

# TAYLOR AKIN ~ CLASS OF 2023

## SENIOR RECITAL

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**Friday, April 7th, 2023 6PM**  
**Taplin Auditorium, Fine Hall**

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DEPARTMENT OF  
**MUSIC**  
AT PRINCETON



Featuring:

Kristin Cahill | Piano/Harpsichord

Nina Shih '24 | Violin  
Jeremy Cha '23 | Cello

Albert Zhou '24 | Viola  
Ewan Curtis '23 | Double Bass

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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

**Georg Philipp  
Telemann**

***Sonata in F Minor***

*I. Andante Cantabile*  
*II. Allegro*  
*III. Andante*  
*IV. Vivace*

Taylor Akin '23 | Bassoon  
Kristin Cahill | Harpsichord  
Ewan Curtis '23 | Double Bass

**Adolphus Hailstork**

***Bassoon Set for Solo Bassoon***

*I. Moderato con anima*  
*II. Vivo*  
*III. Lento e teneramente*  
*IV. Allegretto*

Taylor Akin '23 | Bassoon

**Daniel Baldwin**

***River Of Light***

Taylor Akin '23 | Bassoon  
Kristin Cahill | Piano

**John Steinmetz**

***Sonata for Bassoon and Piano***

*I. Prelude*  
*II. Browning*  
*III. Lament*

Taylor Akin '23 | Bassoon  
Kristin Cahill | Piano

**W.A. Mozart, Arr.  
Mordechai Rechtman**

***Quartett In G-Dur für Fagott,  
Violine, Viola, Und Violoncello, KV  
285***

*I. Allegro*  
*II. Adagio*  
*III. Allegretto*

Taylor Akin '23 | Bassoon  
Nina Shih '24 | Violin  
Albert Zhou '24 | Viola  
Jeremy Cha '23 | Cello

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## PROGRAM NOTES

By: Taylor Akin

### **Sonata in F Minor (Telemann, 1728)**

The Telemann Sonata in F minor for Bassoon is a masterpiece of Baroque music that showcases the beauty and expressiveness of the bassoon. Composed by Georg Philipp Telemann, one of the most prolific and influential composers of the Baroque period, this sonata is a true gem of the bassoon repertoire. It is quite special to me, as it is the very first solo work I prepared on bassoon (which, looking back, was absolutely absurd). It feels fitting that my days of music making in conjunction with (or in lieu of) my academic involvement not only begin, but come to an end with the same notes.

This sonata is intended to be performed with accompaniment, typically by cello or harpsichord. In this performance, I have the pleasure of performing it with both double bass accompaniment by fellow member of the Great Class of 2023, Ewan Curtis and harpsichord accompaniment by the talented Kristin Cahill. The first movement, marked "Triste," opens with a slow, melancholy melody played by the bassoon. The bassoon's rich, warm tone is well-suited to the melancholic mood of this movement. The second movement, marked "Allegro," is a lively and energetic dance. The bassoon and continuo play off each other in a playful and joyful manner. The third movement, marked "Andante," is a slow, stately dance in compound meter. The final movement, marked "Vivace," is a fast and lively dance that brings the sonata to a thrilling conclusion.

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### **Bassoon Set for Solo Bassoon (Hailstork, 1996)**

Adolphus Hailstork is a highly respected contemporary composer who has written for a wide range of genres and ensembles, including opera, orchestra, and chamber music. His works have been performed by renowned ensembles such as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and Detroit Symphony Orchestra. The "Bassoon Set" is a solo piece for bassoon that explores the unique and versatile voice of the instrument. The four movements showcase the bassoon's range and virtuosity, from the quirky and confident character of the first movement to the whirlwind of technical passages in the second movement. The third movement features a beautiful and melancholic melody that showcases the bassoon's rich and expressive capabilities. The fourth movement concludes the piece with a sinister statement, with the bassoon's dynamic and expressive capabilities taking center stage once again. Despite being a solo piece, Hailstork's skillful composition creates a rich and complex soundscape that is engaging and dynamic.

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## River of Light (Baldwin, 2008)

"River of Light" is a stunning piece by composer Daniel Baldwin that has taken on a rich and meaningful life since its composition in 2008. As a native of Oklahoma, Baldwin's work is of particular significance to me, as he attended high school with the very band director who inspired my own journey with the bassoon. This beautiful piece is inspired by Frederick Edwin Church's painting "El Rio de Luz," which draws inspiration from a variety of South American scenes. Baldwin's skillful composition captures the beauty and majesty of the painting, with flowing melodies and lush harmonies that transport the listener to a world of light and color.

The piece parallels the cycle of life in an incredibly beautiful way. The piece starts beautifully serene with the piano acting as the beginning of life - first breaths being drawn and eyes seeing light for the first time. Then we watch the development of an awareness of the beauty within the world, unfolding before our eyes. The middle section shares a glimpse of the excitement brought on by the beauty of God's world enveloping us as we grow. Then finally, we reach the end - contemplative and serene. Full of gratitude and love, the bassoon and piano join each other as old friends in the final stages of life. Finally, we are whisked away as the bassoon and piano take one final breath together and conclude a wonderfully fulfilling life together. I hope you enjoy listening to this piece, and I encourage you to enjoy the painting that inspired it below, considering it as you listen.





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## Sonata for Bassoon and Piano (Steinmetz, 1981)

"Sonata for Bassoon and Piano" is a stunningly beautiful and moving three movement work. It strikes an incredible balance between dark and raw, while also exhibiting beauty and color. I have had the pleasure of discovering John Steinmetz's music, and it has brought me great joy. My first encounter was with his "Suite from an Imaginary Opera," a challenging yet rewarding work that allowed me to explore his unique musical language. Steinmetz is truly a rare composer of instrumental music who continues to create engaging and innovative works in contemporary times. I'll leave the description of the piece up to Steinmetz himself, citing part of his notes on the piece.

*This Sonata is not in "sonata form". Like very early sonatas, it is music "to be sounded," music for invoking different emotional states. The first movement portrays the bassoon as a strong voiced instrument exploring powerful feelings. The second movement is based on an English tune called "Browning" (or "The Leaves Be Green.") Several English Renaissance composers made consort settings of this tune; I was inspired by (and stole ideas from) the Browning for three viols by Elway Bevin, in which the 8-bar theme constantly repeats, moving to a different instrument each time. My version has four voices, with three played by the pianist.- John Steinmetz*

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## Quartett In G-Dur für Fagott, Violine, Viola, Und Violoncello, KV 285 (Mozart, 1777)

The Quartett für Flöte, Violine, Viola, Und Violoncello, KV 285, is one of Mozart's most beloved chamber works, composed in 1777. The piece features a light and elegant character that is quintessentially Mozartian, and is a shining example of his mastery of classical chamber music. We, however, will be performing a transcription for bassoon, violin, viola, and cello by Mordechai Rechtman.

The first movement, marked "Allegro," opens with a lively theme introduced by the bassoon, which is then passed on to the strings. The second movement, marked "Adagio," is a tender and introspective meditation that showcases Mozart's gift for lyrical expression. The final movement, marked "Rondeau," is a joyous and playful romp that brings the work to a delightful close.

Overall, the Bassoon Quartet in D major, K.285, is a work of great charm and elegance that displays Mozart's genius for melody, form, and instrumental color. I'm delighted to be performing three wonderful movements with three wonderful people; two of whom I had the pleasure of getting to know during our semester at the Royal College of Music: Nina Shih (violin) and Albert Zhou (viola). Additionally, it is a pleasure to make music with a fellow member of the Great Class of 2023, Jeremy Cha (cello).

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## ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

**Taylor Akin '23** is a member of the Great Class of 2023 at Princeton University from Washington, Oklahoma. He is pursuing a Bachelor of Arts in Computer Science with a certificate in Music Performance on the bassoon. With a musical background spanning over a decade, Taylor has excelled in both saxophone and bassoon, studying under the esteemed Professor Rod Ackmann from 2014 to 2019.

Taylor's musical achievements include performing on NPR's From the Top in 2018 and collaborating with Kevin Olusola, the beatboxer of the popular group Pentatonix, on episode 4 of Where Music Lives in 2019. He has been fortunate to perform in Carnegie Hall's Honor Performance Series, in the Advanced Double Reed Institute of Texas, and at Tanglewood Institute. He has also participated in the Oklahoma Summer Arts Institute at Quartz Mountain from 2017 to 2019.

At Princeton, Taylor is a part of the Princeton University Orchestra and studies with Robert Wagner, principal bassoonist of the New Jersey Symphony. Additionally, he spent Fall 2022 studying at the Royal College of Music in London. Outside of music, he is a Peer Academic Advisor, a Global Ambassador, and a member of Princeton Christian Fellowship and The Aquinas Institute. After graduation, he plans to build his career as a software developer and an entrepreneur.

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**Kristin Cahill** is on the faculty at the New School for Music Study. She holds a Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance from Bowling Green State University and a Master of Music in Piano Performance with additional studies in Collaborative Piano from the University of Houston. From 2008-2013, Ms. Cahill lived in Barcelona, Spain, where she extensively studied castanets and Spanish piano repertoire.

An active adjudicator, Ms. Cahill is a member of the Royal Conservatory of Music College of Examiners. In addition, she has published articles in The Piano Magazine and has presented at the MTNA National Conference, and The Piano Conference.

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**Ewan Curtis '23** is a senior from Houston, Texas concentrating in Computer Science and pursuing certificates in Urban Studies and Music Performance in Double Bass. He began playing the bass in sixth grade and immediately loved it. In high school, he studied with Eric Larson and he now studies with Jack Hill. At Princeton, Ewan plays double bass in the Princeton University Orchestra and electric bass in the Princeton University Rock Ensemble. He thoroughly enjoys playing music with friends outside of these ensembles as well. He has played in a number of student bands on campus, and loves to play any piano or guitar he manages to find. Recently, he's started to learn to DJ, and is having a blast performing for friends. When he isn't playing music or doing schoolwork, Ewan can be found cycling, hiking, skiing, snowboarding, or exploring the local public transportation system.

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**Nina Shih '24** is a junior from Lancaster, PA who studies violin with Anna Lim and is concentrating in History. She began playing the violin at the age of 3 and has enjoyed performing at the Kennedy Center, the Vanderbilt University Blair School of Music, and the Candlelight Concert Series with the Peabody Pre-Conservatory Violin Program. Independently, she has participated in masterclasses with violinists such as Midori Goto and Kristof Barati and has opened a concert at the Mount Gretna Music series for Rachel Barton Pine. She spent the fall of her junior year studying abroad at the Royal College of Music in London and is planning on getting a certificate in Music Performance. Outside of violin, Nina loves to eat, read, paint, write, and sing, and is planning on pursuing a career in law.

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**Albert Zhou '24** began playing viola at the age of fourteen following nine years of violin studies. As an avid chamber musician, Albert was the violist of the Meridien Quartet, which won the bronze medal in the 2019 PCM National Chamber Music Competition, and has participated in several summers of chamber music intensives. He has also enjoyed two summers at Interlochen performing in the World Youth Symphony Orchestra as principal viola. More recently, Albert spent a term studying at the Royal College of Music where he performed with the RCM Symphony and Philharmonic orchestras. Albert currently studies viola with Jessica Thompson at Princeton University. Past teachers include Aimée Kreston, Andrew Picken, and Nathan Braude.

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At Princeton, Albert is concentrating in molecular biology and pursuing a certificate in music performance. He is active in Princeton's music community as a member of the Princeton University Orchestra and Opus Chamber Music, and as a volunteer teacher with the Trenton Youth Orchestra. Albert also works at the Mendel Music Library. In his free time, Albert enjoys shoddily sight-reading music, taking long walks around campus, and entertaining various whimsical and short-lived obsessions.

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**Jeremy Cha '23** is a senior from Westfield, New Jersey majoring in molecular biology with a certificate in music performance. At Princeton, Jeremy has been a member of the Princeton University Orchestra, Opus, La Vie en Cello, and Early Music Princeton. Besides music, Jeremy is also an avid fan of basketball and good naps.

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## ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I wouldn't be here today without the love and support from Mandy Akin (my wife), Mark and Deanna Akin (my parents), Robert Wagner (my current bassoon teacher), Rodney Ackmann (my former bassoon teacher) and my friends here at Princeton. I would first like to thank my parents for being so supportive of my quest toward music making for so long. They financed my life as a musician (which, as a bassoonist, was no easy feat) and made sure I had what I needed to excel. Second, I'd like to thank my wife for putting up with me and supporting me for the past 8 years. I'm so appreciative for your unconditional support, listening to or attending nearly every concert, joining me in London at the RCM, and for your help getting to this point tonight - thank you. A big thank you to Mr. Robert Wagner, my bassoon teacher for the past four years. I couldn't have done this amidst the Princeton curriculum without your understanding and continual encouragement. Additionally, I'd be remiss if I didn't also mention my gratitude for my first bassoon instructor, Rod Ackmann. I am so thankful for the direction and the foundation that he gave me while I was studying with him. Finally, I would like to thank my friends, especially those joining me on this recital. Nina, Albert, Jeremy, Ewan, Jack, Selena, Andra, and so many others. My musical journey has been enhanced by your company, and I really appreciate getting to know you all over the course of my time at Princeton. I would like to conclude by thanking Kristin Cahill and the members of the quartet for the many hours of rehearsing and practice - you all helped to bring this musical showcase to life. But most of all, thank you (yes, you reading this!) for coming and supporting me as I close out my musical journey. Music is meaningless without people to share it with, so thank you for allowing me to share it with you.

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