



DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
AT PRINCETON

Saturday, May 6, 2023, 5:00pm
Wallace Theater, Lewis Arts Complex

The Playhouse Ensembles (est. 2021) Present: **Story Time**

Directed by:
Solon Snider Sway

Student Conductor:
Halle Mitchell

Student Choreographers:
Aaron Ventresca, Clara McNatt, & Kate Stewart

PROGRAM

Princess and the Frog Medley
from *Princess and the Frog* (2009)

Randy Newman
arr. Jerome Walker

Caution to the Wind
from *Striking 12* (2004)

Val Vigoda '87
arr. Halle Mitchell '23

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

Eubie Blake & Noble Sissle
arr. Kenyon Duncan

My Story
World Premiere (2023)

Jim Papoulis and the '22-23
Playhouse Choir

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

Stephen Sondheim
arr. Daniel Rudin

Te Quiero
from *Gaucha* (2023)

Aaron Ventresca '24

What You're Looking For
from *Three Loves* (2023)

Halle Mitchell '23

Our Time (ft. Playhouse Seniors)
from *Merrily We Roll Along* (1981)

Stephen Sondheim
arr. Mac Huff

You Will Be Found
from *Dear Evan Hansen* (2016)

Benj Pasek & Justin Paul
arr. Michael McElroy

In the Wind
World Premiere (2023)

Kenyon Duncan and the '22-23
Playhouse Choir

A Playhouse Farewell
Songs from 1931-1938

Sammy Fain/Irving Kahal, George/Ira
Gershwin, and Herman Hupfeld
arr. Solon Snider Sway

PROGRAM NOTES

Director's Note: Thank you for joining us for "Story Time"—a concert focused on celebrating new work by members of the Princeton community. Featuring compositions and arrangements by current members of the ensemble, a Princeton alum, and two world premieres composed collaboratively through workshops held this spring, it's sure to be a special evening!

—Solon Snider Sway

Princess and the Frog Medley (*arranged by Jerome Walker*)

Choreography by Aaron Ventresca '24

Soloists: Carrington Symone Johnson, Matthew Weatherhead, Aaron Ventresca, Laura Reyes, Madeleine LeBeau, Charlie Roth, Halle Mitchell, Christina Kim, and Kate Stewart

After our Studio Ghibli medley in the fall, many students were interested in the continued performance of songs from movies. One of the most requested was 2009's *Princess and the Frog*, so we are thrilled to present this new arrangement of songs from that movie!

Caution to the Wind (*arranged by Halle Mitchell '23, written by Val Vigoda '87*)

from the musical *Striking 12* (2004)

Conducted by Halle Mitchell '23

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

Choreography by Aaron Ventresca '24; Featured Dancers: Kimberlynn Bjurstrom, Aaron Ventresca, Carrington Symone Johnson, & Kate Stewart

"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

My Story

Choreography by Kate Stewart '25; featuring the Playhouse Chamber Orchestra

This piece was written as part of a collaborative workshop between Jim Papoulis and the Playhouse Choir in February 2023. **Jim Papoulis** composes in many genres and is known for work that combines contemporary, classical, and world sounds. Papoulis has made significant contributions to choral music by revitalizing the choral repertoire with songs whose roots are classical and world, with voicing that incorporates lead vocalists with choirs, vocal percussion, and world rhythms. He has worked with artists ranging from Aretha Franklin, Celine Dion, Idina Menzel, Billy Porter, Beyonce, the New York Philharmonic, Chicago Symphony, Patti Labelle, Snoop Dogg, Jason Mraz, Natalie Cole, Faith Hill, The Portland Symphony, and more, and his music has been featured at events ranging from the Beijing Olympics to the 2008 Presidential Inauguration to the 2010 World Cup. Jim's choral work often is sung from the perspective of the singer, and is constantly inspired by the work he does through his "Foundation for Small Voices." He firmly believes that music can heal, educate, celebrate, and empower the lives of children. A cornerstone of his work is Foundation for Small Voices Songwriting workshops with youth from over 60 countries, both in person and virtual.

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

Soloists: Rachel Edelstein, Madeleine LeBeau, Charlie Roth, Kevin Yeung, Yinshan Shang, Clara McNatt, Lana Utley, Drew Comstock, and Kate Stewart

Staging by Aaron Ventresca; featuring the Playhouse Chamber Orchestra

From Stephen Sondheim's 1987 *Into the Woods*, recently revived once again on Broadway (2022). Dedicated to Stephen Sondheim (1930-2021).

Te Quiero

from *Gaucha*, a new musical in development!

Music by Aaron Ventresca '24

Performed by Carrington Symone Johnson '24 and Aaron Ventresca '24

What You're Looking For

from *Three Loves*, a new musical by Halle Mitchell '23

Performed by Matthew Weatherhead '23

Piano: Halle Mitchell '23

Our Time (arranged by Mac Huff)

featuring Playhouse Seniors: Juliana Wojtenko, Neyci Estefanía Gutiérrez Valencia, Kate Short, Jenni Lawson, Sophie Gerchikov, Parker Blumenberg, Rosemary Paulson, Annette Lee, AJ Lonski, Kevin Yeung, and Tommy Kim

Conducted by Halle Mitchell '23; featuring the Playhouse Chamber Orchestra

You Will Be Found (*arranged by Michael McElroy, orchestrated by Isaac Harlan*)
featuring the Playhouse Chamber Orchestra

This Spring, The Playhouse Choir was lucky to be able to work with Michael McElroy, the TONY-winning and GRAMMY-nominated founder of The Broadway Inspirational Voices, a group that has helped form the vision for The Playhouse Ensembles. Michael worked with soloists from Playhouse on musical theater performance skills and led the group in a workshop rehearsal of this arrangement that he did for the Broadway Inspirational Voices. We are excited to share some of that work with you through Michael's deeply imaginative arrangement of the closing number from Act 1 of the Broadway hit *Dear Evan Hansen*.

In the Wind (*words by members of the '22-'23 Playhouse Choir, music by Kenyon Duncan*)
featuring Playhouse Chamber Orchestra; Spoken word by Destine Harrison-Williams '26

Last semester, the Playhouse Ensembles performed, purely by coincidence, a number of pieces related to the wind. Embracing this, as we brainstormed topics for our first collaborative composition with our amazing collaborator Kenyon Duncan, we settled on the theme of the wind. Kenyon led multiple group discussions and workshops to collect poetry, images, memories, and other ideas from students. This piece is the next step in that ongoing process, which we hope to continue with a studio recording next year! **Kenyon Duncan** is a composer-performer, conductor, and producer from Northern California. Grounded in the sonic traditions of the Black diaspora, Kenyon's creative practice engages questions of embodiment and placemaking. Recent commissions include works for iSing Silicon Valley Girlchoir, Touch of Blue: New American Vocal Ensemble, and the Yale Undergraduate Chamber Orchestra. His sound installation Music for Strangers was featured at the Yale Center for Collaborative Arts and Media. Kenyon is currently an artist-citizen-in-residence with the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music in Mendocino County, CA. Kenyon's experience as an ensemble leader has led to the production of 3 award-winning albums, bringing him around the world to lead workshops on vocal performance and ensemble technique. He spent a year directing The Whiffenpoofs, programming over 200 concerts across 25 states and 26 countries. Kenyon holds a B.A. in Computing & The Arts from Yale University, where he studied composition, computer music, and conducting.

A Playhouse Farewell (*arranged by Solon Snider Sway*)
Conducted by Halle Mitchell '23
Choreography by Aaron Ventresca '24

Please enjoy this short mashup of the jazz/music theater standards "I'll Be Seeing You," (Sammy Fain and Irving Kahn, 1938) "As Time Goes By," (Herman Hupfeld, 1931) and "They Can't Take that Away from Me" (George and Ira Gershwin, 1937).

The Playhouse Ensembles 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. 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
Annette Lee
Ariel Blumenberg
Ash Jackson
Austria Merritt
Carla Crucianelli
Carrington Symone Johnson
Charlie Roth
Christina Kim
Clara McNatt
Cynthia Jacobson
Destine Harrison-Williams
Drew Comstock
Fatmagül Katmer
George Tidmore
Halle Mitchell
Jenni Lawson
Jessica Wang
Josie Wender
Juliana Wojtenko
Juliette Carbonnier
Karlo Ascue
Kate Stewart
Kate Short
Kevin Yeung
Kimberlynn Bjurstrom
Lana Utley
Laura Reyes
Liam Wang
Madeleine LeBeau
Michelle Tang
Michelle Thurber
Nada Elfarazy
Neyci Estefanía Gutiérrez Valencia
Rachel Edelstein
Rosemary Paulson
Sophie Gerchikov
Sydney Hwang
Tharuka Gamage
Tommy Kim
Yinshan Shang

The Playhouse Chamber Orchestra

Violin: Isabella Khan & Emma Hathaway Sway

Viola: Michael Fording

Cello: Nati Solano

Bass: Jay White

Flute: Kate Park

Clarinet: Jacob Neis

Clarinet 2/Tenor Sax: Jacob Jackson

Bassoon: Conner Kim

Horn: Maya Jaaskelainen

Trumpet: Gabe Chalick

Piano: Miles Walter

Drums: Tommy Kim

Percussion: Rachel Edelstein

Special Thanks:

Nancy Agosto, Shariffa Ali, Jacqueline Appleby, Elena Araoz,
Katie Baltrush, Carmelita Becnel, Dan Benevento, Chloe Brown,
Ronald Cappon, Lou Chen, Collin Costa, Jane Cox, Gabriel Crouch,
Danielle Dennis, Vince di Mura, Carlos Dias, Torrey Drum,
Milan Eldridge, Martha Elliott, Rochelle Ellis, Joe Fonseca, Will Han,
Isaac Harlan, Brian Herrera, Sara Hong, Jacqueline Horner-Kwiatek,
Tess James, David Kellett, Deborah Koenigsberg, Mike Langley,
Jingjing Lin, Michael McElroy, Mary O'Connor, Matthew Parrish,
Tracy Patterson, Matt Pilsner, Barbara Rearick, Kay Richardson,
Steven Runk, Beth Schupsky, Greg Smith, Chesney Snow,
Jaclyn Sweet, Olivier Tarpaga, Dan Trueman, Darryl Waskow,
Kim Wassall, Stacy Wolf, Codi Yhap, Inkyung Yi,
Marion Friedman Young
