

Saturday, April 22, 2023, 7:30 PM  
Sunday, April 23, 2023, 3:00 PM  
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

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# Princeton University Orchestra

## Stuart B. Mindlin Memorial Concerts

**Michael Pratt**, Conductor

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### PROGRAM

**FELIX MENDELSSOHN**  
(1809-1847)

*The Hebrides* Op. 26  
**Yuqi Liang '23**, Conductor

**LUDWIG VAN BEETHOVEN**  
(1770-1827)

*Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Piano* Op. 56  
**Myles McKnight '23**, Violin  
**Robin Park '23**, Cello  
**Kimberly Shen '24**, Piano

**RICHARD STRAUSS**  
(1864-1949)

*Ein Heldenleben (A Hero's Life)*

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*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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## PROGRAM NOTES

### **A NOTE FROM YUQI LIANG '23 ON MENDELSSOHN'S *THE HEBRIDES***

In the summer of 1829, Mendelssohn took a trip to the British Isle and visited Fingal's Cave on the Scottish island of Staffa. The stunning seascape no doubt left a deep impression on him, for he quickly produced a drawing of the island and jotted down a musical idea, the latter of which he sent to his family in a letter. The musical sketch contains detailed instructions for dynamics and orchestral instrumentation and, with surprisingly little revision, turns out to be the opening phrase of today's Hebrides Overture. Although the Overture is meant as an evocative piece from the start, Mendelssohn takes great care to develop the composition into its final form. According to the musicologist R. Larry Todd, the Overture has been transmitted in at least four complete versions, with four different titles. A careful study of the score reveals intricate connections among different sections of the piece. The Overture opens with basses and violins holding an open-fifth, while cellos, violas, and bassoons enter with a descending melodic motif. The music intensifies and grows in complexity before it reaches the second theme in the relative major, an expressive melody with glimmering accompaniment that is suggestive of the rolling waves and the majesty of the island. As the music develops, we may also hear horns that announce the passing of ships, the sound of seagulls, and a terrifying storm followed by total serenity. All the different scenery and characters, however, can find their origin in the opening phrase. I am very grateful for the opportunity of studying conducting with Maestro Pratt over the past four years. It is an experience that has led to much musical and personal growth. And I am truly excited for this culminating performance of Mendelssohn's Hebrides Overture with the Princeton University Orchestra.

### **A NOTE FROM WILLIAM E. RUNYAN ON BEETHOVEN'S *CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN, CELLO, AND PIANO OP.56***

The concerto in its various guises has long been an important part of the symphonic literature, going back to the middle of the seventeenth century. But by Beethoven's time, some 150 years on, concertos were most often written for one instrument—usually piano, violin, or 'cello—with orchestral accompaniment. Of course, many fine compositions were written for other solo instruments: predominantly any of the woodwinds, horn, or trumpet. But, piano, violin, or 'cello were the stars—and so it has remained. Beethoven, a virtuoso pianist, wrote five significant piano concertos, initially of course to showcase himself, and an important violin concerto. But, the concerto that he composed in 1803 for three solo instruments and orchestra stands apart for several reasons. It's the only concerto that he wrote for more than one solo instrument, and in the rest of the nineteenth century not very many of them were written at all.

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Now the idea of a group of soloists accompanied by an orchestra was not a new one by that time, for an important genre of the Baroque era was the *concerto grosso*. And during the time of Haydn, Mozart, and frères, the so-called *sinfonia concertante*, along with the *concerto grosso*, exploited the idea of a group of soloists accompanied by an orchestra. But, there was a rub. By Beethoven's time, and especially with the great man himself, musical style had moved to one of extended musical architecture, driven by an integral emphasis of developing and manipulating musical ideas, and a greater rôle for the accompanying orchestra. All of these factors didn't leave as much room (and time) for multiple soloists to fully occupy the limelight. So, simple traffic control between the soloists and the orchestra posed structural problems. To allow each of the soloists to develop and expand on their material and share ideas with each other—not to speak of giving the orchestra a significant part--would have made for compositions that were just too long and unwieldy, among other things.

But great artists meet difficulties that deter lesser folks, and Beethoven was more than up to the job. Just why he wrote his “triple concerto” is subject to some conjecture, but there is some evidence that he had in mind as his pianist his well-known pupil and patron, Archduke Rudolf of Austria—the Emperor's son. The Archduke studied both piano and composition with Beethoven for almost two decades, and became a very creditable pianist—his patronage was significant financial support for Beethoven, and the two were close friends to boot. Several of the composer's finest works are dedicated to the young archduke. Some speculate that the somewhat easier piano part, compared with the two string soloists, is evidence that the archduke was the pianist in mind, but that's not established. In any case, at the première in 1808, the archduke was neither the pianist, nor the *dedicatee* in the earlier publication.

Cast in the usual three movements, the extensive first movement, full of *gravitas*, has a conventional first-movement form of several themes, appropriately worked through, with recapitulation and coda. The following *largo* is quite brief, and leads directly into a substantial, energetic rondo.

The first movement begins quietly, with the main theme heard immediately in the low strings—there will be several more in the structure of this rather complicated movement. You can spot the next main idea when the woodwinds take it. Finally, our soloists enter, the 'cello—as it does frequently in this concerto—taking the lead. Throughout this movement—given that three soloists have to be given ample opportunity to shine—one does not hear much as one would expect of the composer's vaunted ability to develop and extend aphoristic ideas. Rather, somewhat in the manner of Schubert, there's just a lot of delightful repetition. So, the listener gets to hear a lot of familiar material, as each soloist takes his turn, with a constant trading back and forth between the three. The movement is in a rather complicated sonata/concerto form, but that needn't detain us. The pleasure in this substantial movement is in following the variety of the constant interplay, as well as the entertaining tunes and enterprising harmonic turns. A quick little, almost perfunctory, coda, with the requisite cascading scales, brings us to the end.

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The ensuing slow movement is an elegant example of one of Beethoven's most endearing characteristics. In like manner to the beloved slow movements of his solo piano concertos, it leisurely and serenely spins out a remarkable long-breathed melody of breathtaking beauty and eloquence. The key is Ab, a relationship to the main key of the work that is a favorite of the composer, and a decidedly "romantic" characteristic. It provides a surprising, breathtaking harmonic moment at its inception. As in other parts of the concerto the 'cello take the lead, singing out in its higher register, before yielding to the violin, which takes its turn with the same material. Throughout the movement the piano stays in the background, providing a filigree accompaniment. After a short time, all three instruments participate in a kind of dance of teasing give and take, and we're quickly into the boisterous *Rondo alla polacca* of the last movement.

Rondos are a popular form for last movements, for they are tuneful, energetic, and the "roadmap" easily followed. Typically, a clear, sharply profiled main theme is followed by a variety of contrasting sections, most not too long, and the main theme entertains by constantly returning. Nothing lasts too long, everything is usually pellucid, and on the whole it's a welcome contrast to the seriousness and complexity of what went before. In this particular rondo, Beethoven chose the time signature of three beats to the measure, with the characteristic dance accents of a *polonaise*. The main theme appears immediately, first in the 'cello and quickly taken up by the violin. Without much delay we're into the contrasting material, much of it figurations. The orchestra then thunders in shortly with the main theme—this is a rondo, after all. And so it goes—the middle section has an attractive turn to the minor mode. With each solo section, each of the soloists burns through increasingly impressive virtuosic figures, as Beethoven cunningly builds to a climax—interspersed with typical Beethovenian dramatic pauses, before bolting off again. Moving ahead, the composer turns on the heat with a turn to duple metre, allowing the tempo to really surge in a blazing coda. A massive tutti statement of the main polacca theme brings us to the triumphant end. The "Triple Concerto" may be somewhat of a stepchild of Beethoven's concertos, not garnering near as many performances as the solo works, but it is marvelously entertaining, and a *tour de force* of handling a treacherous musical architecture.

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## A NOTE FROM HANNAH MCLAUGHLIN ON STRAUSS'S *EIN HELDENLEBEN*

Put simply, Richard Strauss's tone poem *Ein Heldenleben* ("A Hero's Life," 1898) illustrates the life, struggles and accomplishments of a hero. Though conceived as a single-movement work, it divides neatly into five sections, tentatively titled by the composer:

- The Hero (*Der Held*)
- The Hero's Enemies (*Widersacher*)
- The Hero's Companion (*Gefährtin*),
- The Hero's Field of Battle (*Walstatt*)
- The Hero's Works of Peace (*Friedenswerke*)
- The Hero's Escape from the World (*Weltflucht*) and Consummation (*Vollendung*)

Who exactly is the *Held* of *Der Heldenleben*? The composer himself insisted that the work portrayed no specific figure at all, but rather the quintessential ideal of "great and manly" heroism. Strauss also outright denied that he, himself, was the subject of his work: "I'm no hero," he wrote, "I'm not made for battle." Yet despite this testimony, scholars have insisted on an autobiographical reading of *Der Heldenleben*. This includes music critic Richard Freed, who contended that the music itself "pointed stubbornly to its own author as its subject work," betraying the composer's verbal conviction.

The music of *Der Heldenleben* betrays the composer's commentary in another way. "Great and manly" were Strauss's words. And yet, something else lies beneath – something seemingly diminutive, yet immensely powerful and achingly beautiful.

If there is an important consistency in Strauss's oeuvre," says Bryan Gillman, "it is in the desire to suggest the profundities and ambiguities in everyday life, even in the apparently banal." How do we reconcile Strauss's supposed preoccupation with the ordinary and unexceptional with a piece like *Der Heldenleben* – a work depicting the life of an extraordinary and exceptional person? The music itself does not offer an obvious answer. The stately first movement, for example, alludes to what Joseph Campbell calls the heroic transcendence of the mundane, a venturing forth "from the world of common day into a region of supernatural wonder." Strauss's hero swats adversaries like flies in Part 2, battles cosmic forces in Part 4, and ushers in a reign of victorious peace in Part 5. In these dignified sections, the hero stands as Supernal Deity, Promethean Deliverer, and Philosopher King all rolled into one.

But while much of *Heldenleben* appears self-aggrandizing, true victory for the work's protagonist lies not in his own might, but in his relationship with another. This *Gefährtin* – literally, a fellow-traveler (*fahren* means "to travel") – is the subject of the work's third section. Her movement, the longest in the work, employs a rigorous and poignant violin solo, one providing crucial material which will later constitute the work's culminating finale. Without this third movement, the entire narrative trajectory of the tone poem collapses.

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But at the same time, the relationship depicted here is one defined by intimacy, domesticity, and privacy. This relationship is also extremely prosaic – an intense contrast to the monumental subject matter surrounding it.

Strauss's *Gefährten* was his wife, Paulina de Ahna. An ambitious and talented singer, Paulina embodied well for Strauss the role of "fellow-traveler." As his student, she followed him first to Weimar in 1889. At 30 years old, she decided (with hesitancy) to marry Richard. While she hoped to continue stage performance after the marriage, it was only two years before she made the "great, beautiful sacrifice" (Strauss's words) to suspend her career for the sake of her husband's. She would follow Richard for the rest of her life, despite extreme difficulties in their marriage. They would settle in Munich and then tour together through Europe and America. Her final public appearance as a vocalist occurred in January 1909. She lived another 40 years after this, dying in 1950.

Many have made similar sacrifices as Paulina. Women, especially, continue to endure the unending tension between career ambitions and family obligations. But men can also feel this tension. It seems Strauss felt it.

Of course, one cannot overlook the patriarchal lens through which Strauss viewed notions of gender. Beyond this, Strauss also bemoaned the dormant lifestyle, complaining that there was nothing to do at his Bavaria summer home but play cards. But this was Germany's most prominent composer at the height of his career, entangled in the thick stresses of public musical life. The allure of *home* – family, private comforts, peace and quiet – surely was very strong for Strauss. *Der Heldenleben* is a testament to this hunger – not only for heroic heights, but also for domestic bliss.

In a late-career interview with the composer, the critic Deems Taylor observed how Strauss could not enter his own house without wiping his feet three separate times. "Strauss may be a good conductor and a great composer," said Taylor, "but... for that moment I saw, for a flash, the truth. Here was no Titan or demigod; before me stood only a married man." In *Der Heldenleben*, Taylor's final statement is proven wrong; the hero is never only a married man. In fact, it may even be in his homebound "condescension" where the hero finds his greatest strength. In *Der Heldenleben*, we witness the hero's truest and most complete form: titanic demigod *and* married man, dauntless hero *and* doting husband. Both sides of this dual identity seem necessary. In returning home, one finds true "escape from the world" implied in the work's final movement. To one like Strauss, such satisfying consummation after a long lifetime of heroic deeds could only be found in those cozy and confidential moments between bedroom walls, over warm hearths, or within the sheltered refuge of the backyard fence. Such a desire is surely not exclusive to Strauss. Indeed, as we all progress through miniature *Heldenlebens* of our own, do we all not find ourselves, once in a while, aching for that same refuge, be it ever so humble?

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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 by his colleagues and generations of students in 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, PUO 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, 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 future King Charles III, then HRH The Prince of Wales. At Commencement 2019 he was awarded the President’s Award for Distinguished Teaching by President Christopher Eisgruber.

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### **YUQI LIANG '23**

Yuqi Liang is a senior in the Philosophy department and pursuing Certificates in Music Performance and Composition. He started playing the violin at age four- and-a-half and studied at the Central Conservatory of Music in Beijing, China when he was in elementary and middle school. At Princeton, he is an active member of the Princeton University Orchestra and the Princeton Undergraduate Composers Collective, and he studies orchestral conducting with Michael Pratt, violin performance with Anna Lim, and piano with Francine Kay. After Princeton, Yuqi is planning to pursue postgraduate work in philosophy and hopes to draw connections between his two main areas of interest.

### **ROBIN PARK '23**

Robin Park (b. 2001) is a cellist hailing from Fort Lee, NJ. Throughout his career, he has won many accolades, most recently winning First Prize in the 5th Gustav Mahler Cello Competition, the Princeton University Concerto Competition, as well as Grand Prizes in the Caprio Competition, Sinfonietta Nova Competition, and the Newtown Chamber Orchestra Competition. Accordingly, he has performed as a soloist with multiple orchestras, including the Riverside Symphonia and Newtown Chamber Orchestra. Robin is the current Associate Principal Cellist of Symphony in C, and was the former Principal Cellist of the 2022 Pacific Music Festival Orchestra and the 2019 National Youth Orchestra of the USA, and is also a two-time alumnus of the New York String Orchestra Seminar. An avid chamber musician, Robin is the former Music Director of Opus Chamber Music Princeton, and is a frequent performer on pianist Per Tengstrand's concert series "Music on Park Avenue" at NYC's Scandinavia House, as well as on Symphony in C's Virtuosi Series and the Suburban Music Study Club's Morning Musicales. Following his love of chamber music, Robin will be attending the Kneisel Hall Music Festival in the summer of 2023, and in the fall of 2023, will be continuing his studies at the Yale School of Music (YSM) as an M.M. student. Robin studied with Richard Aaron while attending Princeton University, where he will be graduating with a B.A. in History, and will be studying with cellist Paul Watkins of the Emerson Quartet at the YSM. Robin plays on an 1820 English Thomas Kennedy Cello.

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### **MYLES MCKNIGHT '23**

Myles McKnight is a senior in the Department of Politics. Originally from Asheville, North Carolina, he is an alumnus of the Brevard Music Center, where he led the Brevard Concert Orchestra through several seasons as concertmaster. In 2019, he led the National Youth Orchestra as concertmaster on a highly publicized tour that included performances at the BBC Proms, the Royal Concertgebouw in Amsterdam, the Konzerthaus Berlin, and the Edinburgh International Festival. At Princeton, he studies violin with Professor Eric Wyrick. In addition to his involvement in Princeton's music scene, he is the former president of the Princeton Open Campus Coalition, managing editor of the Princeton Legal Journal, and crew member of the sailing team, among other things.

### **KIMBERLY SHEN '24**

Kimberly, also known as Kimie, is a pianist hailing from the snowy suburbs of Minneapolis, MN. She is currently a student of Francine Kay and previously studied with Alexander Braginsky and Jean Krinke. She has performed as a soloist in recitals and masterclasses at various venues in the United States and Europe. In addition to her solo work, Kimie is also an avid chamber musician. She has fond memories of learning and performing Brahms's Op. 8 Piano Trio with Myles and Robin during her first semester on campus. Accordingly, she is thrilled to be reuniting with them for Beethoven's Triple Concerto. At Princeton, Kimie is a junior concentrating in physics and pursuing certificates in classical piano performance and applied mathematics. When not practicing piano or getting hopelessly stuck on math problems she enjoys sleeping, hanging out with friends and collecting stuffed animals.

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## **THE PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA**

The Princeton University Orchestra was born in February 1896, with a concert by professional musicians. The modern history of PUO begins with the appointment of the orchestra's present music director, Michael J. Pratt, in 1977. Through the fifties and sixties, the ensemble shrank down to as few as thirty students amid "music-is-better-seen-than-heard" mentalities in music academia, as well as insufficient rehearsal and performance spaces on campus. Following Pratt's appointment to the orchestra's podium, this downward trend quickly reversed itself into an upwards explosion. In 1984, the orchestra's home, Alexander Hall, was renovated from a large auditorium into a professional-grade concert hall. Additionally, unprecedented interest in music performance among students, coupled with growth in the overall undergraduate class size and the development of Princeton's dedicated extracurricular hours (two hours every weekday during which classes are forbidden from meeting), allowed PUO to quickly expand into the large symphonic orchestra of over 100 students that it remains today.

In response to students in the orchestra expressing a desire to continue as musicians after their studies at Princeton, Michael Pratt established the Music Department's Certificate Program in Music Performance in 1990, and he was a major architect in the general integration of performance into Princeton's wider curriculum. Undergraduate musicians in the Music Performance certificate receive complementary lessons and are eligible to spend a semester abroad studying at the Royal College of Music, which has been named one of the top music conservatories in the world. Following the creation of a strong music performance program, the conductor noted a significant upswing in Princeton University applicants with exceptional musical talent and interest, which in turn allowed the Princeton University Orchestra to grow into an even stronger ensemble, able to tackle any piece in the classical repertoire. In 2018, there were enough applicants to the incoming class alone to fill multiple large symphonic orchestras.

Nowadays, the orchestra is recognized for its musical excellence, named in an independent survey as one of the top ten college-age orchestras in the United States.

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# PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA

## Violin I

Rachel Hsu \*# '23  
Melody Choi \*^  
Myles McKnight '23  
Adrian Rogers '23  
Abby Nishiwaki '23  
Sea Yoon '23  
Madeline Yu '23  
Iroha Shirai '23  
Sophia Zheng '23  
Luca Stewart  
Andrew Liu  
Kodai Speich  
Nina Shih  
Victor Chu '23  
Claire Schmeller '23  
Andrew Park

## Violin II

Yuqi Liang + '23  
Amy Baskurt  
Isabella Khan  
Andi Grene  
Haram Kim  
James Han  
David Opong  
Miriam Waldvogel  
Allison Jiang  
Kevin Tsai  
Kelly Kim  
Margaret Miao  
Eleanor Clemans-Cope  
Andrew Chi  
Tienne Yu  
Andrew Guo ~  
Soonyoung Kwon ~  
Abigail Stafford ~  
Natalie Wong ~  
Evan Zhou ~

## Viola

Jack Shigeta + '23  
Rohan Jinturkar '23  
Michael Fording '23  
Andrew Jung  
Albert Zhou  
Sol Choi  
Georgia Post  
Justin Yi  
Watson Jia '21 G'23  
Anna Shin  
Hannah Su  
Dorothy Junginger  
Ryan Ro  
Trey Hydock  
Callia Liang  
Angelica She

## Violoncello

Jeremy Cha + '23  
Bridget Denzer '23  
William Gu '23  
Katie Cappola '23  
Aaron Dantzler  
William Robles  
Brandon Cheng  
Rachel Chen  
Rebecca Cho  
Matthew Kendall  
Kaivalya Kulkarni  
Aster Zhang  
Andrew Do  
Natalia Arbelaez-Solano ~

## Contrabass

Ewan Curtis + '23  
Cara Turnbull  
Abhi Bansal  
Bernie Levenson  
Jingwan Guo  
Mitchell Goodman-Sprouse  
Jack Hill

## Flute and Piccolo

Annette Lee + '23  
Kate Park  
Anna Solzhenitsyn  
Alessandro Troncoso +  
Alex Tsai + '23  
Audrey Yang

## Oboe and English Horn

Jeremy Chen + '23  
Leon Chen '23  
Darren Chiu + '23  
Sarah Choi  
Richard Huang '23  
Abigail Kim

## Clarinets

Naomi Farkas  
Daniel Kim  
Kevin Mo +  
Kyle Tsai +  
Allison Yang + '23

## Bass Clarinet

Nirel Amoyaw

## Bassoons

Taylor Akin + '23  
Annie Jain + '23  
Gabriel Levine + '23  
Christopher Li

## Contrabassoon

Dirk Wels

## French Horns

Soncera Ball +  
Spencer Bauman  
Jacob Beyer '23  
Clara Conatser  
Benjamin Edelson + '23  
Selena Hostetler '23  
Ian Kim +  
Sophia Varughese  
Sada Harris

## Trumpets

Gabriel Chalick +  
Trevor Holmes + '23  
Helen Cueyoung Lee  
Devon Ulrich + '23  
Coleman Yanagisawa

## Trombones

Artha Abeysinghe  
Jack Isaac + '23  
Johnathan Schubert

## Euphonium

Sebastian Quiroga '22 G'23

## Tuba

Wesley Sanders

## Harps

Leila Hudson  
An-Ya Olson '22 G'23

## Timpani

Kerrie Liang  
Andrew Tao  
John Wallar

## Percussion

Jake Klimek ~  
Louis Larsen ~  
Wonju Lee  
Andrew Tao  
John Wallar  
Shivam Kak

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\* Denotes Concertmaster

+ Denotes Principal Player

~ Denotes On Leave

\*\* *Ein Heldenleben* Soloist Saturday

\*# *Ein Heldenleben* Soloist Sunday

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