



*penn*  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Friday, November 11, 2022



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IRVINE AUDITORIUM  
3401 SPRUCE STREET  
University of Pennsylvania

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. Michael Ketner, Director of Performance  
Sophie Shalit, Performance Operations Coordinator  
Matthew Hewitt, Communications Coordinator  
Eugene Lew, Director of Sound and Music Technology  
Dr. Timothy Rommen, Department Chair



# PROGRAM

Leonore Overture No. 3..... Ludwig van Beethoven

Boléro..... Maurice Ravel

## INTERMISSION

Symphony No. 2 ..... Sergei Rachmaninoff

- I. Largo – Allegro moderato
- II. Allegro molto
- III. Adagio
- IV. Allegro vivace

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.

# BEETHOVEN & RAVEL

## 1ST VIOLIN

Hannah Lee / Joey Wu  
Ben She / Zoe Patterson  
Ethan Yu / Daphnie Nie  
Annie Cheng / Jonah Baer  
William Qi / Gracie Zhang  
Louis Dong / Maggie Yuan  
Richard Xiong / Kevin Zhou  
Bryan Kim

## 2ND VIOLIN

Talia Coopersmith / Joy Onawola  
Jason Lee / Alison Royce  
Angela Ye / Annie Wu  
Eva Gonzalez-Whitehouse / Gabriel Hajjar  
Bo Sun / Hannah Goldberg  
Elliot Kim / Brinson Moore

## VIOLA

Autumn Cortright / Greg Kraynak  
Anna Chung / Aaron Tsui  
Emily Monfont / Enne Kim  
Gavin Lee / Ella Cho  
Nancy Drye / Isaac King

## CELLO

Evan Jiang / Samantha Martinez  
Sophia Liu / Melissa Liu  
Thomas Sharrock / Maxfield Brody  
Avaniko Asokkumar / Andy Liu

## BASS

Joonyoung Lee / Alex Kalbach  
Berk Soykin / John Wallison

## DOUBLE BASS

Olivia Steinmetz\* / Sophia Kelsall\*

## FLUTE / PICCOLO

Michael Han / Kimberly Liang

## OBOE

Luna Sato  
Catherine Lachance-Duffy\*

## CLARINET

Xandro Xu  
Eric Just\*

## BASSOON

Mikaeel Habib  
Rick Barrantes\*

## HORN

Brian Herman / Harold Litt / Ryan Yang  
Martina Adams\*

## ENGLISH HORN

Catherine Lachance-Duffy\*

## TRUMPET

Celeste Adler / Ryan Dahn  
Tessa Ellis\*

## TROMBONE

Tyler Jenkins-Wong (Mark Li, assist.)  
Rishi Patel / Hunter Stufflebeam

## TUBA

Dan Ju

## PERCUSSION

Bill Priebe\* / Austin Andrulis\* / Alyssa Resh\*

## TIMPANI

Tammy Yang

\*Guest Musician

# RACHMANINOFF

## 1ST VIOLIN

Elliot Kim / Hannah Goldberg  
Andrew Wang / Bonnie Li  
Isaac Yan / Daniel Da  
Roberto Ligeralde / Linlin Yang  
April Zhang / Hannah Tsai  
Jessica Liang / Adah Kaplan  
Alan Hong / Amy Hong  
Daniel Kwon / Danny Sanchez

## 2ND VIOLIN

Lucas Schrier / Jason Ren  
Michael Huang / Julianna Cimillo  
Eric Liu / Anthony Lee  
Ian Lee / Anjana Begur  
Victor Tsao / Susan Zhang  
Sheridan Marsh / Luis O. Tierradentro

## VIOLA

Ella Cho / Cecilia Wright / Gavin Lee  
Phoebe Vallapureddy / April Park  
Lucas Chang / Savannah Mueller  
Henry Sywulak-Herr / Cynthia Dong  
Isaac King / Sahana Sundar

## CELLO

Deborah Zhang / Michael Tu  
Colby Snyder / Sophie Sax  
Christine Kong / Gabrielle Ryu  
Alex Ge / Patrick Wu  
Evan Jiang / Jordan Brooks

## BASS

Berk Soykan / Sarah Ramadan  
John Wallison / William Stewart  
Alex Kalbach

## DOUBLE BASS

Olivia Steinmetz\* / Sophia Kelsall\*

## FLUTE / PICCOLO

Elle Kirsch / Alyssia Liu / Katherine Li (picc.)

## OBOE

Daniel Koropeckyj-Cox / Jonathan Hong  
Catherine Lachance-Duffy\*

## CLARINET

Will Wang / Greg Ferrey  
Eric Just\*

## BASSOON

Kaitin Blam  
Rick Barrantes\*

## HORN

Aidan Lewis / Harry Li  
Anagha Gouru / Evan Bretz  
Martina Adams\*

## ENGLISH HORN

Catherine Lachance-Duffy\*

## TRUMPET

Seamus Wang / Eli Harrison / Graciela Torres  
Tessa Ellis\*

## TROMBONE

Tyler Jenkins-Wong (Mark Li, assist.)  
Rishi Patel / Hunter Stufflebeam

## TUBA

Dan Ju

## PERCUSSION

Bill Priebe\* / Austin Andrulis\* / Alyssa Resh\*

## TIMPANI

Tammy Yang

*The following notes were written by William E. Runyan, and abbreviated by Sophie Shalit.*

## NOTES ON BEETHOVEN

### Lenore Overture No. 3

Beethoven's Leonore Overture No. 3 was first composed in 1806. It is the third version of the overture from his only opera, *Fidelio*. While the opera was not well-received by some, this overture is a work of art all its own. The sheer grandeur of this work did not fit in with the calm beginning of the opera and Beethoven tried to rewrite the overture to better fit the plot. Though his rewrite (which was mistaken as his first attempt and is now known as Leonore Overture No. 1) was a more accurate match to the plot, the fantastic drama in the third overture makes it hard to resist. Many opera conductors have tried to fit the Overture No. 3 into their productions of *Fidelio*, but have always found it too grand in comparison to the plot. Hence, this overture is now played in concert halls, instead of opera houses, where its greatness can truly shine.

This piece is written for 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, timpani, and strings. Throughout the overture there are moments of reflection, triumph, and joy. Though the overture is not a good fit for the opera, it does portray the story of *Fidelio* well. In the beginning, there is a man called Florestan who has been arrested by a politician named Don Pizarro. The darker tones that open the overture reflect the life he lives in prison. Leonore, the wife of Florestan, is

disturbed by the absence of her husband and sets out to find him. She disguises herself as a male prison guard named Fidelio. There is then another section of peace and calm as Florestan remembers his happy life outside the prison. This is known as *In des Lebens Frühlingstagen* or "In the spring days of life". A solo trumpet then sounds once to hint at the spark of freedom that lingers just ahead in the plot. Fidelio has worked her way into her husband's cell and hides just as Pizarro comes to take his life. At the last moment, Leonore reveals her true identity and the trumpet sounds again to announce the arrival of the minister. Pizarro then leaves Florestan and Leonore together, promising his revenge on both of them. Though this piece was originally written for an opera, it is profoundly effective as an orchestral performance. ☺

## NOTES ON RAVEL

### Boléro

Ravel, was the son of a Basque mother and a Swiss father, but was quintessentially French in his elegant, stylish artistic imagination. He is clearly in the camp of those classicists who elegantly re-interpret the genres, forms, and musical syntax of the past. Only a cursory review of many of the titles of Ravel's works will bear out his deep fascination and appreciation for the uses of the musical past for imaginative, original contributions to a musical future. And yet, his music smacks nothing at all of the reactionary. His *oeuvre* from beginning to end is a succession of infinitely subtle, sophisticated, and attractive compositions—yet, how ironic it is that

what has come to be his best-known work he considered a trifle, an experiment, and a work consisting wholly of “orchestral tissue without music.” *Boléro*’s genesis came relatively late in Ravel’s life out of a commission from the great Russian ballerina, Ida Rubenstein. The story of the ballet is brief (and the music lasts only around fifteen minutes): In a Spanish tavern, in the midst of a raucous crowd, a woman leaps onto a table and dances the traditional boléro, becoming gradually more animated, until violence is threatened among the men, and the intense episode ends with a crash. There was a near-riot at the first performance.

Ravel’s setting for this little scene begins quietly with the snare drummer playing the traditional boléro rhythm—an unenviable task the poor player will have to unwaveringly perform non-stop for over fifteen minutes, straight through until the end. Truth be told, the player would probably rather be somewhere else. The simple “Spanish-Arab” melody is first heard in flute with simple pizzicato accompaniment in the lower strings (they, too, have an endurance challenge, for they must pluck non-stop to the end). The listener will hear it repeated eighteen more times, each in a different solo instrument or new combinations of instruments. As the tune is passed around, notice that the instrumental combinations that form the accompaniment change as well. The large orchestral forces include a small clarinet, bass clarinet, English horn, oboe d’amore, piccolo trumpet, and several saxophones. Sure, the hypnotic rhythm and the ever-increasing volume tend to grab your attention, but pay heed to the wonderful colors mixed up for the listener. The tension generated

by the repetition is enhanced by Ravel’s steadfast adherence to the key of C major—although considerable charm and interest is occasionally wrought by having some of the accompanying instruments double the melody simultaneously in different, but closely-related keys. A true stroke of genius occurs near the end: When you think that you are going to scream if you hear another bar of C major, Ravel abruptly signals the approaching end by a short move to the striking and ingratiating key of E major—but only for eight bars. The tumult reaches its climax, and with glissandi from the trombones and saxophones, amid smashing percussion, the orchestra triumphantly slides home to C major by a half step. Ravel’s “experiment” ends and in his own words: you can “. . . take it or leave it.”

Economy of means is a traditional virtue in art, and Ravel intentionally experimented with repetitive rhythm and melody in order to focus the mind on changing instrumental color. Sure, the long crescendo is important, but his acclaimed genius at orchestration makes the piece. ☺

## **(10-MINUTE INTERMISSION)**

# NOTES ON RACHMANINOFF

## Symphony No. 2

Normally, a “Symphony No. 2” implies a considered and thoughtful next step from the composition of a “Symphony No. 1.” But in the case of Rachmaninoff, it is somewhat of a minor miracle that he was able to muster the strength, courage and interest to produce a second effort in the genre after the debilitating and embarrassing debacle of that of the first. By the time of his graduation from the St. Petersburg Conservatory in 1892—winning a rare “Great Gold Medal”—he had completed his successful first piano concerto, a symphonic poem, and a highly praised opera. The evergreen Prelude in C# Minor soon followed, along with a spate of other works. He composed easily and enthusiastically, and soon turned his attention to the composition of his first symphony, No. 1 in D Minor, which received its première in March of 1897. It was a disaster of the first magnitude. Rachmaninoff’s efforts suffered from the conjunction of sound condemnation by the critics, a rag-tag performance owing to insufficient rehearsal, and a conductor, the eminent Alexander Glazunov, who not only was incompetent, but was also rumored to have been drunk on the podium. César Cui—not alone among the notable critics—compared the work to a symphony “based on the story of the Ten Plagues of Egypt,” from the “conservatory of Hell.” And that was one of the more moderate of his comments.

Rachmaninoff’s reaction was not immediate, but he soon fell into a debilitating loss of confidence as a composer, and more or less suffered a complete artistic collapse. During 1900 he began work on what is likely his most popular work, the Piano Concerto No. 2, and

gave its première in the fall of 1901. Other works soon followed, but composing was difficult owing to his busy and demanding career as opera conductor. In 1901 he married his first cousin, Natal’ya Satina, and became a father in 1903. Conducting at the Bolshoi was his focus until the social, economic and political troubles in Russia that culminated in the Revolution of 1905 led Rachmaninoff to remove to Dresden, where he lived on and off for several years. The relative peace and quiet there was propitious, for there he composed several major works, including the Symphony No. 2 in E Minor.

The first movement, like the whole work, is a long one, and opens with a substantial introduction—it’s quite a while before the movement, proper, begins. As with the first symphony, the very first few notes (here in the low strings) contain a simple, but important melodic idea or “motto” that will appear in many guises throughout the work. Three rich chords in the woodwinds immediately respond to this little back-and-forth undulation—a marker that will reappear from time to time in important moments. As the introduction builds, Rachmaninoff soon leads us through one of his signature and favorite passages: a strong, directed, harmonic progression along with a more defined melodic shape—it sounds complicated, but it’s easy to spot. Finally, the intensity of the familiar melodic undulations wanes and the solo English horn—echoing the opening notes—leads to a faster tempo, the beginning of the movement proper, and to the main tune, played by the violins. Taking his time, the composer expands the idea, and finally moves to the usual major key, introduced by clarinets. A winsome, throbbing theme follows, the exploration of which takes us eventually to the last tune. The working out is a stormy and extensive one, with intimations of all of

the ideas heard so far weaving in and out of the texture. Some soft brass chords echoing the woodwinds from the introduction signal the drive to the end of the section. Soon, brief “fanfare” pronouncements from the brass, which hitherto have been largely restrained, drive us forward. The composer quickly rounds out the movement by going directly to the major key and tune of the contrasting section from earlier on. This somewhat abbreviated return is balanced by a vigorous, driving coda—now back in the minor key--that takes us to the end of this substantial movement.

The following scherzo sparkles with the rhythmic drive and orchestration of an early influence, Rimsky-Korsakov. As is typical of scherzo movements, it is laid out in a broad arch form, the end like the beginning, and with a contrasting middle. But within these two large distinct sections, Rachmaninoff has subdivided each into two further contrasting parts. It sounds a bit complicated, but in the event, is quite easy to follow. The middle of the movement opens with a kind of jagged fugue that starts in the second violins, and works its way around the orchestra. Soon, in the second part of this middle section, the brass takes up a happy little processional march, with intimations of a chorale, which gradually and wryly disintegrates, leading into the return of the first main section that we heard in the horns. Finally, the little march with the brass chorales takes us nobly and quietly out.

The adagio is an apotheosis of Rachmaninoff’s signature ability to weave a rich and sustained movement of long, undulating melodies accompanied by brief “mottos” that tie it all together. The weft of contrapuntal textures and dark textures glides along with almost unparalleled lyricism, with one

memorable tune after another. The main theme of the movement occurs after an opening bar or two, and most will recognize it, some will even remember the smash popular hit from the nineteen thirties based upon it. It doesn’t last long, but it will return in a big way. It all gently and meditatively draws to a tranquil end, with the long, expressive clarinet solo from the beginning now in the strings, ending suggestively with one of the mottos.

The last movement is in—surprise!—an optimistic major key, and bursts out in an energetic Italianate tarantella. Soon, the timpani announces the arrival of a soft little march which in no time leads right back to the busy tarantella. The second main idea is again one Rachmaninoff’s signature expansive, lyrical tunes, ending finally in a brief, poignant allusion to the famous melody of the preceding movement. The development—which is not long--then plunges ahead with the tarantella, but ends spectacularly with a cascade of descending, carillon-like scales all over the place, fast and slow. The recapitulation brings back all of the previous themes—tarantella, march, lyric melody, bell scales, and elements from the previous movements. The composer weaves it all together in a marvel of thematic integration that belies his reputation as just a “big tune” romantic. All that remains is the inevitable quick scamper to the end.

Rachmaninoff’s reputation suffered greatly in the last century at the hands of many intellectuals who sneered at his hopelessly passé effusive romanticism. They foolishly ignored his brilliant thematic integration, formal innovations, and profound imagination. The tables have thankfully turned, and we are all the better for it. ☉

# *penn music* UPCOMING CONCERTS

Wednesday, November 16 - 7:30 PM

Opera and Musical Theater Workshop: The Power of Myth

Thursday, November 17 - 8:00 PM

Penn Baroque and Recorder Ensembles

Friday, November 18 - 6:00 PM

Penn Jazz Ensembles

Sunday, November 20 - 3:00 PM

Penn Wind Ensemble

Saturday, December 3 - 7:00 PM

Penn Chorale

Monday, December 5 - 7:30 PM

Penn Collegium Musicum

Wednesday, December 7 - 7:30 PM

Penn Sound Collective

Thursday, December 8 - 8:00 PM

Penn Arab Music Ensemble

Friday, December 9 - 7:00 PM

Penn Chamber

Saturday, December 10 - 8:00 PM

Penn Symphony Orchestra: Sibelius Symphony no. 2

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