Friday, December 3, 2021 at 7:30pm
Sunday, December 5, 2021 at 3:00pm
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

Princeton University Orchestra
Michael Pratt, Conductor

DAVID DEL TREDICI
(1937-)
Selections from Final Alice
Allison Spann ‘20, Soprano

SERGEI RACHMANINOFF
(1873-1943)
Symphony No. 2 in E Minor, Op. 27
I. Largo—Allegro moderato
II. Allegro molto
III. Adagio
IV. Allegro vivace

This program will be performed without an intermission.
All patrons must wear a properly fitting mask over their nose and mouth.
The use of photographic, video or audio equipment is strictly prohibited.
Please turn off or mute electronic devices for the duration of the performance.

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A NOTE FROM ALLISON SPANN ’20
ON DAVID DEL TREDICI’S SELECTIONS FROM FINAL ALICE

When I first began preparing Final Alice for the Concerto Competition back in December of 2019, I was so overwhelmed by its sheer athletic, technical demands that I hardly took the time to dig into its dramaturgy. Now, two years later, after sitting with it through the bizarre period we’ve just gone through, its meaning has become quite clear. See, the single most important thing to remember about Alice in Wonderland is that the whole thing is a dream. In a time that is filled with so much anxiety and fixation on reason and finding meaning, what a relief it can be to escape into a world of sheer joyful nonsense! David del Tredici’s setting of this piece relishes in this surrealism, giving the twists and turns of the courtroom scene an aggressively boisterous gleam. Though escapist in nature, I believe that this piece can also provide a beautiful sliver of hope: a reassurance that childlike wonder can once again reign, and that the joys of our wildest dreams are waiting—just down the rabbit hole.

I would like to thank Maestro Pratt and PUO for allowing me to present this piece even after our world was interrupted; my teacher, David Kellett for introducing me to this piece and for his unwavering faith in me throughout our years working together; and to my family and friends, who help me have faith in what lies ahead every day.

A NOTE FROM RUTH OCHS
ON SERGEI RACHMANINOFF’S SYMPHONY NO. 2 IN E MINOR, OP. 27

Sergei Rachmaninoff took to the podium to conduct the first performance of his Second Symphony in January 1908. His conducting was described as “disciplined,” but surely happiness welled up from within and satisfaction radiated from his face, as soon as he gestured the final chords, and the audience signaled their warm, enthusiastic response. Just over ten years earlier, in 1897, Rachmaninoff suffered a near-career ending setback as a composer, when Alexander Glazunov botched the premiere of his First Symphony and scathing reviews sent him into a multi-year depression. Several months of psychotherapeutic help from Nikolai Dahl rekindled Rachmaninoff’s creative confidence. The Second Piano Concerto of 1900-01, with its passionate tunes and waves of emotion, marked Rachmaninoff’s break-through and return to the concert stage as a composer. The Second Symphony became his next major orchestral project.

The Symphony moves through four movements, and each contains musical material related to the very opening of the work: the quiet and mysterious motto in the low strings. An extended introduction establishes E minor and pulls the listener into the symphony’s passion-filled and forward-surging world. The English horn, the lower-pitched cousin of the oboe, offers a contemplative variation of the introductory motto, which also serves as the transition into the Allegro moderato. The energy of the movement, cast as a sonata form, ebbs and flows, being particularly expressive when it falls into E minor’s relative major, G major, and, later, E major in the movement’s recapitulation.

The second movement is a brisk scherzo that vaults through an aggressive theme, led by the horns, straight into a rich passage for the strings. After a quiet transition, the music leads into a demonic round dance of spiky string gestures. Rachmaninoff deftly handles the sonic resources of the
orchestra in this movement; the carefully chosen key of A minor, for example, allows him to utilize the strident ring of the violins’ open A and E strings.

The Adagio third movement is the emotional heart of the symphony. The yearning and winding string melodies, and the souring clarinet solo, navigate through an astonishing range of musical beauty, yearning, and warmth. The Finale, marked Allegro vivace, opens with full force. By way of a whirlwind of triplet figures, E major is established as the antidote to the first movement’s focus on E minor. A sinister-sounding march — signaled by buzzy, stopped horns — will not sully the sense of triumph. Several returns to the sparkling triplets, a new forward-surging melody, and remarkable transitions propelled by cycles of descending scales move the music to a lavish and exciting conclusion. The very final gesture of the symphony — a punctuated repetition of E major — is a classic Rachmaninoff finish, his bold rhythmic salute and sign-off.

MICHAEL PRATT

The 2021-2022 season marks 44 years since Michael Pratt came to Princeton to conduct the Princeton University Orchestra — a relationship that has resulted in the ensemble’s reputation as one of the finest university orchestras in the United States.

He is credited by his colleagues and generations of students in being the architect of one of the finest music programs in the country: Princeton University’s Program in Music Performance. Pratt has served as the director of this certificate program since its inception in 1991, and its international reputation has solidified Princeton University’s standing as a vibrant home for students who are both musically and academically gifted. Pratt also established a partnership with the Royal College of Music in London that sends Princeton students to study abroad at this prestigious conservatory, and co-founded the Richardson Chamber Players, which affords opportunities for students to perform alongside performance faculty in chamber music concerts.

Over the years, he has guided many generations of Princeton students through a remarkable variety of orchestral and operatic literature, from early Baroque Italian opera through symphonies of Mahler to the latest compositions by students and faculty. He has led the Princeton University Orchestra on eleven European tours. Under Pratt, the orchestra has also participated in major campus collaborations with the University’s Theater and Dance programs in such works as the premieres of Prokofiev’s Le pas d’acier and Boris Godunov, a revival of Richard Strauss’s setting of the Molière classic, Le Bourgeois gentilhomme, and a full production of A Midsummer Night’s Dream, with all of Mendelssohn’s incidental music.

Pratt was educated at the Eastman School of Music and Tanglewood, and his teachers and mentors have included Gunther Schuller, Leonard Bernstein, Gustav Meier, and Otto Werner Mueller.

In March 2018, he was awarded an honorary membership to the Royal College of Music, London (HonRCM) by HRH The Prince of Wales. At Princeton’s Commencement in 2019, he was awarded the President’s Award for Distinguished Teaching by President Christopher Eisgruber.
ALLISON SPANN

Allison Spann is a Brooklyn-based generative performing artist who believes in collaborative art-making as a radical tool for healing. With training spanning acting, composition, dance, playwriting, sound design, directing, producing, and voice across many genres, she is interested in how different disciplines can inform each other to create engaging, grounded work.

Hailed for her “engaging presence,” (Jazz Times) and for making “spontaneous rebellions sparkle,” (Broad Street Review), Spann has reached audiences from The Kennedy Center, La Maison Symphonique de Montréal, and jazz clubs around the globe. She has worked in various solo capacities with Gustavo Dudamel, Bobby McFerrin, Caroline Shaw, Archie Shepp, Billy Childs, Darcy James Argue, Rob Kaplowitz, Carolann Page, Paul Bogaev, and Gabriel Crouch, among others.

Winner of the 2020 Edward T. Cone Prize in Music, she graduated from Princeton University with a Concentration in Music, and Certificates in Theater, Music Theater, and Vocal Performance. While at Princeton, she served as the social chair for the Princeton University Glee Club, Costumes Manager for the Princeton University Players, and Hospitality Chair of Terrace F. Club. In her Junior year, she wrote a two-act musical entitled Masquerade, which she produced, directed, music directed, and designed set and costumes for as 2019 Richardson Artist in Residence. This project brought together artists from many different backgrounds across campus — a cast of 30 and a seven piece pit — in efforts to build student-led community and encourage collaboration across disciplines.

For her senior thesis, she composed a one-act piece of chamber music theater for three performers and looping pedal entitled Water Play. This quasi-autobiographical work centers the story of a voice separated from its body in a moment of trauma, and their journey to find each other again. Spann continues to workshop these two pieces and looks forward to bringing them to larger stages in NYC as live theater returns. During the pandemic, she produced a summer performing arts series in the Adirondacks and released her debut album, sp(inner)ace, now available on all streaming platforms.

Voraciously curious, Spann constantly seeks to expand her understanding of the world through new ways of storytelling and making. For more about her work, or to access sp(inner)ace, visit her website at allisonspann.com, or find her on Instagram @justaspann.
PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA

The Princeton University Orchestra (PUO) has been the flagship symphony orchestra of Princeton University since 1896, and is one of the most prestigious and highly-acclaimed collegiate orchestras in the country. At over one hundred and twenty undergraduate-musicians strong, the orchestra performs eight annual performances in Alexander Hall and tours internationally every other year. Since 1977, Maestro Michael Pratt has served as its Music Director. For more information about PUO, visit orchestra.princeton.edu.

Violin I
Dane Jacobson*
Abby Nishiwaki*
Bryant So
Allie Mangel
Emiri Morita
Victor Chu
Rachel Hsu
Celeste Belknap
Allan Liu
Claire Schmeller
Adrian Rogers
Haram Kim
Joanna Kuo
Nina Shih
Soonyoung Kwon
Evan Zhou
Joanna Kuo

Violin II
Yuqi Liang†
Melody Choi†
Lukas Mann
Luca Stewart
Andrew Liu
Andrew Guo
Isabella Khan
Ethan Luk
Andi Greene
Natalie Weng
Alexandra Weng
Madeline Yu
Kodai Speich
Iroha Shirai
Sam Hanson
David Opong

Bass
Ewan Curtis†
Daniel Strayer†
Chaz Bethel-Brescia
Cara Turnbull
Debbi Park
Luke Begley
Tyler Benson
Thomas Graul

Flute
Annette Lee†
Alexander Tsai†
Audrey Yang
Hannah Kim

Oboe and English Horn
Roshini Balasubramanian
Jeremy Chen†
Leon Chen
Darren Chiu†
Sarah Choi
Richard Huang
Vedrana Ivezic

Clarinet
Naomi Farkas
Neerav Kumar†
Emily Liushen
Kevin Mo†
Kyle Tsai
Allison Yang

Saxophone
Bryan McNamara†
Jordan Smith

Bassoon
Taylor Akin†
Annie Jain
Gabriel Levine†
Nanci Belmont

French Horn
Sunny Ball
Spencer Bauman
Helen Brush
Clara Conatser†
Benjamin Edelson†
Selena Hostetler

Trumpet
Gabriel Chalick
Arjun Guthal
Trevor Holmes†
Devon Ulrich†
Coleman Yanagisawa

Trombone
Justin Bi
Jack Isaac†
Kevin Nuckolls†
Ray Flores

Tuba
Sebastian Quiroga†

Timpani
Elijah Shina
Alex Valtchanov

Perussion
Jake Klimek
Louis Larsen
Kerrie Liang
Elijah Shina
Andrew Tao
John Waller

Harp
Leila Hudson

Celeste
Kyrie S. McIntosh

*Concertmaster †Principal

Personnel Manager & Librarian
Dan Hudson

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