

DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
AT PRINCETON

Sunday, November 20, 2022
4:00pm
Lee Music Room, Lewis Arts Complex



A Playhouse Panoply

Beloved Stories, Reimagined

Featuring

The Princeton Playhouse Choir (*est. 2021*)

and

The Princeton Playhouse Chamber Orchestra (*est. 2021*)

directed by Solon Snider Sway

PROGRAM

The Song of Purple Summer
from *Spring Awakening* (2006)

Duncan Sheik & Steven Sater

Love Will Find a Way
from *Shuffle Along* (1921)

Eubie Blake & Noble Sissle
arr. Kenyon Duncan

Hadestown Medley
from *Hadestown* (2019)

Anaïs Mitchell
arr. Farrah Rothman

—*short pause*—

Kaze
a *Studio Ghibli* medley

Joe Hisaashi & Ayano Tsuji
arr. Gia Gan
orch. Griffin Strout

Soon As I Get Home
from *The Wiz* (1975)

Charlie Smalls
arr. Kenyon Duncan

Sondheim Ascending
medley from *Sweeney Todd*
(1979)

Stephen Sondheim
orch. Farrah Rothman

No One is Alone
from *Into the Woods* (1987)

Stephen Sondheim
arr. Daniel Rudin

PROGRAM NOTES

Director's Note: Thank you for joining us for the first-ever collaborative concert between Princeton's new Playhouse Choir and Playhouse Chamber Orchestra. These groups were formed in an effort to celebrate music theater repertoire, build community, foster new arrangements and compositions, facilitate student leadership opportunities, and connect the Music Department and Lewis Center for the Art's Programs in Theater and Music Theater through collaborative, co-curricular ensembles. We hope you'll encounter songs and stories you know and love today, and perhaps discover some new ones along the way... —Solon Snider Sway

The Song of Purple Summer

Conducted by Halle Michell '23

Choreography by Aaron Ventresca '24

Soloist: Kate Short '23

This is the closing number of the hit score to the musical *Spring Awakening*, set in 19th-century Germany and exploring the trials, joys, and wonders of growing up.

Love Will Find a Way (*arranged by Kenyon Duncan*)

Conducted by Halle Mitchell '23

"Love Will Find a Way" is from Eubie Blake and Noble Sissle's landmark 1921 show *Shuffle Along*. Credited by Langston Hughes as starting the Harlem Renaissance, the show was the first all-Black hit on Broadway and paved the way for black theatre of the 20th century. The song is an affirmation of love's endurance, a declaration that, at the time, was risky to make. "On opening night in New York this song had us more worried than anything else in the show," Sissle recollected. The writers feared they might "be run out of town" by white audiences who, accustomed to minstrel mockery, might feel threatened by a sincere black love song.

Through revivals and intentional reimaginations, the song and the show remain beautiful articulations of a kind of black love — a fierce and fugitive creativity that finds a way to flourish even within the most suffocating confines. Even now, over a hundred years since the song was first penned, the text is still pushing on our boundaries. Love will find a way, has not yet found a way, is finding a way...The song has always been aspirational and oriented towards a future not yet here. It seems always to be asking us: what part will you play in creating the possibility for love? —Kenyon Duncan

PROGRAM NOTES

Hadestown Medley (arranged by Farrah Rothman)

Soloists: Faith Wangermann, Carrington Symone Johnson, Juliana Wojtenko, Lana Utley, Juliette Carbonnier, Jenni Lawson, Jessica Wang, Kate Stewart, Fatmagül Katmer, Halle Mitchell, George Tidmore, Josie Wender, Madeline LeBeau, Rosemary Paulson, AJ Lonski, Ariel Blumenberg, Kevin Yeung, Kate Short, Aaron Ventresca, & Charlie Roth

Staging by Aaron Ventresca '24

This medley of songs from Anaïs Mitchell's 2019 Broadway hit *Hadestown* combines three of the show's spectacular tunes: "Any Way the Wind Blows," "All I've Ever Known," and "Wait for Me."

Kaze (arranged by Gia Gan, orchestrated by Griffin Strout) *for Aura*

"Our lives are like the wind... or like sounds. Welcome into being, resonate with each other... then fade away." -
Hayao Miyazaki

This fantasia of wind-themed songs from the widely beloved Studio Ghibli films includes selections from *My Neighbor Totoro* (1988), *Nausicaä of the Valley of the Wind* (1984), *Castle in the Sky* (1986), and *The Cat Returns* (2002)

Soon As I Get Home (arranged by Kenyon Duncan)

Soloists: Carrington Symone Johnson, Neyci Estefanía Gutiérrez Valencia, Juliana Wojtenko, and Aaron Ventresca

Often passed over for its (literally) show-stopping counterpart "Home," "Soon As I Get Home" offers us a look inside Dorothy's heart before she steps foot on the yellow-brick road — before she learns the power of who she is and what she carries with her.

It's my favorite song in Charlie Smalls' 1975 black reimagining of *The Wizard of Oz* and a defining moment of the musical. Here near the beginning of the first act, Smalls forgoes the expected "Over the Rainbow" number entirely and delays Dorothy's solo until after she finds herself alone in a strange new world. Instead of a song about dreams of escape, we get "Soon As I Get Home," a song that confronts the terror of realizing you must find your own way to reality through a dream that feels much more like a nightmare. It is on the strength of this song that Dorothy begins her search for her own way.

She reminds us that we all seek, not just to find what we don't have, but in order to renew our sight — to learn again how to see what is already here. I return to this song when I need these reminders: to face what scares me, to get out and do my own searching, to ask my own questions, to engage life without knowing if I'll get where I want to go but with the confidence that wherever I go, I'm gonna be alright. —Kenyon Duncan

PROGRAM NOTES

Sondheim Ascending (*orchestrated by Farrah Rothman*)
ft. The Playhouse Chamber Orchestra

Stephen Sondheim was a supreme writer, a master of his craft whose lyrical dexterity was always gamely matched by the richness of his chameleonic musical abilities. With every show, Sondheim reinvented himself, letting his music adopt the language of the show like liquid taking the shape of a glass. There is no score in history more evocative and embodied than that of Sweeney Todd, Sondheim's most "heaven and hell" work, so to speak. Though "Sondheim Ascending" is in some ways an original composition, it was written with the deepest reverence for Stephen Sondheim and his score for Sweeney Todd. I decided to pair together the "heaven" themes of the show – "Pretty Women," "Green Finch and Linnet Bird," and "The Barber and His Wife" – and send my hero up to heaven with a bang. -Farrah Rothman

No One is Alone (*arranged and orchestrated by Daniel Rudin*)

Soloists: Rachel Edelstein, Madeleine LeBeau, Charlie Roth, Kevin Yeung, Danielle Ranucci, Lana Utley, Drew Comstock, and Kate Stewart
Staging by Aaron Ventresca

We hope this one speaks for itself—from Stephen Sondheim's 1987 *Into the Woods*, recently revived once again on Broadway (2022). *Dedicated to Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021)*.

For more information about the Department of Music and other upcoming events, and to sign-up for our mailing list, please visit music.princeton.edu.

The Playhouse Officer Team

President:

Juliana Wojtenko '23

Manager:

Carrington Symone Johnson '24

Social Media and Publicity Coordinator:

Kate Stewart '25

Social Chairs:

Sydney Hwang '24 and George Tidmore '26

Student Conductor:

Halle Mitchell '23

Student Choreographer:

Aaron Ventresca '24

About The Princeton Playhouse Ensembles

The **Princeton Playhouse Choir** is a new ensemble, founded in 2021, housed jointly with the Lewis Center's Programs in Theater and Music Theater and the Music Department, and focusing on repertoire beginning in a broad range of theatrical traditions and expanding into a realm of experimental and innovative music-making. The core of the group's repertoire is music connected to theater and reimagined for creative ensemble configurations through new arrangements and interdisciplinary collaborations. Playhouse incorporates large and small ensemble singing, a cappella and accompanied singing, vocal solos, dance, spoken word, new music commissions, and collaborative projects with artists across departments to facilitate a vibrant and inclusive rehearsal environment.

The **Princeton Playhouse Orchestra** is a new instrumental chamber ensemble specializing in the performance of new music commissions, music theater repertoire, popular song, and film music.

The Playhouse Choir

Aaron Ventresca
AJ Lonski
Amala Akkiraju
Ariel Blumenberg
Austria Merritt
Carla Crucianelli
Carrington Symone Johnson
Charlie Roth
Christina Kim
Danielle Ranucci
Drew Comstock
Faith Wangermann
Fatmagül Katmer
George Tidmore
Halle Mitchell
Jenni Lawson
Jessica Wang
Josie Wender
Juliana Wojtenko
Juliette Carbonnier
Kate Stewart
Kate Short
Kevin Yeung
Lana Utley
Laura Reyes
Madeleine LeBeau
Michelle Tang
Nada Elfarazy
Neyci Estefanía Gutiérrez Valencia
Rachel Edelstein
Rosemary Paulson
Shreya Sinha
Sophie Gerchikov
Sydney Hwang
Yinshan Shang

The Playhouse Chamber Orchestra:

Violin 1: Isabella Khan

Violin 2: Soonyoung Kwon

Viola: Angie Lumour-Mensah

Cello: Nati Solano

Bass: Jay White

Flute: Audrey Yang and Annette Lee

Clarinet: Allison Yang and Jacob Neis

Bassoon: Conner Kim

Horn: Helen Brush

Trumpet: Devon Ulrich

Guitar: Noah Daniel

Keyboards/Piano: Farrah Rothman and Halle Mitchell

Drums/Percussion: Tommy Kim

Percussion 2: Rachel Edelstein