

Friday, October 7, 2022, 7:30 PM
Saturday, October 8, 2022, 7:30 PM
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

Princeton University Orchestra

Peter Westergaard Memorial Concerts

Michael Pratt, Conductor
Kyrie McIntosh '23, Piano

PROGRAM

Frédéric Chopin
(1810-1849)

Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 11 in E minor
Allegro maestoso
Romanze: Larghetto
Rondo: Vivace

Kyrie McIntosh '23, Piano

Modest Mussorgsky
(1839-1881)

Pictures at an Exhibition
Orchestrated by Maurice Ravel
Promenade
Gnomus, Promenade
The Old Castle, Promenade
Tuileries
Bydlo, Promenade
Ballet of the Chicks in Their Shells
Samuel Goldenberg and Schmuyle
Limoges; The Market
Catacombs; Con Mortuis
The Hut on Fowl's Legs, Baba Yaga
Great Gate of Kiev

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PROGRAM NOTES

Piano Concerto No. 1, Op. 11 in E minor

Frédéric Chopin

Chopin's first piano concerto is a piece that I sporadically listened to throughout high school, but one that I did not seriously consider learning until the pandemic hit. It is the quintessential "beautiful" piano concerto, with lovely, romantic, melodies. Perhaps learning and living through this piece during the pandemic brought out a deeper, darker shade of its meaning. The concerto was written in 1830, when Chopin was 20 years old. Poland, up until this point, had a history of being occupied and split up by its more powerful neighbors. Just a year after this concerto was written, Chopin would leave Poland for Paris and live in exile for the rest of his life. He never returned home. With this in mind, one can interpret the deep tragedy presented by the first theme (after the initial opening by the piano). From here, the piece develops into an emotional rollercoaster of sorts. The second theme is optimistic, giving the impression of the arrival of springtime after a particularly harsh winter. Afterwards, Chopin displays the technical fireworks that he later became so well known for through his concert etudes. I find his approach to harmony fascinating; especially when Chopin finds a technical idea that he likes, whether it comes in the form of sweeping arpeggios or patterns that are more intricate, he will repeat the pattern over and over again while generating a dizzying amount of momentum through his harmonic modulations. At times he touches upon a different tonal center as frequently as every two measures. This idea is not uncommon, but rarely is it used for so long and in such brilliant style. In Chopin's time, the effect would have been even more dizzying—Chopin was in many ways the founder of modern piano technique, and accordingly, the technical hand-machinery required to play his music was unprecedented.

The second movement is an aria-like movement that displays the full range of Chopin's sensitivity to slight changes in tone-color. If the first movement contains deep bold colors, the second movement carries soft blues and greens that differ in subtly nuanced ways. Chopin uncovers a world that occupies the magical space that exists between the moments when one is silent and when the first noise exits a whisperer's mouth.

The third movement is, without a doubt, the most technically challenging movement of the three. The passages require a large amount of velocity but also control. At surface the right hand is doing most of the work—it scales up and down the keyboard unceasingly. Yet at the same time the left makes innocuous jumps that seem less difficult, but will sabotage the ensemble if the two hands do not work together on more or less equal terms. The third movement is at its core a playful Polish dance. To this effect, the movement contains the same fluidity of timing as the first and second movements, but is executed in a flashier style.

—Kyrie McIntosh

Pictures at an Exhibition

Modest Mussorgsky-Maurice Ravel

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).

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, Bydlo, 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 Schmuyle—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 Schmuyle. 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!

—William. E. Runyan

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ABOUT

MICHAEL PRATT

The 2022-2023 season marks 45 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 with being the architect of one of the finest music programs in the country, Princeton’s certificate Program in Music Performance, Pratt has served as its director since its inception in 1991. The international reputation the Program has earned has resulted in Princeton’s becoming a major destination for talented and academically gifted students. Pratt also established a partnership between Princeton and the Royal College of Music that every year sends Princeton students to study in London. He is also co-founder of the Richardson Chamber Players, which affords opportunities for top students to perform with the performance faculty in chamber music concerts.

Over the years, Pratt 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 PU Orchestra has also participated in major campus collaborations with the 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, Michael Pratt was awarded an honorary membership to the Royal College of Music, London (HonRCM) by HRH The Prince of Wales. At Princeton’s 2019 Commencement, he was awarded the President’s Award for Distinguished Teaching by President Christopher Eisgruber.

KYRIE MCINTOSH

Kyrie McIntosh has studied music for most of his life. He grew up in Washington Heights, New York City, and began piano lessons in kindergarten at the Special Music School under the direction of Genya Paley, who he studied with through the end of high school. During this time, Kyrie gave numerous performances ranging from recitals to performances with orchestra. He won the Kaufman Center Concerto Competition twice: once in eighth grade, when he performed the third movement of Bach's D-minor keyboard concerto, and once in his junior year of high school, when he performed the last three movements of Shostakovich Piano Concerto No. 1. In his senior year, he gave a well-reviewed performance of Prokofiev Sonata No. 3 at Weill Recital Hall. He also performed at Merkin Hall, Steinway Hall, the Roulette, and Symphony Space, among others. After matriculating at Princeton, he studied with Margaret Kampmeier for his freshman and sophomore years. Starting his junior year, Kyrie began lessons with Francine Kay, and was a winner of the 2021 Princeton University Orchestra Concerto Competition. Kyrie has been an active member of Princeton University Orchestra since freshman year, and has also taken harpsichord lessons with Wendy Young while participating in Early Music Princeton. In addition to playing the piano, Kyrie is an avid composer. In high school, he studied with Eric Ewazen at Juilliard Pre-College. He attended the Tanglewood Young Artist Program as an ASCAP scholar, and during college Kyrie attended the Yellow Barn Young Artist Composition Program. At Princeton, Kyrie has concentrated in math, with a special interest in topology and quadratic forms.

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

Melody Choi *
Myles McKnight *
Rachel Hsu
Abby Nishiwaki
Sea Yoon
Adrian Rogers
Evan Zhou
Haram Kim
Natalie Wong
Isabella Khan
Kodai Speich
Amy Baskurt
Elinor Detmer
Allison Jiang
Andi Grene
Victor Chu
Andrew Guo

Violin II

Yuqi Liang +
Andrew Liu
Soonyoung Kwan
Luca Stewart
Tienne Yu
Madeline Yu
Eleanor Clemans-Cope
James Han
Andrew Chi
Andrew Park
Margaret Miao
Kelly Kim
Miriam Waldvogel
Abigail Stafford
David Opong ^

Viola

Jack Shigeta +
Michael Fording
Andrew Jung
Dorothy Junginger
Anna Shin
Hannah Su
Callia Liang
Watson Jia
Georgia Post
Ryan Ro
Sol Choi
Angelica She
Justin Yi
Trey Hydock

Violoncello

Jeremy Cha +
Bridget Denzer
Katie Cappola
Brandon Cheng
William Gu
William Robles
Matthew Kendall
Aaron Dantzer
Rachel Chen
Rebecca Cho
Kaivala Kulkarni
Andrew Do
Natalia Arbelaez-Solano

Contrabass

Ewan Curtis +
Cara Turnbull
Michell Goodman
Bernie Levenson
Jack Hill
Robert Peterson

Flute and Piccolo

Annette Lee +
Kate Park
Anna Solzhenitsyn
Alessandro Troncoso
Alex Tsai +

Oboe

Jeremy Chen +
Leon Chen
Darren Chiu +
Richard Huang
Abigail Kim

English horn

Sarah Choi

Clarinets

Naomi Farkas
Daniel Kim
Kevin Mo +
Kyle Tsai+
Allison Yang

Bass Clarinet

Nirel Amoyaw

Saxophone

Bryan McNamara

Bassoons

Annie Jain +
Gabriel Levine +
Christopher Li

Contrabassoon

Dirk Wels

French Horns

Soncera Ball
Spencer Bauman
Clara Conatser
Benjamin Edelson +
Selena Hostetler +
Ian Kim
Sophia Varughese

Trumpets

Gabriel Chalick +
Trevor Holmes +
Devon Ulrich
Coleman Yanagisawa

Trombones

Artha Abeysinghe
Jack Isaac +
Jonathon Schubert

Tuba

Wesley Sanders

Harps

Leila Hudson +
An-Ya Olson

Timpani

Andrew Tao
John Wallar

Percussion

Shivam Kak
Jake Klimek
Louis Larsen
Kerrie Liang
Wonju Lee
John Wallar

Celesta

Vian Wagatsuma

Librarians

Dan Hudson

Orchestra Manager

Dan Hudson

Orchestra Committee

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Katie Cappola
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Nina Shih
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