

Penn Symphony Orchestra

Thomas Hong, Conductor

Friday, October 27, 2023

8:00pm

Irvine Auditorium

University of Pennsylvania



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The Department of Music and the Student Activities Council Present:

PENN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Thomas Hong, Conductor & Director
Hannah Lee ('25), Violin
Elliot Kim ('25), Concertmaster

Embracing the Resiliency theme of all performance ensembles this academic year, the Penn Symphony celebrates the resilience of our senior graduating class who began their academic journey at Penn during the height of the Pandemic in isolated conditions.

With thanks to the University of Pennsylvania Music Department

Dr. Timothy Rommen, Department Chair
Dr. Michael Ketner, Director of Performance
Isaac Shalit, Performance Operations Coordinator
Diane Imboden, Communications Coordinator
Eugene Lew, Director of Sound and Music Technology

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PROGRAM

Overture to Don Giovanni, K.527

Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart
(1756 -1791)

Violin Concerto no.5 in A Major, K. 219 ("Turkish")

I. Allegro aperto

II. Adagio

III. Tempo di menuetto

Mozart
(1756 - 1791)

Hannah Lee ('25), violin

Intermission

Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40

Richard Strauss
(1864 - 1949)

About the Ensemble

The University of Pennsylvania Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1878 and is comprised of musicians from throughout the University community, primarily non-music majors. The ensemble rehearses for four hours each week and performs a diverse range of repertoire drawn from the eighteenth, nineteenth, and twentieth Centuries. The Penn Symphony Orchestra rehearses and performs in historic Irvine Auditorium on Penn's Campus. Due to the increased number of student participation, the ensemble has expanded to two ensembles with rotating/interchangeable personnel.

About the Conductor

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.



About the Soloist

HANNAH LEE is a PPE and Psychology student also currently in Penn GSE's Education Policy Master's program. As a violinist, she placed first for Washington State multiple times and was a finalist for the Seattle Youth Symphony Orchestra concerto competition. Ms. Lee has also attended numerous music festivals and won national awards, including Interlochen's Fine Arts Award as well as top rankings for the Washington/Northwest region at Nationals. A music minor at Penn, she currently studies with Min-Young Kim as part of the Marian Anderson Performance Program.



PENN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

OVERTURE TO DON GIOVANNI

Violin 1

Daniel Hwang, CM / William Qi
Amy Hong / Alan Hong
Maxine Moody / Kevin Zhou
Darae Kang / Isaac Yang
Talia Coopersmith / Isaac Yan
Ben Amidon

Violin 2

Hertha Torre Gallego /
Sophie Rosales
Cissy Wang / Sakyo Maedo
Gracie Zhang / Ethan Fan
Kohei Kayanuma /
Eva Gonzalez-Whitehouse
Jennifer Li / Brinson Moore

Viola

Cynthia Dong / Rayan Jawa
Nihar Ballamudi / Bo Sun
Vidhu Bulumulla / Yichen Huang

Cello

Samantha Martinez /
Lianghuan Huang
Alicia Zhang / Michelle Shi
Melanie Hilman / Evan Jiang

Basses

William McGregor*
Jason Henery*

Flute

Alyssia Liu / Rebecca Lim

Oboe

Luna Sato / Jonathan Hong

Clarinet

Gavin Kurdek / Xandro Xu

Bassoon

Christopher Kwok / Joshua
Schairer*

Horn

Brian Herman / Ryan Yang

Trumpet

Seamus Wang / Samy Antifit

Timpani

Bill Priebe*

VIOLIN CONCERTO NO.5 IN A MAJOR

Violin 1

Ethan Yu, CM / Daphnie Nie
Jonah Baer / Daniel Da
Richard Xiong / Leyla Robertson
Isaac Yan / Brinson Moore

Oboe

Luna Sato / Jonathan Hong

Horn

Lyndsie Wilson* / Evan Bretz

Violin 2

Talia Coopersmith / Joy Onawola
Kate Wong / Kevin Xu
Angela Zhu / Victor Tsao
Gracie Zhang / Ben Amidon

Viola

Autumn Cortright /
Gregory Kraynak
Emma Bethon /
Sydney Fitzgerald

Cello

Christine Kong / Sophie Sax
Andy Liu / Melanie Hilman
Evan Jiang

Bass

Maria Evancho /
Christian Luevano*





EIN HELDENBELN, OP.40

Violin 1

Elliot Kim, CM / Joey Wu
Isaac Yan / Bonnie Li
Roberto Ligeralde /
Juliana Cimillo
Hannah Tsai / Maggie Yuan
Gracie Zhang /
Hannah Goldberg
Cecelia Petruconis / Aiwen Li
Ryan Aihara / Gabriel Huang
Aruli Pillai / Emily Li Wang

Violin 2

Michael Huang / Jason Ren /
Susan Zhang
Meg Bowen / Michelle Edavettal
Jaemyoung Lee / Adah Kaplan
Angela Ye / Anjana Begur
Lucas Schrier / Zayd Khan
Eric Liu / Ian Lee
Eric Cui / Sophia Fu
Brinson Moore /
Benjamin Amidon

Viola

Phoebe Vallapureddy /
Henry Sywulak-Herr
Liam Tan / Anna Chung
Madeline Chun / Cecilia Wright
Gavin Lee / Ella Cho
Savannah Mueller

Cello

Michael Tu / Gabrielle Ryu
Colby Snyder /
Thomas Sharrock
Kevin Song / Irene Kim
Justin Lo / Brianna Hess
Marcela Reina / Melanie Hilman
Evan Jiang / Leo Kim

Bass

William Stewart / Daniel Virgen
Christian Leuvano* /
William McGregor*
Jason Henery*

Flute

Rachel Wang / Rishi Dadlani /
Clara Ma /
Kristine Huang, piccolo

Oboe

Daniel Koropecykj-Cox /
Nicholas Kwok

English Horn

Marie Trudeau*

Clarinet

Kyunghwan Lim / Will Wang

E-flat Clarinet

Eric Just*

Bass Clarinet

Ethan Thway

Bassoon

Judy Belland / Joshua Schairer*

Contrabassoon

Rick Barrantes*

Horn

Aidan Lewis [Lyndsie Wilson*, assist.]
/ Anagha Goulu / Hannah Eide* /
Marcus Shaw* / Evan Bretz /
Harold Litt / Nick Ivy* / Christine Ott*

*Guest Musician

B-flat Trumpet

TBD / Celeste Adler / Samy Antifit

E-flat Trumpet

Ryan Dahn / Kent Bergin*

Trombone

Tyler Jenkins-Wong / Rishi Patel /
Hunter Stufflebeam (bass)

Euphonium

Megan Alexander*

Tuba

Joseph Gould

Keyboard

David Hughes

Timpani

Avery Kirschbaum

Percussion

Austin Yuan
Caleb Cho
Bill Priebe*
David Lu*



PROGRAM NOTES

Overture to *Don Giovanni*, K.527 Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 -1791)

Mozart's incomparable musical gifts enabled him to compose at the highest level of artistic brilliance in almost every musical genre. We are privileged to experience his legacy in symphonies, chamber music, wind serenades, choral music, keyboard music—the list goes on and on. But, unquestionably, his greatest contributions to musical art are his operas. No one—not even Wagner, Verdi, Puccini, or Richard Strauss exceeded the perfection of Mozart's mature operas. The reason, of course, is clear: his unparalleled musical gift is served and informed by a nuanced insight into human psychology that is simply stunning. His characters represented real men and women on the stage, who moved dramatically, and who had distinctive personalities. Of no opera is this truer than his foray into serious opera in the Italian style, *Don Giovanni*.

Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro*, at its première in Vienna in 1786, was a decided success, but nothing like the acclaim that it garnered later, in December of that same year, in Prague. The city literally went wild for it, bringing the composer to the Bohemian capital to conduct performances in January of 1787. A commission for another hit ensued, and Mozart once again collaborated with librettist, Lorenzo Da Ponte—this time basing the opera on the legendary seducer, Don Juan. Italian opera buffa is comic opera, and Mozart was a master of it, but the new opera—given the theme—is a serious one, with hilarious, comic interludes. Shakespeare often made adroit use of the dramatic contrast in that play, and so does Mozart, with equal success.

The evidence is that Mozart wrote out the overture at the last minute—almost literally. The first performance was on 29 October 1787, and the overture was finished the day previous, although we must remember that Mozart, being the genius that he was, had almost certainly composed it to the note in his head before sitting down to the onerous task of copying it out in ink. The overture to *The Marriage of Figaro* is one of the most vivacious, sparkling opera preludes in the entire literature—this is most certainly not the case with *Don Giovanni*. Sonorous dark chords, throbbing sighs in the strings, and sinuous lines that wind up and down all ominously portend the condemnation to Hell that awaits the protagonist in our drama. This is the same music that will accompany the Don at the end of the opera, as demons take possession of his wretched soul. But, after putting us all on notice of the libertine's fate, Mozart plunges into a happy allegro, which, as the opera audience will soon see, anticipates the comic scenes that are so beloved. But, the composer doesn't lay out a completely untroubled romp leading into the opera, proper, for there are dark moments, too, in this otherwise bright section. It all blends together in an artful reflection of the variegated moods of the tale—and, upon a little contemplation, of the composer's life, as well.

--Wm. E. Runyan

Violin Concerto no.5 in A Major, K. 219 (“Turkish”) Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart (1756 -1791)

Visitors to the small, sparse museum located in the putative home of the Mozarts in Salzburg will see a glass display case containing the little violin of the young Wolfgang. And it reminds us of the centrality of the violin in Mozart’s younger days. His father, Leopold, was the author of the most celebrated tutor for the violin in the eighteenth century . Little Wolfgang was his prize pupil, and his performances on the violin were a mainstay of his celebrity during all those barnstorming tours as a child. A little older, and back home in Salzburg, Mozart led the little court orchestra as a virtuoso concertmaster. In 1775, at the age of nineteen, Mozart composed all five of his violin concertos, for own use, of course. Though composed rather quickly in succession, each concerto shows growing mastery of the genre, culminating in the important A Major concerto. In many respects it is his swansong for the violin, for after leaving Salzburg for Vienna a few years later, he never again played the violin in any significant situations, preferring to play the viola in private music making with his friends.

The A Major concerto is perhaps the best violin concerto of the latter half of the eighteenth century, and probably the most frequently played violin concerto. It certainly merits the attention, for this is a work that marks Mozart’s emerging mature style in every way. In the first movement Mozart’s imagination comes to the fore immediately, for upon the entrance of the soloist, the whole atmosphere of the movement changes for a bit, as the bustling tempo of the orchestra is replaced by a brief slow passage of considerable gravitas for the soloist. The faster tempo resumes, but in the middle of the movement, we encounter darkly colored excursions in minor keys and somber emotion. This is rather typical of music from this period in Mozart’s life, and some listeners may remember similar passages in his so-called “Little G Minor” symphony from the same period. The middle movement is predictably a lyrical one, simply of exquisite beauty.

It is the last movement that gives the concerto its moniker, and starts out as a fairly conventional dance (it’s a minuet) in a form in which the main idea alternates with other contrasting ideas. But, it is in the contrasting section that occurs just before the last statement of our familiar main theme that Mozart “drops the bomb.” For this surprise he recycles a kind of “Turkish” march from an earlier opera, “The Jealous Harem Women.” It’s different in every way: tempo, meter, mood, culture—you name it. So-called “Turkish” music was all the rage, then, in Vienna, owing to the threat to the city by the Turks for centuries (museums in the city, today, are full of artifacts from the wars). All of the major composers wrote pieces with what the Viennese thought of as Turkish qualities: cymbals, drums, triangles, piccolo, thumping bass lines, etc. You will remember Beethoven’s use of the conceit in the last movement of his Ninth Symphony. Well, it comes as a complete surprise, here, rather like an uninvited drunken guest at the party, and it’s all great fun. The basses enhance the effect of tomfoolery by striking the strings with the wooden part of their bows. Just when things seem out of control, the graceful minuet returns and all’s put right. Surprising, the movement ends quietly, almost with a sigh, not apologetically, but definitely rather like conciliatory relief.

--Wm. E. Runyan

Ein Heldenleben, Op. 40

Richard Strauss (1864 - 1949)

One of Richard Strauss's claim to fame was his composition of tone poems, orchestral works written to evoke the content of poem, short story, novel, painting, or other extramusical source. By the summer of 1898 when Strauss began composing *Ein Heldenleben (A Hero's Life)*, he was already enjoying immense popularity following the composition of four very well-received tone poems. The original inspiration for *Ein Heldenleben* arose from Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony, another famous work based on an unnamed hero. Strauss was obviously aware of the connection between the two works and remarked that since "Beethoven's *Eroica* is so little loved by our conductors, and consequently seldom performed nowadays, I am satisfying an urgent need of mine by composing a largish tone poem entitled *Ein Heldenleben*, admittedly without a funeral march, but at least in E-flat major and with lots of horns – which is always a measure of heroism." (Beethoven's *Eroica* is in that key, features a funeral march, and famously beefs up the horn section.) Naturally, a work entitled "A Hero's Life" raises the question of who is the Hero? Critics at the time speculated that the work is autobiographical but Strauss himself was adamant that the focus should not be on the identity of the hero but rather the ideals of heroism. *Ein Heldenleben* is split into six contrasting sections but is performed as one continuous movement with minimal pauses. Strauss originally published names for each of the sections, but later rescinded them feeling that they were superfluous and self-evident in the music. Despite this, the titles of each section remain in use today, serving as signposts in the musical journey.

Ein Heldenleben begins with **The Hero**, an energetic and expansive opening that introduces the Hero's theme. The section culminates in a grand preparatory gesture that seems destined for resolution but instead leads to a starkly contrasting section of dissonant and prickly music. This new scene represents **The Hero's Adversaries** and was the most divisive portion of the work at its premiere. Many of Strauss's critics believed the hideous and distorted music portraying grudgers and faultfinders was a representation of themselves. The critics were unsurprisingly offended and Strauss even privately admitted the comments were "only partially true." The Hero's theme makes an appearance in this section but is darker and more subdued compared to the opening. The next scene introduces **The Hero's Companion**, portrayed by a solo violin. Although Strauss was evasive about whether he was the Hero depicted in the work, he did confirm that the Hero's companion is a portrait of his wife, Pauline Strauss. Strauss remarked that "she is very complex, very feminine, a little perverse, something of a flirt, never the same twice, every minute different from how she had been a minute before." The solo violin emulates these qualities, playing a virtuosic cadenza that travels through a range of characters while conversing with the rest of the orchestra. The section ends in a beautiful love song that is briefly interrupted by the music of the adversaries before a trumpet fanfare summons the hero to **The Hero's Battlefield**. Strauss utilizes an army of brass instruments and prominent percussion parts to evoke the scene of a battle, culminating in a triumphant musical return of the Hero's theme. The penultimate section, **The Hero's Works of Peace**, is the most autobiographical section of the work, as Strauss liberally quotes from many of his previous tone poems and weaves them together into rich tapestry of textures and colors. Perhaps as justification for this seemingly self-congratulatory display, Strauss told his publisher decades later: "Of course I haven't taken part in any battles, but the only way I could express works of peace was through themes of my own." **The Hero's Retirement from the World and Completion** brings the work to a close, as the Hero recalls his previous battles and his companion returns to join her hero for a peaceful conclusion. However, the music is not allowed to subside undisturbed – Strauss pushes for one last heroic moment, using the brass section to create a rich sonority that reaches a glorious peak before fading away.

-- Evan Jiang ('21)



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UPCOMING PERFORMANCES

Penn Flutes

November 5, 2023 at 4pm

Houston Hall - Hall of Flags (3417 Spruce Street, Philadelphia PA)

**Penn Flutes - Music in the Stacks
Concert Series**

November 10, 2023 at 1:30pm

Van Pelt-Dietrich Library Center - Main Lobby (3420 Walnut Street, Philadelphia PA)

Penn Jazz Ensembles

November 10, 2023 at 6pm (Set 1) and 7:30 (Set 2)

Fisher-Bennet Hall - Rose Recital Hall, Room 419 (3340 Walnut Street, Philadelphia PA)

Opera and Musical Theater Workshop

November 15, 2023 at 7:00pm

Fisher-Bennet Hall - Rose Recital Hall, Room 419 (3340 Walnut Street, Philadelphia PA)

Featured Art: "Heroic Movement" by Theo van Doesburg (1916)