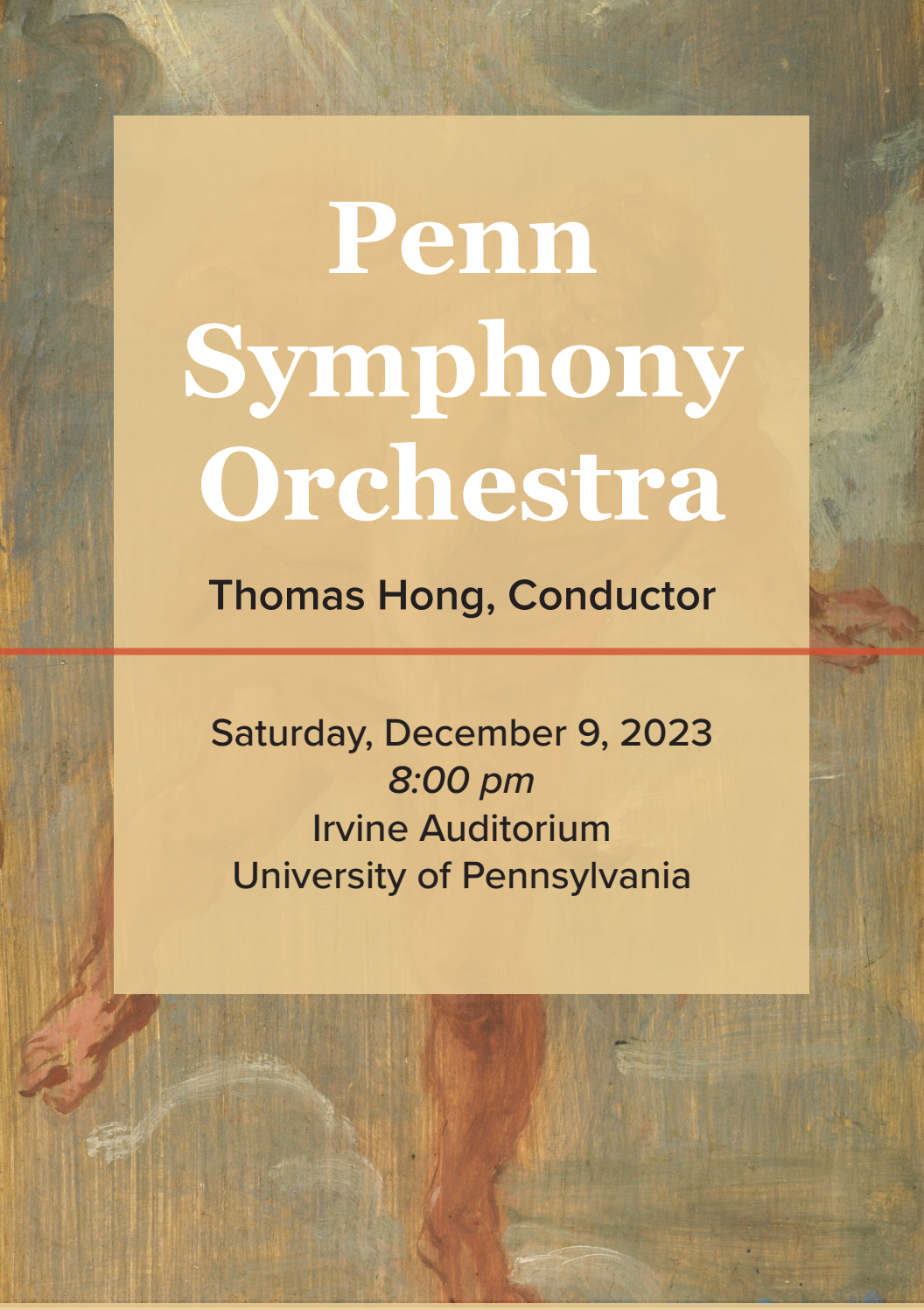

Penn Symphony Orchestra

Thomas Hong, Conductor

Saturday, December 9, 2023
8:00 pm
Irvine Auditorium
University of Pennsylvania

PennMusic
University of Pennsylvania

Program

Overture to *The Creatures of Prometheus*, Op. 43 — Ludwig van Beethoven (1770 - 1827)

Idillio-Concertino in A major for Oboe, Strings and two Horns, Op. 15 — Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari (1876-1948)

I. Preambolo
II. Scherzo – Presto
III. Adagio
IV. Rondò – Allegro non troppo

Richard Woodhams, soloist

- Intermission -

Symphony no. 5 in E minor, Op. 64 — Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)

I. Andante – Allegro con anima – Molto più tranquillo
II. Andante cantabile, con alcuna licenza
III. Valse. Allegro moderato
IV. Finale: Andante maestoso – Allegro vivace – Meno mosso

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

RICHARD WOODHAMS retired from the Philadelphia Orchestra in 2018 after having enjoyed a tenure as Principal Oboe since 1977, appearing as a soloist in New York, Chicago, Boston, Ann Arbor, San Francisco, Los Angeles and many other cities in the United States as well as in Asia. He premiered several Concerti in Philadelphia as well and collaborated with its last five Music Directors.

He taught at the Curtis Institute and Temple University and now teaches privately. His former students currently occupy positions in leading Orchestras and Schools both in the United States and abroad. Richard has given masterclasses in prominent conservatories in Canada, China, Great Britain, Israel, Taiwan and the United States. He taught and played at the Aspen School of Music for fifteen summers and participated in many other Festivals including those of La Jolla, Marlboro, Sapporo, and Sarasota. He also served on the Jury of the Munich International Oboe Competition, recorded the Strauss Oboe Concerto with Wolfgang Sawallisch , and is a charter member of The World Orchestra for Peace, an international assembly of musicians founded by Sir Georg Solti in 1995 to commemorate the 50th Anniversary of The United Nations.

In recent years he has served as guest Principal Oboe of the Chicago Symphony with Riccardo Muti and the Los Angeles Philharmonic with Michael Tilson Thomas. In 2018 he received a citation from the Musical Fund Society of Philadelphia in acknowledgement of his longstanding contributions to Philadelphia's musical life. Mr. Woodhams is a graduate of the Curtis Institute where he studied with John deLancie, his distinguished predecessor in the Philadelphia Orchestra, and began his career in the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra under Walter Susskind.

He has two grown sons, Louis Woodhams and Eric Woodhams who live in St. Louis and Detroit respectively, and is married to Kiyoko Takeuti, pianist and celesta player with the Philadelphia Orchestra. He enjoys reading about culture and politics, playing in and going to concerts of many forms of classical music, and listening to vintage jazz and swing music.

Penn Symphony Orchestra

Overture to The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43

Violin 1
Michael Huang, CM / Jason Ren
Angela Ye / Anjana Begur
Lucas Schrier / Zayd Khan
Elliot Kim / Isaac Yan
Benjamin Amidon

Violin 2
Meg Bowen / Michelle Edavettal
Eric Liu / Ian Lee
Eric Cui / Sophia Fu
Susan Zhang / Brinson Moore

Viola
Cecilia Wright / Anna Chung
Gavin Lee / Ella Cho

Cello
Colby Snyder / Thomas Sharrock
Kevin Song / Brianna Hess

Bass
William McGregor* / Jason Henery*

Flute
Clara Ma / Kristine Huang

Oboe
Daniel Koropeckyj-Cox /
Nicholas Kwok

Clarinet
Kyunghwan Lim / Will Wang

Bassoon
Judy Belland / Rick Barrantes*

Horns
Anagha Gouru / Evan Bretz

Trumpet
Samy Antifit / Tessa Ellis*

Timpani
Avery Kirschbaum

Idillio-Concertino in A major

Violin 1
Isaac Yan / Bonnie Li
Roberto Ligeralde / Juliana Cimillo
Hannah Tsai / Maggie Yuan
Elliot Kim / Joey Wu

Violin 2
Cecelia Petruconis / Aiwen Li
Ryan Aihara / Hannah Goldberg
Gabriel Huang / Aruli Pillai
Benjamin Amidon / Brinson Moore

Viola
Phoebe Vallapureddy /
Henry Sywulak-Herr
Liam Tan / Madeline Chun

Cello
Michael Tu / Gabrielle Ryu
Justin Lo / Melanie Hilman
Evan Jiang

Bass
William Stewart / Christian Luevano*

Horn
Evan Bretz / Marcus Shaw*

Symphony no. 5 in E minor

Violin 1
Hannah Lee, CM / Daphnie Nie
Ethan Yu / Jonah Baer
Daniel Hwang / Daniel Da
William Qi / Amy Hong
Kevin Zhou / Richard Xiong
Alan Hong / Maxine Moody
Darae Kang / Leyla Robertson
Isaac Yang / Sophie Rosales

Violin 2
Talia Coopersmith / Joy Onawola
Kate Wong / Hertha Torre Gallego
Kevin Xu / Angela Zhu
Sakyo Maedo / Ethan Fan
Victor Tsao / Kohei Kayanuma
Adah Kaplan / Eva Gonzalez-Whitehouse
Aruli Pillai / Jennifer Li
Brinson Moore / Benjamin Amidon

Viola
Autumn Cortright / Greg Kraynak
Cynthia Dong / Rayan Jawa
Nihar Ballamudi / Emma Bethon
Sydney Fitzgerald / Savannah Mueller
Vidhu Bulumulla / Yichen Huang
Nancy Drye

Cello
Christine Kong / Sophie Sax
Samantha Martinez /
Lianghuan Huang
Alicia Zhang / Michelle Shi
Melanie Hilman / Evan Jiang

Bass
Maria Evancho / Christian Luevano*
William McGregor*/ Jason Henery*

Flute
Alyssia Liu / Rebecca Lim / Alice Jin

Oboe
Luna Sato / Jonathan Hong

Clarinet
Gavin Kurdek / Xandro Xu

Bassoon
Judy Belland / Christopher Kwok

Horn
Brian Herman / Evan Bretz / Ryan Yang /
Harold Litt

Trumpet
Seamus Wang / Samy Antifit

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

Tuba
Brian Brown*

Timpany
Austin Yuan

*Guest Musician

Program Notes

Overture to The Creatures of Prometheus, Op. 43

The Creatures of Prometheus is the only ballet music written by **Ludwig van Beethoven** (1770-1827). Based on a libretto by Italian choreographer and dancer Salvatore Viganò, it was composed in 1801 and premiered on late March of the same year at the Burgtheater in Vienna. The ballet is an allegory about the mythical story of Prometheus, who stole fire from the sky and thunder god Zeus to create humankind from clay. In the ballet, Prometheus finds humans to be somewhat ignorant and introduces them to science and art. This idea was very much in line with the composer's own understanding and support of the Enlightenment movement or the Age of Reason, which was shaping and influencing European philosophy during that time. After the dramatic opening chords of the slow introduction, the oboes and horns lead this opening section with a most simple yet sublime melody. Afterward, the orchestra bursts into a blaze of colorful energy as the strings drive the force of the tempo while the winds join in sparkling, intricate fashion. This infectious energy

is heard throughout the overture and meant to represent Prometheus fleeing from heaven after stealing fire from the gods. The overture ends with equally bold, bristling chords played by the entire orchestra.

Idillio-Concertino in A major

Italian composer **Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari** (1876-1946) was born in Venice. The son of German painter, he added his mother's maiden-name to his surname at age 19. As a teenager, Wolf-Ferrari wanted to be a painter like his father and pursued his craft intensively but later decided to concentrate on music instead, enrolling at the Munich conservatory. Eventually, he moved back home to Venice and began working as a choral conductor, also starting a family there. However, his artistic pursuits would lead him back to Munich and he enjoyed tremendous success as a comic opera composer in the early 1900's.

Although relatively unknown, *Idillio-Concertino* is perhaps one of the most exquisitely written oboe concerto works of the 20th century. It shows off the capabilities of the oboe as a virtuoso instrument, highlighting its various moods. The outer movements are bright and cheerful with syncopated rhythms. The playful second movement is blissfully folk-like, even capturing some of the countryside imagery of Beethoven's *Pastoral* symphony. Perhaps, the centerpiece of this work is the profound third movement with its melancholically introspective harmonies, reaching nearly Mahlerian intensity at times.

We are also deeply honored to share the stage with our soloist Richard Woodhams this evening.

Symphony no. 5 in E minor

Tchaikovsky completed six symphonies during his lifetime, the last three of which have long been concert staples. The three, while exhibiting both the tangible and intangible characteristics of the composer that endear him to music lovers everywhere, are each unique expressions of his musicianship and personality. Symphony No. 4 (with good reason associated with "fate") came out of an especially troubled time in his life with regard to his ill-starred (and short) marriage—among other factors was his attempted suicide. Symphony No. 6 was, of course, his last one (he died of cholera nine days after its première), and its title bore the French equivalent of "pathos." And its tragic pianississimo ending truly evokes the finality of his great personal anguish. So, where does that leave us with No. 5?

In some ways, we find ourselves in a similar kettle of fish. The fifth symphony was composed and premièred in 1888, when the composer was 48 years old, and it too- based upon the composer's own testament- more or less is concerned with "fate." He was already in contemplation of death: many close friends had recently died, he was in poor mental and physical health, and had made out his will in contemplation of his demise. But the preoccupation on fate in the fifth symphony is perhaps not the hammering fate of the fourth symphony, but rather a more acquiescing acceptance of what Tchaikovsky called "providence." The first movement starts right out with the so-called fate motive, played by both clarinets, ominously down in their lowest register; this motive will be easily heard in all four movements, and is a strongly

unifying element in the composition. The movement proper begins with a dark march—with a characteristic Tchaikovskian stuttering syncopation--initiated by solo clarinet and bassoon, accompanied by pizzicato strings. The whole movement centers around this theme, but there are others, most notably a winsome waltz-like theme. Although the movement moves through a variety of intense, dramatic (read loud) utterances, it ends in soft darkness—just as it began.

The second movement is perhaps the most well known of the four movements, owing to its use in a pop arrangement by Glenn Miller and others, shortly before World War II—luckily time has faded most of that particular memory. The melody is primarily a solo for the principal horn, and a glorious, beautifully spun out affair it is. A related idea for solo violin follows shortly. The middle of the movement generates considerable interest from its vivid harmonic surprises, a new theme in the clarinet, and general sense of unrest and instability. But then, the so-called fate motto from the first movement interrupts, and we're back at a return to the lovely first theme, although with changed orchestration and a dramatic buildup of emotion before quietly subsiding.

There are those who opine that no one equaled Tchaikovsky in walzes—even the Strausses—and I concur. The third movement is a series of incredibly elegant waltzes that make you wish that we all still danced them. But before they start, a soft, but ominous series of chords in the strings lures you into thinking that the dark mood of the ending of the first movement will prevail. But a wonderful modulation brings us to the novel and beguiling key of D major. The waltzes commence. The middle of the movement provides some relief from the waltzes in the form of a short scherzo in duple meter, contrasting nicely with all the ONE-two-three of the waltz. It's a frenetic affair, not so much unlike the suggestion of little rodents scampering around when they should be gracefully waltzing. The scampering continues for a while when the waltzes return, signaling the end of the movement—but not before the low clarinets menacingly interrupt for a moment with the motto that opens the whole symphony, and which we will hear in spades imminently in the last movement.

A sure-fire spiritual narrative in art during the romantic period—or any period, for that matter—is the journey from darkness to light, from defeat to victory, and perhaps death to transfiguration. Beethoven, Brahms, and other great composers wrote any number of works with this theme, and it is Tchaikovsky's and ours in this symphony. The long introduction to the last movement is based upon the motto theme of fate, but now opens in E major, the happy key of redemption. But, victory cannot be won so easily, so the main movement returns to E minor to begin the battle, and Tchaikovsky works it out with a dramatic review of familiar materials, as we gradually find our way into the world of light. The victory is hammered out in the motto of fate by stentorian unison brasses, and a tumultuous gallop to the end wraps up the triumph.

--Wm. E. Runyan

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Penn Samba
December 11, 2023 at 7:00pm
Houston Hall - Hall of Flags

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Featured Art: “Prometheus” by Peter Paul Rubens (1636 - 1637)
courtesy of Museo del Prado