



**PENN
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
CONCERT**

Saturday, April 23, 2022

8:00PM

The Department of Music and the Student Activities Council
present

Penn Symphony Orchestra

Thomas Hong, conductor & director

With thanks to the University of Pennsylvania Music Department

Dr. Timothy Rommen, Department Chair

Dr. Anna Weesner, Undergraduate Chair

Dr. Michael Ketner, Director of Performance

Maddie Hewitt, Performance and Communications Coordinator

Eugene Lew, Director of Sound and Music Technology

IRVINE AUDITORIUM
3401 SPRUCE STREET
University of Pennsylvania



Founded in 1878, the **Penn Symphony Orchestra** exists to provide the Penn community with orchestra concerts. Consisting of primarily undergraduate student members, the ensemble performs music ranging from the early Baroque styles to modern living composers. The Penn Symphony Orchestra rehearses and performs in historic Irvine Auditorium on the University of Pennsylvania campus.

Hailed by Kurt Masur as “one of the most talented young conductors of his generation,” **Thomas Hong** enjoys the distinction of being one of many successful protégés of the great Maestro. Having won titled positions with the Dallas, Pittsburgh, and Seattle Symphony Orchestras as well as Orchestre National de France, Hong has conducted countless concerts with those orchestras, ranging from classical, community, education and pops concerts. Presently, he is the artistic director and conductor of the University of Pennsylvania Orchestras. Recent activities include being principal conductor for the inaugural season of the DSO on the “GO” series with the Dallas Symphony, performing in neighboring venues of the North Texas area, and a re-engagement with the Utah Symphony, where he was the conductor for the Gina Bachauer International Piano Competition in Salt Lake City.

Hong was born in Incheon, Korea and immigrated to the United States with his family. He began his musical training as a pianist with Dr. Samuel Hsu at Cairn University. Later, he went on to earn a Master’s degree in choral conducting at Temple University and an artist diploma in orchestral conducting from The Curtis Institute of Music, studying with Maestros Alan Harler and Otto Werner Meuller, respectively. He concluded his artistic training with Larry Rachleff at Rice University’s Shepherd School of Music. Currently, Hong lives in Philadelphia with his wife Rachel Ku and their daughter Esther.

PROGRAM

Pictures at an Exhibition

Modest Mussorgsky

- Promenade
- I. The Gnome
 - Promenade (2nd)
- II. The Old Castle
 - Promenade (3rd)
- III. Tuileries (Children's Quarrel after Games)
- IV. Cattle
 - Promenade (4th)
- V. Ballet of Unhatched Chicks
- VI. "Samuel" Goldenberg and "Schmuyle"
 - Promenade (5th)
- VII. Limoges. The Market (The Great News)
- VIII. Catacombs (Roman Tomb) – With the Dead in a Dead Language
- IX. The Hut on Fowl's Legs (Baba Yaga)
- X. The Bogatyr Gates (In the Capital in Kiev)

Intermission

Scheherazade

Nicolay Rimsky-Korsakov

- I. The Sea and Sinbad's Ship, Largo e maestoso – Lento – Allegro non troppo – Tranquillo
- II. The Kalandar Prince, Lento – Andantino – Allegro molto – Vivace scherzando – Moderato assai – Allegro molto ed animato
- III. The Young Prince and The Young Princess, Andantino quasi allegretto – Pochissimo più mosso – Come prima – Pochissimo più animato
- IV. Festival at Baghdad. The Sea. The Ship Breaks against a Cliff Surmounted by a Bronze Horseman, Allegro molto – Lento – Vivo – Allegro non troppo e maestoso – Tempo I



VIOLIN 1

Stand 1 – Elliot Kim, Concertmaster / Daphne Nie
Stand 1.5 – Bonnie Li / Joy Gong
Stand 2 – William Qi / Jonah Baer
Stand 3 – Daniel Da / Linlin Yang
Stand 4 – Daniel Hwang / Yuxuan Liu
Stand 5 – Lucas Schrier / Ben She
Stand 6 – Hannah Tsai / Maggie Yuan
Stand 7 – Danny Sanchez / Joey Wu
Stand 8 – Heewon Kim / Alea Zone

VIOLIN 2

Stand 1 – Hannah Goldberg, Principal / Eric Liu
Stand 1.5 – Alison Royce / Talia Coopersmith
Stand 2 – Jason Ren, Co-principal / Annie Wu
Stand 3 – Jason (Jaemyoung) Lee / Hyejin Lee
Stand 4 – Anthony Lee / Joy Onawola
Stand 5 – Kevin Xu / Mallory Peters
Stand 6 – Susan Zhang / Anna Nguyen
Stand 7 – Kingsley Song / Victor Tsao

VIOLA

Stand 1 – Ella Cho, Principal / Gavin Lee
Stand 1.5 – Cecilia Wright / Autumn Cortright
Stand 2 – Greg Kraynak / Savannah Mueller
Stand 3 – Henry Sywulak-Herr / Sahana Sundar
Stand 4 – Anna Chung / Peter Proenca

CELLO

Stand 1 – Deborah Zhang, Principal / Jason Shu
Stand 1.5 – Angela Youn, Co-principal / Sophie Sax
Stand 2 – Michael Tu / Christine Kong
Stand 3 – Samantha Martinez / Andy Liu
Stand 4 – Sierra Wei / Melanie Hilman
Stand 5 – Alex Ge / Edward Kim
Stand 6 – Evan Jiang

BASS

Stand 1 – John Wallison, Principal / Alex Kalbach
Stand 2 – William Stewart

FLUTE / PICCOLO

Sherry Shi, Principal
Elle Kirsch
Michael Han, Co-principal
Alyssia Liu

OBOE

Daniel Koropecykj-Cox, Principal

CLARINET

Will Wang, Principal
Greg Ferrey
Brett Bernstein
Xandro Xu, Co-principal

SAXOPHONE

Tristan Ly

BASSOON

Davey Heister, Principal
Mikaeel Habib
Kaitin Blam

HORN

Anagha Gouru, Principal
Harold Litt, Co-principal
Aidan Lewis
Evan Bretz

TRUMPET

Adrian Wang, Principal
Seamus Wang
Eli Harrison
Celeste Adler
Ryan Dahn

TROMBONE

Lance Lunceford, Principal
Justin Amgott
Tyler Jenkins-Wong, Co-principal
Rishi Patel
Hunter Stufflebeam, Bass

TUBA

Santino Lo

HARP

Elizabeth Vo-Phamhi

PERCUSSION

Karen Xu, Principal
Ethan Pani

GUEST MUSICIANS**Oboes / English Horn**

Erin Lensing
Rex Yape

Bass clarinet

Kenton Venskus

Contrabassoon

Rick Barrantes

Horn

Jack Bryant

Timpani

David Lu

Percussion

Bill Priebe
Griffin Harrison

Basses

Olivia Steinmetz
Sophia Kelsall
Markus Lang
Vincent Luciano



NOTES ON MUSSORGSKY

Pictures at an Exhibition

A staple of piano recitals given by virtuosi, this work is probably more familiar to many in its orchestration by Ravel. Unquestionably, a *tour de force* for the solo pianist, it is equally a sound spectacular for the modern orchestra. It lends itself admirably to reinterpretation in the orchestral idiom for the simple reason that few works in the repertoire consist of such deliberate and vivid depictions of a variety of colorful images from the physical realm. It was composed by Mussorgsky in 1874 during three weeks in June as a tribute to the distinguished Russian architect and artist, Viktor Hartmann, who had unexpectedly died of an aneurysm the age of only 39. Hartmann, a Volga German, was one of the champions of a new resurgence of indigenous Russian art, along with his close friend Mussorgsky. In recognition of Hartmann's work, an exhibition of some 400 of his drawings and paintings was given in the Academy of Fine Arts in St Petersburg in February and March of 1874. Mussorgsky's musical tribute to his friend takes the form of a suite of movements that vividly depict the subjects of ten of the paintings (few of the art works survive).

Pictures at an Exhibition is so replete with such a variety of colorful, eccentric and unique visual references that it almost begged for a setting for orchestra, with that group's magnificent palette of sound "colors." Yet, in all fairness it must be said that it is unquestionably equally successful as a solo piano work—imagine one person drawing all of the color, drama and power out of one instrument! To my mind, a comparison between the original piano version and its orchestration

is rather like imagining a Western vista photographed in black and white by Ansel Adams on the one hand, and the same vista painted on a grand scale by Alfred Bierstadt. Both would be equally stunning interpretations. In any case, Mussorgsky's work was almost seized upon by orchestrators and literally dozens of orchestral interpretations have been pumped out during the past 135 years—many by distinguished familiar conductors, composers, and orchestrators. Some of these occasionally are performed today, but only one has achieved almost universal acclaim and dominates today's concert performances, and that is the one done by Maurice Ravel in 1922. His gift for orchestration is well familiar to audiences, and his choices in the orchestration have now well nigh defined the work in the world's imagination.

In keeping with the composer's desire to mimic as much as possible the experience of a visitor to the exhibit, he starts the series of vignettes with a short movement (*Promenade*) that literally depicts the viewer walking from painting to painting. The music of this short introduction appears several times throughout the suite in various guises as the visitor moves from picture to picture. The effect of walking is cleverly created by music that is without a steady metre—Mussorgsky self-deprecatingly said that it alluded to his own rather lumbering gait.

The suite begins with the *Promenade*, played by solo, unaccompanied trumpet. It doesn't last long, and we arrive at the first picture, *Gnomus*, the music for which stutters to and fro, depicting a grotesque little gnome. The promenade takes us to the next picture, *Il vecchio castello* (the old

castle), a serene and antique scene in front of which a troubadour sings. In this case, Ravel has given the troubadour's song to a smoothly lyrical saxophone. The promenade next takes us to the Tuileries, the famous garden near the Louvre, where children are noisy (and contentiously) at play. This short scene features light woodwinds and lyrical strings in a consciously naïve and playful style. Without the help of the promenade, we encounter the next movement, *Bydło*, dominated by a rustic, lurching Polish oxcart, depicted so famously by the melancholy tuba solo. The movement starts softly, growing louder as the huge cart goes by, and fades as it passes on. Again, the promenade theme presents us with the next picture, a truly bizarre painting of dancing "un-hatched chicks in their shells." Chirping flutes, *pizzicato* strings, and a scampering bassoon aptly conjure up frenetic baby birds in a mad avian ballet.

Immediately thereafter, there emerges a dark portrait of two Russian Jews, Samuel Goldenburg and Schmuÿle—one rich, one poor. This clichéd and dated caricature uses a Middle Eastern gapped scale to evoke the two men's culture, beginning with Goldenburg, followed by a rapidly tongued, muted piccolo trumpet passage for Schmuÿle. The two portraits are then combined, followed by a short, morose tag. The famous market at Limoges comes next, populated by quarrelsome French peasant women. Barking horns and scintillating strings and woodwinds seem to evoke village gossip as it makes the rounds. A sudden pause and then a breakneck coda leads us to the dark and moribund world of the Roman catacombs, subtitled "With the dead, in a dead language."

Massive low brass and French horn passages ominously begin the first section, later joined by the trumpets in a powerful evocation of the finality of death. The second section is somewhat less foreboding, with strings and woodwinds creating a somewhat reflective search for the meaning of it all. The next movement takes the concept of "bizarre" to a truly higher level: it pictures the famous Slavic witch, Baba Yaga, who eats small children and lives in a hut standing on chicken legs. This particular hut is in the shape of a clock whose bells enter into the texture. It's a grotesque exercise in frenetic chasing around, far exceeding what we have heard so far. The end winds up in a whirlwind that spins right into the finale of the whole suite, the "Great Gate of Kiev." The majestic theme is worked through in several versions—some with intimations of a carillon. Each version seems to be more intense than the one before, with teasing sections of calmness, only to be redoubled by even more massive and imposing renditions that seem to challenge human and musical limitations. The peroration is usually considered to be just about the loudest and most imposing playing of which an orchestra is capable. Enjoy! ☺

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NOTES ON RIMSKY-KORSAKOV

Scheherazade, op. 35

Nicolay Rimsky-Korsakov's career stood in the very center of Russian musical life of the second half of the nineteenth century. His first career was in the Russian navy, but he soon garnered success in music. Known primarily for his fifteen operas, he was instrumental in the rising importance of that genre in Russia. In addition to his fame and influence as a composer, he was also head of the conservatory in St. Petersburg--his statue dominates the little park directly across the street from the conservatory and the famed Mariinsky Theatre. In the West, of course, we know him primarily for his symphonic overtures and the tone poem, *Scheherazade*. His ability as an orchestrator and teacher of orchestration is one of his many legacies--Igor Stravinsky was one of his students. In fact, much of the marvelous musical atmosphere that audiences adore in Stravinsky's early ballets, the *Rite of Spring*, *Firebird*, and *Petrouchka*, lead directly back to Rimsky-Korsakov and the orchestral style of his operas. And it is of no small interest that there are sections in Debussy's *La Mer* and Ravel's *Daphnis et Cloé* that seem lifted right out of *Scheherazade*. A fascination with the exotic, with non-Western subject matter was a prime characteristic of Romanticism, and Russian music of the late nineteenth century is exemplary of this predilection.

Scheherazade, completed in 1888, is a musical depiction of the well-known story, *One Thousand and One Arabian Nights*. The eponymous heroine must entertain her bridegroom, the murderous sultan, with continuous intriguing tales in order

to forestall the arrival of the executioner who had beheaded a thousand previous wives the morning after their successive marriages. While Rimsky-Korsakov more or less disclaimed his well-known reputation for his evocative musical orientalism, his abilities therein certainly created a triumph of exotic atmosphere in *Scheherazade*. The four movements--following their titles, which Rimsky-Korsakov later withdrew--depict specific stories of *Scheherazade*, the Sultana. We can follow loosely the narrative, for *Scheherazade* is represented by the elaborate, highly figured violin solo that constantly weaves in and out of the texture as the stories unfold. The composer makes ample use of other solo instruments throughout the suite, combined with a rich, colorful orchestral texture that carries it all. The last movement ties all the tales and stories together by juxtaposing the principal themes from the preceding movements in a smashing climax. ☺

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UPCOMING CONCERTS

Monday, April 25 | 7:30 PM

Penn Samba

Tuesday, April 26 | 7:00 PM

Penn Chamber

Wednesday, April 27 | 7:00 PM

Penn Chamber

Thursday, May 5 | 7:00 PM

UPenn Composers: Yarn/Wire

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