso—Allegro vivace

PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY  
(1840-1893)

# PRINCETON UNIVERSITY SINFONIA

## **Violin**

Angela Yang, *co-concertmaster*  
Jaeyoon Cha, *co-concertmaster*  
Alexander Menegas,  
*co-principal*  
Donovan Cassidy-Nolan,  
*co-principal*  
Rebekah Adams  
Lauren Anllo  
Shinya Blattmann  
Jessica Chen  
Lou Chen  
Abe Chien  
Kevin Feng  
Eve Fleisig  
Michaela Hennebury  
Long Ho  
Monty James  
Amy Jeon  
Michael Lenzi  
Jack Lohmann  
Delaney McMahon  
Rishwanth Raghu  
Hannah Smalley  
Grace Wei  
Katja Vassilev  
Stephanie Ward  
Warren Yuan  
Geoffrey Zheng

## **Viola**

Watson Jia, *principal*  
Selam Bellete  
Lennart Beringer  
Caoimhe Boyle  
Johanna Linna  
Madison Manning  
Meredith McMahon  
Alisa Seavey

## **Cello**

Anthony D'Arienzo,  
*principal*  
Natalie Arbelaez Solano  
Miguel Caranti  
Camille Heubner  
Meredith Hooper  
Joon Kim  
Timothy Morrow  
Sean-Wyn Ng  
Kevin Polish  
Daniel Wey

## **Bass**

Jonah Vernejoul, *principal*  
Jack Hill

## **Flute/Piccolo**

Kathy Fan  
Emma Guare  
Sunita Srivatsan  
Cheyenne Zhang

## **Oboe**

Riesa Cassano  
Kouta Ohyama  
Aaron Scheinberg

## **Clarinet**

Jason Hong  
Emily Liushen  
Audrey Shih  
Gabriela Hayward-Lara

## **Bassoon**

Mina Yu  
Emily de Jong

## **Horn**

Alexis Cowan  
Matthew Fuller  
New Furlong  
Elizabeth Keim

## **Trumpet**

James Porter  
Jonathan Zhi

## **Trombone**

Justin Coon  
Thomas Honzt  
Trisha Madhavan

## **Tuba**

Nathaniel Hontz

## **Timpani/Percussion**

Barak Nehoran  
Elijah Shina  
Alex Valtchenov

## **Piano**

Audrey Shih

## ABOUT THE PROGRAM

### AARON COPLAND

#### *An Outdoor Overture*

Copland wrote *An Outdoor Overture* after Alexander Richter, head of the music department of the High School of Music and Art in New York City, asked him to compose a piece for the school orchestra. By this time, Copland had already demonstrated an interest in writing “American music for American youth” (his recent opera, *The Second Hurricane*, was intended for high school students) so he found Richter’s suggestion “irresistible.” Upon hearing Copland’s piano sketch, Richter remarked that it seemed to have an “open-air quality.” From that off-the-cuff observation came the title, *An Outdoor Overture*. The work was premiered on December 16, 1938 — ironically, indoors!

But even when performed indoors, the piece manages to transport us into a natural vista of Copland’s making. The harmonies are spread out, from the highest sonorities to the lowest, creating a vast and open soundscape. The music bursts with natural life; the clarion fanfare in the brass brings to mind stately trees; the high-pitched motifs in the woodwinds, twittering birds; the light-footed theme in the strings, skittering animals--so on and so forth. Towards the end, Copland combines these themes, perhaps to evoke nature in its chaotic, multifarious glory.

Note by Lou Chen, ©2019

### CHARLES CALLAHAN

#### *Celtic Prelude* for String Orchestra

On a spring day during my childhood, I learned that my first piano teacher had told my mother that I should move on to a new teacher who could offer me a richer opportunity. Numb and confused, I could not imagine such a move; I was only filled with love and gratitude for my teacher, the person who unlocked the door to music for me. Little did I know that my hometown of Orwell, Vermont (population at the time: less than a thousand and more dairy cows than people) is also home to a world-renowned organist, pianist, and composer, Charles Callahan. His career was such that I would only study with him for a couple years, but he continued to look out for me — connected me with my next piano teacher, introduced me to music theory, and frequently checked in on my progress. While I did not fulfill one childhood dream of becoming an organist, I am truly happy to perform his music as a conductor. The following is a short biographical sketch about Dr. Callahan:

A native of Cambridge, Massachusetts. Charles Callahan is well-known as an award-winning composer, organist, choral conductor, pianist, and teacher. He is a graduate of The Curtis Institute of Music, Philadelphia, PA, and The Catholic University of America, Washington, D.C. Additional study has been in England, France, Germany, and Belgium. He holds the Associate and Choirmaster Certificates of the American Guild of Organists. Callahan compositions are performed frequently in church and concert; his writing style has been described by *The Washington Post* as “gentle, confident lyricism.”

An active church musician and concert organist, Callahan has conducted many of the major choral works with orchestra and has performed on many of the great organs of the world. He has a dozen solo organ recordings to his credit. Callahan is an award-winning member of the American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers. He has most recently been honored by the American Guild of Organists with its 2014 Distinguished Artist award, “for his illustrious career as composer, performer, teacher, and consultant, and his lifelong service to the sacred music profession.”

Dr. Callahan sent me the follow description of his work:

Based on an original melody composed in the Celtic spirit, Charles Callahan’s *Celtic Prelude* elaborates on this tune’s graceful simplicity. The work was first published for organ solo and later arranged for string orchestra by the composer. Through a traditional tonal harmonic framework, the lyrical thematic elements are shared among the instruments.

Note by Ruth Ochs, ©2019

## **EMILY LIUSHEN**

### *Airsong* for Wind Quintet

I wrote *Airsong* sitting on the loveliest day in a while, on a chair in Mathey courtyard. The night before, and the night before that, I had worked through till seven in the morning trying to write something that might say something, something interesting and profound and beautiful. Everything that came out was desperate and scattered, filtered through expectations of what I thought I ought to be writing. I worked myself into such a state that all I could hear were the negative thoughts in my head, screaming that I should just give up. Two Princeton Preview students were sleeping in my common room, and around five in the morning one of them looked up at me with such pity that I realized how deeply exhausted I was, and that this degree of sleep deprivation was terrifying to those who observed it. This is not an inspirational story. There was no stroke of genius that came to save me. But the next day, the

weather was beautiful. I skipped class, took my staff paper and orchestration book outside, and sketched the entire piece in a few hours. I don't know where it came from, but it felt right: this small piece, a piece that is not by any means profound or groundbreaking, said something beautiful by simply being.

Note by Emily Liushen, ©2019

## **PYOTR ILYICH TCHAIKOVSKY**

Symphony No. 5 in E Minor, Op. 64

Before setting a single note of his Fifth Symphony to paper, Tchaikovsky jotted a brief verbal sketch for the symphony:

Introduction. Complete resignation before Fate, or, which is the same, before the inscrutable predestination of Providence. Allegro (I) Murmurs, doubts, complaints, reproaches against XXX. (II) Shall I throw myself in the embraces of faith??

Although only referencing the first movement, these notebook lines from April 1888 have been rich fodder for interpretations of the Fifth. Some have surmised that the cipher, XXX, must reference Tchaikovsky's homosexuality. Tchaikovsky left no other hints about the meaning of the Fifth. This dilemma especially contrasts with the Fourth Symphony, for which Tchaikovsky shared extensive programmatic background. Buried in that correspondence about the Fourth, composed a decade earlier, is a nugget that might help us accept Tchaikovsky's reticence about the Fifth:

Of course my symphony [the Fourth] is program music, but it would be impossible to give the program in words [though, he did elsewhere]. It would only appear ludicrous and raise a smile. But ought this not always to be the case with a symphony, the most lyrical of musical forms? Should it not express everything for which there are no words, but which the soul wishes to express, and which requires to be expressed?

Tchaikovsky poignantly described how programmatic description could hinder the richness of poetic intention in his music. Poetry overflows within Tchaikovsky's Fifth. Most recognizable is the refrain-like use of a musical motto in each of the Symphony's four movements. The first movement opens with the motto in its most plaintive, sepulchral guise, intoned by the clarinets in a muffled and murky range. Deep, resonant string chords accompany. After a series of obsessive and increasingly urgent pronouncements, this musical distilment of heart-wrenching pathos loses breath. Just as the music seems to expire from torment, a faster-paced march takes up the emotional agony of this introduction to confront it head-on.

The conflict animating the first movement's main section, marked *Allegro con anima*, seems to be an extended psychological battle, Tchaikovsky's "murmurs" and "doubts." The first extended passage, like in the introduction, ruminates over shorter musical phrases — presented for the first time by clarinet and bassoon — with the movement's signature dotted rhythm. The shape of the movement unfolds as a sonata form, which Tchaikovsky punctuates with violent exchanges of raw anger and inner struggle. After increasing the intensity of the struggle, the music encompasses only exhaustion and emotional depletion. Breathless and worn out, the movement closes with resignation.

The Finale will lead to renewal, but only after the inner movements broaden the emotional scope, and the motto theme intrudes in shocking ways. The principal theme of the second movement, however, is new and fresh, first heard played by the first horn. Burning and volatile passion works as a kind of antidote to the agony of the first movement, until the motto theme, now aggressive and angry, twice interrupts. The second of these intrusions registers as cataclysmic and utterly terrifying. Yet through enduring shudders, the music pushes forward, using strummed string chords and a soothing back and forth of the main theme, it repeats and repeats enforcing calm.

The third movement is a waltz, and the melody — unlike many of Tchaikovsky's waltzes — begins without introduction. Forced into motion, this waltz is tinged with melancholy, and in its second theme, hesitation. Just as the dance begins to settle and close, the motto sneaks back in — metrically distorted by the 3/4 waltz pattern — and reminds of unfinished business within the Symphony's design.

The Symphony's answer arrives immediately with the opening introduction to the Finale. The pathos of the first movement is in one stroke supplanted with optimism by statements of the motto in E major, rather than the Symphony's key of E minor. But that shift arrived too quickly. To continue, the Finale regresses back to E minor, and, over one more long stretch of tribulation, it re-achieves E major. The uplifted spirit of this conclusion is hard-won and truly restorative. Whether the Symphony's entire scope fully reflected Tchaikovsky's early ideas for the symphony, the breadth and depth of the entire Symphony's expressive scheme highlights the resilience of the human spirit. Throughout his career, insecure about his abilities as a conductor, Tchaikovsky led the premiere of his Fifth Symphony on November 17, 1888 in St. Petersburg.

Note by Ruth Ochs, ©2019

## ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

The **Princeton University Sinfonia** is a full symphony orchestra that unites eager, music-loving students to explore symphonic repertory from the Baroque to the very newest compositions. Its members are undergraduate and graduate student musicians with diverse academic interests and backgrounds, who join their talents for the pleasure of making music together and for others. Having grown from a small chamber orchestra to its current size, the orchestra has expanded the scope of its musical mission on campus, as well. The orchestra now performs regularly with faculty soloists, and pursues a creative variety of works composed by undergraduate composers. In 2014, several members of the Sinfonia began an outreach initiative with the Community House After School Academy (CHASA) at Princeton University's Pace Center for Civic Engagement. Each spring the orchestra sponsors a concerto competition for its own members, and the winners perform with the orchestra in May of each year.

**Ruth Ochs** has been conducting at Princeton University since 2002. Soon after beginning graduate studies in the Department of Music at Princeton, she became director of the Princeton University Sinfonia and steered its growth from a chamber orchestra into a full-size symphonic orchestra performing repertory from the Baroque to the most recent. The orchestra regularly features student soloists and premieres new compositions by Princeton University undergraduate composers. She also serves as Associate Conductor of the Princeton University Orchestra, and has led the ensemble in a variety of performances. Off the podium, her work in the classroom and as a pre-concert speaker for Princeton University Concerts puts into action her belief that performers and audiences alike benefit from closer understanding of a musical composition's biography and design.

Passionate about raising the bar among community and youth musicians, Dr. Ochs also shares her time with local musical initiatives in central New Jersey. She is now in her thirteenth season as conductor and music director of the Westminster Community Orchestra, with whom she leads successful opera gala performances, collaborates with partner ensembles from the Westminster Conservatory of Music, and masterminds a popular series of children's and holiday concerts.

Music study has taken Dr. Ochs beyond her upbringing on an apple orchard in Vermont, and she holds degrees in music, orchestral conducting, and music history, from Harvard University, the University of Texas at Austin, and Princeton University, respectively. As a Fulbright Scholar, she studied musicology at Humboldt Universität in Berlin, Germany, and, as a student of the Polish language, she studied at the Uniwersytet Jagielloński in

Kraków, Poland. For many summers, she studied conducting at the Pierre Monteux School in Hancock, Maine, where she worked closely with Michael Jinbo. In 2008 she was chosen to be as the School's first conducting associate. In 2015 she served as clinician for the Texas Private School Music Educators Association All-State Orchestra. She is currently a lecturer in the Princeton University Department of Music. When not conducting or teaching, she enjoys tending her garden, and trains at New Jersey Tae Kwon Do & Kicking Boxing Academy in West Windsor, NJ, where she currently holds the rank of blue belt.

Originally from San Bernardino, CA, **Lou Chen** is a senior in the Music Department with certificates in Orchestral Conducting and American Studies. He currently serves as Founder/Director of the Trenton Youth Orchestra, Associate Conductor of the Princeton University Sinfonia, Outreach Director of the Princeton Chamber Music Society, and Founder/Director of the TCHS-Princeton University Collaborative Concert Series. Previously, he has been Music Director for various student-produced musicals, including *Dogfight* and *Jesus Christ Superstar*. While studying abroad at the University of Oxford last spring, he played piano and wrote songs as a member of a homeless band. For his work with the Trenton Youth Orchestra, Lou has received the Santos-Dumont Prize for Innovation and the A. James Fisher, Jr. Memorial Award. He studies conducting with Dr. Ruth Ochs and has participated in a masterclass with Maestro Gustavo Dudamel. He is very grateful to Sinfonia for the opportunity to conduct them for the past four years, and will miss them very much!

**Emily Liushen** is a composer, clarinetist, and pianist. She studied clarinet performance at the Youth Performing Arts School in Louisville, Kentucky before directing her studies toward composition. Past and current composition teachers include Cynthia Folio, Steven Mackey, Erin Busch, Dan Trueman, Annika Socolofsky, and Donnacha Dennehy. Emily has studied clarinet with Angela Soren, Daniel Silver, and Jo-Ann Sternberg; and piano with Jessie Xu, Dror Biran, and Kris Davis. On campus, she plays keyboard and clarinet for the Princeton Triangle Club; clarinet with the university's chamber orchestra, Princeton Camerata, and Sinfonia; and is a member of the Princeton University Composers Collective.