Friday, March 10, 2017 • 7:30pm
Saturday, March 11, 2017 • 7:30pm
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA
Michael Pratt, conductor

RICHARD STRAUSS
(1864-1949)
Horn Concerto No. 2 in E-flat Major, TrV 283 (1942)
Allegro
Andante con moto
Rondo Allegro molto

Nivanthi Karunaratne ‘18, horn

FRANZ LISZT
(1811-1886)
Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, S. 124 (1849)
Allegro maestoso – Tempo giusto –
Quasi adagio –
Allegretto vivace. Allegro animato –
Allegro marziale animato

Kevin Chien ‘17, piano

* INTERMISSION *

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF
(1873-1943)
Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30 (1909)
Allegro ma non tanto
Intermezzo: Adagio
Finale: Alla breve

Seho Young ‘19, piano
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA
(winds and percussion listed alphabetically, *indicates principal player)

VIOLIN 1
Demi Fang, concertmaster
Samantha Cody
Jeffrey Kuan
Tabitha Oh
Yun Teng
Daniel Wood
Connie Zhu
John Li
Kristin Qian
Magdalena Collum
Soyeong Park
Janice Cheon
Evelyn Wu
Jason Polychronakos

Renee Warnick
Alisa Seavey

VIOLIN 2
Emma Powell*
Hyunnew Choi
Andy Deng
Yinan Zheng
Isaac Treves
Katie Liu
Haeun Jung
Alexander Regent
Philippa Marks
Mary Kim
Katherine Park
Alice Lin
Russell Kim
Hana Mundiya
Sarah Le Van

Contrabass
Christopher Perron*
Harrison Waldon
Megan Chung*
Matthew Troiani
Andrea Reino
Thomas Graul
Jack Hill

FLUTE AND PICCOLO
Ruchita Balasubramanian
Nicholas Ioffreda
Alexia Kim*
Queenie Luo*
Nicole Ozdowski*

OBOE AND ENGLISH HORN
Amelia Hankla*
Tiffany Huang*
Ethan Petno
Ann-Elise Siden*

CLARINET
Michael Chen
Allison Halter*
Thomas Jankovic

Kyle Lang
Jacob Williams*

BASSOON
Mark Abate
Jan Offerman
Greg Rewoldt*
Timothy Ruszala*

HORNS
Michael Chen
Allison Halter*
Thomas Jankovic
Kyle Lang
Jacob Williams*

TRUMPETS
Sami Belkadi
Elizabeth DiGennaro*
Matthew Hetrick
Lucas Makinen*
Duncan Waldrop*

TROMBONE
Rajeev Erramilli*
Bradley Spicher*
Daniel Stern

TUBA
Mitch Hamburger*

TIMPANI AND PERCUSSION
Steven Chien
David Graff
Isaac Ilivicky
Henry Peters
Adam Petno
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA COMMITTEE

CO-PRESIDENTS
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Tiffany Huang

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Daniel Wood

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Queenie Luo
Sophie Wheeler

ALUMNI CHAIR
Cadee Qiu

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Cadee Qiu
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Raj Balaji

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Megan Chung
Sarah Rapoport

WEBMASTER
Ben Parks

LIBRARIAN
Greg Rewoldt
Kerith Wang

ORCHESTRA MANAGER
Dan Hudson
The PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA began with a group of professional musicians from the New York Symphony and Philharmonic Societies who performed a series of concerts at Alexander Hall in 1896, the first on February 13. The proceeds were “devoted to the funds for the establishment of a School of Music for the study of Musical Composition, Theory, and History at Princeton University.” In the ensuing 121 years, the orchestra has come to be an almost exclusively student organization; some 90-100 undergraduate and graduate musicians representing a broad spectrum of academic departments come together for concerts in Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall.

Under the direction of Michael Pratt since 1977, the orchestra has in recent years taken an important place in the state’s concert calendar. The Newark Star-Ledger had high praise for the orchestra’s “passionate performance” of Mahler’s “Resurrection” Symphony and called the performance of Mahler’s Third Symphony one “that would make any orchestra proud.” The Princeton University Orchestra performs ten to fifteen concerts a year on campus, in addition to international tours. These concerts include both new music and works from the standard repertory. Audience members and critics alike have commented that even the most familiar works take on a new freshness in the enthusiastic, spirited and precise performances given by the Princeton musicians.

The orchestra also serves an important role in Princeton’s Department of Music by both reading and performing new works by graduate composition students. In addition, the orchestra has also been invited to give command performances for special University events, such as the installation of President Harold Shapiro, and the celebration of Princeton’s 250th Anniversary. In April 2001, the Orchestra appeared at Lincoln Center for a special performance called “Beethoven and Homer, The Heroic Moment,” a program which combined the Fifth Symphony of Beethoven and Professor Robert Fagles reading from his translation of The Iliad and The Odyssey. The Orchestra has represented Princeton on tours both of the United States and Europe. Recent tours have seen visits to Dublin, London, Glasgow, Edinburgh, Madrid, Barcelona, Prague, Bratislava, Budapest and Vienna. In January 2007 the Orchestra’s performance in Bratislava was taped for later broadcast on Slovak television. Participation in the orchestra is voluntary and extracurricular; students commit many hours to rehearsal above and beyond the time required for academic course work. Graduates of the orchestra have gone on to be performers, music teachers, and arts administrators, but the list of professions also includes lawyers, physicians, business executives, government officials, economists, architects, research scientists, and journalists. The Princeton University Orchestra offers an important opportunity for student instrumentalists to pursue musical interests in a way that significantly enhances their overall growth in a strong academic environment.

For 39 seasons the Princeton University Orchestra has been led by Conductor
MICHAEL PRATT, a relationship that has resulted in the ensemble’s reputation as one of the finest university orchestras in the United States. Over the years, the Orchestra and Pratt have performed a remarkable variety of the orchestral literature, from J. S. Bach’s Orchestral Suites, to Beethoven’s Ninth Symphony, to Wagner’s Tristan und Isolde. He has led the orchestra on ten European tours, leading performances in London, Prague, Vienna, Budapest and Madrid.

As Director of the Princeton University Opera Theater, Pratt has conducted operas from Mozart to Ravel, and in the past decade has focused on the early Baroque operas of Monteverdi and Cavalli. One of the chief architects of Princeton’s Certificate Program in Musical Performance, Pratt has served as its director for over twenty years, and is co-founder of the Richardson Chamber Players. Pratt was educated at the Eastman School of Music and Tanglewood, and his teachers have included Gunther Schuller, Gustav Meier, Leonard Bernstein and Otto Werner Mueller. He also holds the posts of Music Director of the Delaware Valley Philharmonic and Principal Conductor of American Repertory Ballet. He has also conducted the orchestras of Boston, Atlanta, Buffalo, Detroit, Indianapolis, and Odessa, Ukraine.

Beginning his musical studies at the age of 6 in Vancouver, Canada, Kevin Chien received his Associate Diploma in Piano Performance from the Royal Conservatory of Music (Toronto) at 13, winning the National Gold Medal as the top graduate. He has been a prizewinner at numerous competitions across Canada and the US, including the British Columbia Performing Arts Festival, the Canadian Music Competition, and the National Music Festival. He was also a semi-finalist at the sixth Yamaha USASU International Piano Competition and the 44th William C. Byrd International Young Artist Competition. As the winner of the Seattle Young Artists Music Festival, Kevin made his concerto debut in 2011 with the Philharmonia Northwest. He has appeared in concert at venues such as Benaroya Hall (Seattle) and Sala dei Notari (Perugia, Italy), and his playing has been broadcast on Seattle’s KING-FM.

A senior majoring in Mathematics, Kevin is currently a student of Francine Kay in Princeton’s Program in Musical Performance. He has previously studied with Sasha Starcevich, K.K. Sum, and duo pianists Ken Broadway and Ralph Markham. Kevin has also played for James Anagnoson, Peter Frankl, and Douglas Humpherys, among others.

At Princeton, Kevin has performed at Classical Music Hour and the Princeton Music Club. Outside of solo repertoire, Kevin enjoys chamber music collaborations, and he was also part of the pit orchestra for the Princeton Opera Company. As the pianist in the Princeton University Orchestra this season, he recently completed a tour of central Europe with the orchestra.

Nivanthi Karunaratne began studying music at age five on piano, beginning her brass career in fourth grade – on trumpet. Wise even at ten, she quickly realized the superiority of the horn and switched.

As an Emerson Scholar, Nivanthi received a merit-based full scholarship to Interlochen Arts Camp in 2012. More recently, she joined National Youth Orchestra of the USA (NYO-USA) for two summers, playing under Maestros David Robertson and Charles
Dutoit. Due to her affiliation with NYO-USA, Nivanthi was personally invited to perform with a brass quintet at the State Department for then-Vice President Biden and Chinese President Xi Jinping. She also appeared on *Jimmy Kimmel Live!* through New York Youth Symphony.

Now, Nivanthi mostly cracks notes in the Princeton University Orchestra under Maestro Michael Pratt’s baton. She also participates in the Princeton Chamber Orchestra, where she cracks jokes under Maestro DG Kim’s baton.

At Princeton, Nivanthi studies with two teachers: Chris Komer, Principal Horn of New Jersey Symphony and member of the performance faculty at Princeton, and Erik Ralske, Professor at Juilliard and Principal Horn of the Metropolitan Opera. Despite her concentration in Neuroscience, Nivanthi recently returned from studying abroad at London’s Royal College of Music, where she studied with the principal horns of the Royal Opera House and Philharmonia Orchestra, Simon Rayner and Nigel Black. Though she failed to develop any proficiency in speaking with a British accent, Nivanthi did learn a trick or two about playing French horn, and is considering pursuing graduate studies in Music.

**Seho Young** was brought to music at a young age by the conducting of his greatest musical inspiration, Maestro Seiji Ozawa, which he imitated with chopsticks. He has studied piano, composition, and music theory at New England Conservatory Preparatory School and The Juilliard School Pre-College. As a fellow of Oberlin Conservatory’s partnership program with International Piano Academy Lake Como, he studied with William Naboré at Oberlin, and participated in masterclasses with renowned professors such as Stanislav Ioudenitch and Tamás Vásáry. He has also studied with Yoheved Kaplinsky and Wha Kyung Byun, and has performed in masterclasses with Jeffrey Kahane, Piotr Paleczny, Andrea Bonatta, and Fumiko Eguchi.

Seho has performed in venues in the US, Japan, Russia, Poland, and Italy, and has played with the Pro Arte Chamber Orchestra, Brockton Symphony Orchestra, Phillips Academy Orchestra, and Toruń Symphony Orchestra. He has participated in the Aspen Music Festival and School, Ishikawa Music Academy, Paderewski Piano Academy, Southeastern Piano Festival, and Lake Como Summer Piano School. In 2009, he was invited to perform at Vladimir Spivakov’s sixth International Festival in Moscow. He has won top awards at the Rosalyn Tureck International Bach Competition, Arthur Fraser International Piano Competition, and National YoungArts Foundation.

Seho Young is currently a sophomore at Princeton University, where he studies with Francine Kay. He plays piano and writes music for the university’s famous comedy musical theater troupe, Triangle Club. In 2016, he was appointed Associate Conductor for Princeton Chamber Orchestra, a student-led ensemble that specializes in playing music that otherwise would not be heard on campus. He is an avid member of Princeton’s Ultimate Frisbee team, Clockwork Orange, and enjoys watching children’s animated films.
Richard Strauss wrote just two horn concerti, of which I will be playing the second tonight.

His father was Franz Strauss, who was himself a composer, professor of music – and top-notch horn player. The elder Strauss took it upon himself to tutor his musically talented son (who was composing as young as age six). As a principal and solo horn player (who indeed, also composed two horn concerti) Franz Strauss no doubt helped kindle Richard Strauss’s deep-seated love for the horn, which he features heavily in many of his compositions.

Franz Strauss strictly preferred the classical music of Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven, a preference imposed upon his son through his schooling. He abhorred the music of Wagner, unlike his son, who yearned to study newer, more innovative works of music, which he only managed to do after leaving home. Despite this seeming tension, however, the Strauss father-son duo still shared a special bond.

Richard Strauss’s first horn concerto was written when he was just 18, influenced heavily by his conservative musical upbringing, and undoubtedly represented a nod to his father. The bold solo part requires surprising endurance and virtuosity and Franz Strauss, 61 at the time of composition – past the peak of his horn playing – could not perform it to his desired standard. Instead, he delegated the premiere to one of his fine students, Bruno Hoyer, who later went on to join the Munich Opera. Though it comprises an indispensable part of the solo horn repertoire, the first concerto did not yet epitomize the rich, luxurious Romanticism into which his compositions grew.

The younger Strauss’s music is possibly now known best for its seeming ego, grandeur, and flair, but in his horn concerti, though we see these characteristics, they also reveal vastly different aspects of the great composer’s style. The First Concerto, written towards the beginning of his compositional career, can perhaps be interpreted as an admiring tribute to his beloved father. The Second Concerto, however, was written in 1942 – a mere 7 years before he passed away. Correspondingly, it is far richer and more complex than its predecessor. More compellingly, however, it was composed during what was likely a highly introspective time in Strauss’s life, given the increasingly encroaching nature of World War II.
Given the toll of the war and his personal relation to the horn, it is hardly surprising that Strauss produced this work. In it, we see more than mere traces of sentimentality. Multiple instances in the first movement point to fond remembrances; the fanfare-like beginning soon gives way to a gentle melody. Indeed, this shift from heroism to introspection happens throughout the first movement, which then tapers seamlessly into the second movement, which features a simple, sublime melody punctuated with agony. Even the third movement, a prominently playful and triumphant rondo, includes moments of frustration, anger, and anguish.

If we view this through the lens of an older man considering the antics and accomplishments of days, the myriad facets of the concerto start to fit together; the adoration of his father, his compositional growth, and even the wish for peace all seem to manifest themselves in the lush orchestration.

Like many students, I began learning the piece when I was far too young to appreciate its many intricacies. As I began developing the technical capacity to move beyond panicked determination, the operatic nature of the concerto began to expose itself. This is often considered the finest concerto written for the horn, as hardly any other comes close to approaching its scope. It is a privilege to have the chance to perform this piece, and I hope you enjoy the concert tonight.
— ©2017, Nivanthi Karunaratne

FRANZ LISZT
Piano Concerto No. 1 in E-flat Major, S. 124

It took Franz Liszt 25 years to arrive at the final form of his Piano Concerto No. 1 – a remarkable gestation period that exceeds the time it took him to compose any of his other works for piano and orchestra. At the time the preliminary three-movement draft was complete in 1832, the 21-year old Liszt had already made a name for himself as an accomplished pianist. As a child prodigy, he had impressed the musical audience of Vienna and finished a European tour that closely mirrored the one embarked upon by the young Mozart slightly over a half-century earlier. With people openly comparing him to the famed genius, Liszt’s stardom was just beginning.

Liszt first encountered the legendary violinist Niccolò Paganini in a Paris recital in 1831. Astounded by Paganini’s skill on the violin, Liszt not only spent up to 14 hours a day at the piano to perfect his technique, but he also worked on compositional methods for the piano
that would replicate the dazzling effects of Paganini’s violin. In the words of musicologist Alan Walker, Liszt aspired to “become the Paganini of the piano.”

To say that Liszt succeeded would be an understatement. Paris was a hub of piano virtuosi battling for the public’s affection, with some pianists specializing in particular techniques, be it thundering octaves or intricate passagework. Collectively, these pianists represented the basis for modern pianistic technique, and Liszt made these skills his own. In 1837, Liszt decisively outshined his final rival, Sigismond Thalberg, at a joint concert promoted as “Rome” against “Carthage.” With his competitors in Paris vanquished, Liszt spent the next ten years on the concert stage as the “rock star” of his age. He was greeted by unprecedented adulation: admirers fought over his handkerchiefs and collected his coffee dregs. The frenzy over Liszt reached such extremes that Heinrich Heine coined the term “Lisztomania” to describe it.

By 1839, Liszt’s First Piano Concerto had taken the single movement form it has today, but it took further revision (and the whimsical addition of the triangle) to bring the work to its final form in 1855, when Liszt premiered the concerto himself in Weimar with Hector Berlioz conducting. Liszt’s virtuosity at the piano is evident right at the start with a pyrotechnic display of octaves. Throughout the concerto, Liszt displays his mastery at coaxing all possible effects from the piano: crashing octaves are contrasted with the harp-like accompaniment at the end of Allegro maestoso, and the singing lyricism in the Quasi adagio is a stark contrast to the sparkling bells of the Allegretto vivace.

In spite of the concerto’s flashy nature at times, it would be a mistake to dismiss this work as a mere showpiece (which a Times critic once did, describing the piece as “most vulgar”). Indeed, by the time of its completion, Liszt had long given up a highly lucrative career as a travelling virtuoso in favor of extra time to compose, and he had edited away much of the extraneous virtuosity of previous versions of the concerto, presumably to focus more exclusively on the music itself. Liszt’s crafted his concerto in a way that links music of the past with the music of Romanticism. Structurally, it is clear that Liszt was inspired by Beethoven’s “Emperor” Concerto. Both pieces share the E-flat major tonality for their outer movements, with a slow movement in the surprising key of B major; Liszt’s idea to bridge the Allegretto vivace with the final Allegro marziale reflects Beethoven’s bridging of the last two movements in the “Emperor;” and both pieces start with cadenza passages for the piano.

However, Liszt’s concerto also exemplifies the radical evolution of music since Beethoven’s time. The concerto, a single-movement work, is structured upon only a few motives that may be elaborated upon and transformed, but never undergo an extensive development. Instead, in
the Allegro marziale, the short themes from earlier in the work all reappear, flowing freely into each other in a sort of fantasy. The recurrence of a motive throughout a work probably achieved its greatest renown as the Wagnerian *leitmotif*, yet few realize that it was Liszt who introduced Wagner to the idea. This technique was Liszt’s hallmark that could be also be found in his Piano Sonata, a cornerstone of the piano repertory, and the symphonic poem, a genre he invented that perhaps best captures the spirit of radical Romanticism.

— ©2017, Kevin Chein

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF  
Piano Concerto No. 3 in D Minor, Op. 30 (1909)

Vladimir Horowitz, whose performances and recordings of Rachmaninoff’s Third Piano Concerto immensely boosted its popularity in the United States, once described the work as an “untamable beast.” For its performers, the concerto is a war zone: waves of flurrying passages in the piano clash with bursts of frantic syncopation from the strings and woodwinds, and the thunderous Rachmaninoff-ian chords battle head-to-head with the explosions from the brass and percussion. However, Rachmaninoff’s magic – his skill with singing melodies, multi-layered textures, and harmonic colors – transforms the chaos into something extraordinarily beautiful. Ironically, he composed this piece in September 1909, a relatively tranquil period of his adulthood – almost a decade after his triumphant victory over depression, and well before the Russian Revolution of 1917, in his family estate of Ivanovka. Josef Hofmann, to whom the piece is dedicated, never performed it in public, saying that it “wasn’t for him.” On his way to North America, where Rachmaninoff would give a tour of the piece, he did not have access to a piano, so instead he brought a cardboard keyboard to practice and memorize the part.

The first performance of the concerto took place in November 1909, with the composer at the piano and Walter Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony Society. Several weeks later, he performed it again with the New York Philharmonic under the baton of Gustav Mahler, who Rachmaninoff respected, saying, “[Mahler] touched my composer’s heart straight away by devoting himself to my Concerto until the accompaniment, which is rather complicated, had been practiced to the point of perfection.” In Boston, when Rachmaninoff performed the concerto with the Boston Symphony Orchestra, he made such a great impression that he was asked to become Music Director of the orchestra, although he declined the offer.

The concerto, although it clearly showcases a virtuosic solo piano part, is more like a symphony
than any other. The orchestra does not simply accompany the piano; they work in symbiosis, providing melodic lines at times and accompanying figures at times. The first movement, in a modified sonata form, opens with its iconic first theme, reminiscent of hymns and plainchant with its generally stepwise motion and tonality. The contrapuntal line played by the cellos and the harmonic movement of the theme make it especially elegant and memorable, a perfect introduction to the arduous journey that is beyond. The second theme, in the closely related key of B-flat major, is a passionate love song, an expression of yearning for pure romance. The piano provides the main line, while several instruments – bassoon, horn, and then oboe and clarinet – join in with blending counterpoint. The development begins with a restatement of the first theme, but going in a different direction. The calm, spiritual atmosphere of the theme doesn’t last long, as the piano and woodwinds enter a canonic whirlwind. The music builds to the climax of the movement, an eruptive triple forte on the stormy C diminished seven chord. After a brief period of repose, the piano begins one of two cadenzas written by Rachmaninoff: the quick and nimble original cadenza, or the grand and lavish _ossia_ cadenza; both are monumental works of pianistic virtuosity, and serve as the “recapitulation” of the movement, restating a variation on the first theme. After, the music falls back again to a calm, almost hypnotizing state, where the piano plays a second mini-cadenza on the second theme, and softly ends with the first theme as a coda.

The second movement, Intermezzo, contains most of Rachmaninoff’s use of complex textural layers that turn simple melodies into beautiful waves of harmony. The entire movement is based on one theme, played by the oboe, and then the violins during the piano’s moment of rest. After a thunderous entrance full of chaotic chromaticism, the piano eventually sings the theme in the key of D-flat, a gorgeous key commonly used by Rachmaninoff for melodic passages. The movement builds and jumps from key to key, but returns to D-flat for a triumphant, majestic climax. The fast waltz-like scherzo that follows is completely based on the first theme of the first movement: the quick notes in the piano, as well as the melody played by clarinet and bassoon, can be built from the notes of the theme. Some parts from the second theme also appear in the section as little “Easter eggs.” A quick transition leads directly into the last movement.

The Finale, in a broad A-B-A form, is by far the most technically demanding movement for the pianist. The A section contains a string of sharp rhythmic themes, followed by a lyrical section, where the melody freely flows up and down, and broadens and tightens. The B section begins with a scherzando formed off the second theme of the first movement, and enters a set of dazzling variations on that theme. The first “hymn” theme occasionally makes its appearance as well. The last A section ends with an exciting build to the triumphant key of D major, concluding the concerto with the most magnificent of endings.
Personally, I have not had a long history with this piece; in fact, until the beginning of last summer all I knew about the concerto were the first and last themes, so I thought I should listen to the entire piece at least once. I downloaded Pletnev’s recording with Rostropovich conducting the Russian National Orchestra, and listened to it on a plane ride to Japan. At the end I found myself in tears. I was reminded of my late grandmother, my grandfather and relatives in Japan, and my family back in Boston. Something about Rachmaninoff’s nostalgic music hit very close to home, I guess. It was at that point that I swore to myself to give my absolute all to learn this piece, and compete in the competition. It was a long journey – seven months of only Rachmaninoff – but I’m so glad I pulled through with it, and I’m glad I’m able to share this music with you today. I hope you share a similar experience to what I had, and if so, there is a next stop: his Second Symphony!

— ©2017, Seho Young

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PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA
2016-2017 SEASON

Friday and Saturday, April 28 and 29, 7:30pm
Stuart B. Mindlin Memorial Concerts
Richardson Auditorium in Alexander Hall

HINDEMITH Symphonic Metamorphoses of Themes by Carl Maria von Weber
MAHLER Symphony No. 5

Saturday June 3, 8:00pm
Reunions Fireworks Concert
Finney Field