THURSDAY, DECEMBER 12TH, 2013
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY

Sinfonia

7:30 PM IN RICHARDSON AUDITORIUM
WINTER CONCERT
RUTH OCHS, CONDUCTOR
“In the Steppes of Central Asia”  
Alexander Borodin

“In the silence of the sandy steppes of Central Asia unfolds the refrain of a peaceful Russian song, never before heard there. We hear as well the melancholy sounds of Eastern song, and the hoof beats of approaching horses and camels. Escorted in safety by Russian soldiers, a caravan crosses the vast desert, confidently continuing its long, relentless journey. Russian songs and Asian melodies blend in a common harmony, their refrains heard far into the desert, finally fading away in the great distance.”  
(Program note published with the first edition of the score)

Scherzo  
Jason Wang

The soundscape of this piece is largely inspired by the great Russian modernists, namely Prokofiev and Shostakovich. Yet the music also draws inspiration from Debussy, Mahler, and Beethoven while containing tone rows, rock harmony, and quotations from Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde. These and various other influences amalgamate into a simple ternary form, whose slower middle section is almost entirely based on pentatonicism. Entitled Scherzo, this piece of music will eventually be incorporated as one of the movements of a symphony I am writing for my senior thesis.  
(Program note by Jason Wang)

Four Orchestral Songs  
Richard Strauss

Much of Richard Strauss’s early song composition was inspired by the soprano voice of his wife, Pauline de Ahn. The original versions of Op. 27 set of songs, including “Morgen!” and “Cäcilie,” were written as a wedding gift for her. During their early professional work, the two toured together, and Strauss orchestrated many of his songs for those purposes.

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, “Pastoral”  
Ludwig van Beethoven

The premiere of the Pastoral Symphony occurred on a historic four-hour, all-Beethoven concert on December 22, 1808 in Vienna. Beethoven conducted the entire performance, which included the premieres of the Fifth Symphony and the Choral Fantasy, as well as a performance of the Fourth Piano Concerto. By Beethoven’s era, the pastoral style in music had a long and venerable tradition, and Beethoven incorporated its conventions—drone figurations, horn calls, and gentle, lilting rhythms—with his symphonic style and his own love of the countryside. During the composition of the work, Beethoven cautioned himself about writing something too illustrative or programmatic. For the published score, Beethoven finally settled on this title: “Pastoral Symphony, or Memories of Country Life / More the expression of Feeling than Tone-Painting.” He affixed descriptive titles to each of the movements, along with indications that the third, fourth, and fifth movements should be performed as a single unit without pause. Despite Beethoven’s concern for the potential misunderstanding of the Pastoral Symphony as program music, this work did stake an important claim for the use of descriptive and narrative elements in a symphonic context, and the symphony served as a venerated example for future generations of composers.
Richard Strauss Song Translations

Zuwendung—Dedication
(Hermann von Glini)

Yes, you know it, dear soul,
that, far from you, I pine;
love makes hearts sick, be thanked!

Once, reveling in freedom, I lifted
up the amethyst cup
and you blessed the drink—
be thanked!

And you banished the evil spirits,
till I was, what I had never been,
boly, and holy fell on your heart;
be thanked!

Morgen!—Tomorrow!
(John Henry Mackay)

And tomorrow the sun will shine again,
and on the path that I shall take
it will unite us, lucky ones, again
amid this sun-bathing earth.

And to the beach, broad and blue-waved,
we shall climb down, quiet and slow.
Speechless we shall gaze in each other's eyes,
and the speechless silence of happiness will
fall on us.

Wieneglece—Lullaby
(Richard Dehnell)

Dream, dream, my sweet life,
of heaven, that brings us flowers.
blossoms gleam there that live
on the song your mother sings.

Dream, dream, bud of my sorrows,
of the day when the flowers bloomed,
of the morning bright with blossoms,
when your soul opened to the world.

Dream, dream, blossom of my love,
of the silent, holy night
when the flower of his love
turned this world into heaven for me.

Cäcilie
(Heinrich Hah)

If you knew,
what it means to dream
of ardent kisses,
of strolling and resting
with one's beloved,
with eyes for each other only,
and caressing and conversing—
if you knew, your heart would assent.

If you knew,
what it means to worry
in lonely nights,
midst pelting storm,
where no one
with gentle mouth
soothes one's battle-weary soul—
if you knew, you would come to me.

If you knew,
what it means to live
pervaded by the Divinity's
world-creating breath,
to float aloft
borne by the light
to blissful heights—
if you knew, you would live with me.

PROGRAM

In the Steppes of Central Asia

Alexander Borodin
(1833-1887)

Scherzo (world premiere)

Jason Wang
(Class of 2014)

Zueignung, Op. 10, No. 1

Richard Strauss
(1864-1949)

Morgen, Op. 27, No. 4 (Marcos Spiegel, violin solo)

Wieneglece, Op. 41, No. 1

Cäcilie, Op. 27, No. 2

Rochelle Ellis, soprano

Intermission

Symphony No. 6 in F Major, Op. 68, "Pastoral"

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770-1827)

I. Allegro ma non troppo
(Awakening of happy feelings upon arriving in the country)

II. Andante molto moto
(By the brook)

III. Allegro—
(Merry gathering of country folk)

IV. Allegro—
(Thunder and storm)

V. Allegretto
(Shepherds' song: happy, grateful feelings after the storm)
ARTISTS’ BIOS

Rochelle Ellis, an Adjunct Assistant Professor of Voice at Westminster Choir College of Rider University, and an instructor of voice at Princeton University, has taught private voice at the collegiate level for over 20 years. She has dedicated herself to developing teaching techniques that improve the success of her students by serving the whole student, both musically and personally. She is currently a Doctor of Musical Arts in Voice Performance candidate at Rutgers University Mason Gross School of the Arts. Active in both Rider University and community outreach in music, Ms. Ellis teaches in the Westminster Conservatory Summer Vocal Institutes for middle school and high school students. She has been the vocal teacher for the Rider University Educational Opportunity Program. Locally, she serves as a vocal consultant with the Trenton Children’s Choir.

Ms. Ellis has distinguished herself in both the concert hall and opera stage. She made her New York City Opera debut as Serena in Gershwin’s Porgy and Bess, and her Carnegie Hall debut in Schubert’s Mass in G and Bach’s Cantata 140. She has performed under conductors Christoph Eschenbach, James DePriest, Leonard Slatkin, and Joseph Flummerfelt, and has been a frequent soloist with the Berkshire Choral Festival in Massachusetts. Internationally, she has performed at the National Opera of China in Beijing, the Prague (Czech Republic) Autumn Music Festival, and performed solo recitals in Japan.

Ruth Ochs has conducted at Princeton University since 2002. As music director of the Princeton Symphony Orchestra, she has led its growth from a chamber orchestra into a full-size symphony orchestra. She frequently assists with the Princeton University Orchestra, including working as guest conductor of the orchestra in the fall of 2011. Passionate about raising the bar for collegiate, community, and youth orchestras, she works with several local ensembles, including the Westminster Community Orchestra and the Princeton Charter School/Westminster Conservatory Youth Orchestra. She holds degrees in music and conducting from Harvard University and the University of Texas at Austin. For many summers, she studied conducting at the Pierre Monteux School in Hancock, Maine.

Jason Wang is senior music major at Princeton University and has been composing for about eight years. He was first introduced to composing in 2007 through the David Diamond Young Composer Workshop where he worked with Dr. Samuel Jones, the Seattle Symphony’s Composer in Residence, to compose a piece of chamber music that was performed by Seattle Symphony musicians. He has repeated this experience more times. In 2009, Jason submitted a composition to the PTA Reflections program and received an Award of Excellence at the national level. In 2010, he won the junior division of the ASTA Merle J. Isaac Composition Contest. He has won the Sinfonia division of the C. Keith Birkenfeld Composition Contest in 2008 and 2010 and the Youth division in 2009. In 2012, Jason attended a composition master class led by John Adams, and he spent the spring of 2013 studying abroad at the University of Oxford under the tutelage of Robert Saxton. Besides composing, he also plays piano and has been a violinist in Sinfonia for four years. Jason is currently writing a symphony for his senior thesis and plans to incorporate Scherzo as one of the movements.

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