

DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC
AT PRINCETON



Friday, November 22, 2024, 7:30 PM
Saturday, November 23, 2024, 7:30 PM
Richardson Auditorium, Alexander Hall

Princeton University Orchestra presents Ellington and Mahler

Michael Pratt, Conductor

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PROGRAM

**EDWARD KENNEDY “DUKE”
ELLINGTON**
(1899 – 1974)

The River
Spring
Meander
Giggling Rapids
Lake
Vortex
Village of the Virgins
Riba

Intermission

GUSTAV MAHLER
(1860 – 1911)

Symphony No. 4 in G Major
Sara Shiff '25, soloist
I. Deliberately, without rushing
II. In a comfortable movement
III. Peacefully
IV. Very comfortably

PROGRAM NOTES

THE RIVER EDWARD KENNEDY “DUKE” ELLINGTON

Edward Kennedy “Duke” Ellington grew up in a comfortable middle-class neighborhood in Washington in a home filled with music. Probably the most prodigious of all American composers with over a thousand works, he is arguably (at least by me) the most gifted composer produced by the United States.

In Richard Boyer’s 1944 profile in The New Yorker “How Duke Ellington Took Jazz From the Back Yard to Buckingham Palace” one reads about Ellington’s hectic mid-career life:

“...Duke, christened Edward Kennedy Ellington, has spent his days and nights on trains rattling across the continent with his band on an endless sequence of one-night stands at dances, and playing in movie theatres, where he does up to five shows a day; in the night clubs of Broadway and Harlem and in hotels around the country; in radio stations and Hollywood movie studios; in rehearsal halls and in recording studios, where his band has made some eleven hundred records, which have sold twenty million copies; and even, in recent years, in concert halls such as Carnegie and the Boston Symphony. His music has the virtue of pleasing both the jitterbugs, whose cadenced bouncing often makes an entire building shudder, and the intellectuals, who read into it profound comments on transcendental matters. In 1939, two consecutive engagements Ellington played were a dance in a tobacco warehouse in North Carolina, where his product was greeted with shouts of “Yeah man!,” and a concert in Paris, where it was greeted as revealing “the very secret of the cosmos” and as being related to “the rhythm of the atom.”

Boyer goes on to emphasize that for the Duke, there was no difference between the music that the tobacco farmers jitterbugged to and that which brought enlightenment to the Parisian intelligentsia.

The River was a commission to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the American Ballet Theater and was choreographed by Alvin Ailey. The different movements refer to a voyage down a river, from its origin from a bubbling spring to its merging into the infinity of the ocean—the metaphor being our own life trails and trials, and, at death, release into eternal vastness.

The ballet was first given with an incomplete score, with only five of the planned twelve movements performed. It was expanded later. Despite the note in the premiere’s program that that it was a work in progress, this deeply spiritual and glowing work was received with wide acclaim.

Tonight we play an expanded orchestra version by Canadian composer Ron Collins, who did the original orchestration for small orchestra.

—*Michael Pratt*

SYMPHONY NO. 4 IN G MAJOR

GUSTAV MAHLER

Gustav Mahler was born in Bohemia in 1860. His father, an innkeeper, was sadistic; his parents fought, and several of his siblings died as infants. It was a grim upbringing, save for the consolations of Jewish faith and culture.

His childhood is a point of focus in Mahler studies, so too his protracted death from heart disease at age 51 along with his complicated marriage to Alma Schindler. She too was a gifted composer, forced by her husband to curtail the pursuit; that, together with the death of their daughter, drove a wedge between them. Alma had an affair with an architect, and there followed a nasty three-way confrontation that ended with Alma reluctantly deciding to remain with her husband. “Gustav’s love is so boundless that my remaining with him means life to him,” Alma told her lover, whom she continued to see.

Add in anxiousness, neurosis, an overhyped encounter with Freud and an interpretive scheme emerges: Mahler’s music, his symphonies and songs, are romantic and modern, sublime and subliminal, outrageously self-centered and excessively emotional, such that his scores require huge orchestras and choirs.

In an essay on Mahler, philosopher Theodore Adorno stated the obvious: Mahler’s symphonies are contradictory affairs. In his first symphony, an organ-grinder tune mixes with a song about a friar who has overslept (“Bruder Martin,” aka “Frère Jacques”) with klezmer music with agonizingly protracted dominant-tonic relationships and bloated sonata forms. Siblings fight; angels sing; flowers bloom in the tomb. The symphony becomes all-inclusive, incorporating bits and pieces of the Wagner, Mozart, and Beethoven operas Mahler conducted in Vienna along with snatches of the ballet Alma’s composition teacher wrote. The conflation of styles made Mahler’s output seem, at least to Adorno, novelistic—a pulp-fictional grab-bag that most readers would likely leave unfinished. The later symphonies are increasingly abstract, likened by other critics to strolls along the edge of reality and gazes into oblivion. Some of the sounds are reckless, uncivilized, but all are in defense of civilization.

Mahler wrote his Fourth Symphony in G Major in a resort town in the southern Austrian state of Carinthia. It was summer vacation; he enjoyed the lake view. He dubbed the symphony a “humoresque,” suggesting a good-natured, idyllic, and buffoonish score.

Mahler's muse, a deceased novelist named Jean Paul, defined humor and laughter as the best defense against morbidity. Evidently, Mahler didn't laugh enough.

The first movement opens with bells that suggest the mechanicalness of a puppet theater. Maybe this is Mahler's definition of life: a comic-tragic puppet show. The jingling is the background for themes of contrasting character. The development is fantastically bizarre, disturbing, on the edge of falling apart before the opening materials return, in keeping with the strictures of sonata form. In the second movement, a small band plays Ländlers in a tavern while the patrons dance and sing. Here too the sounds are distorted, made grotesque before a more heartfelt middle section. The third movement is the essence of the score, some 25 minutes long, a latticework of variations in a confessional mode before a cry of – what? Despair? Hopelessness?

The text of the final movement comes from Des Knaben Wunderhorn (The Boy's Magic Horn), a folklore collection published in 1805 by Achim von Arnim and Clemens Brentano. Mahler adored the compilation and returned to it again and again in his choral settings, finding within it those contradictions Adorno latched onto: the utopian and dystopian, the carefree and menacing, the pre- and postlapsarian world. The music of the finale is by turns savage, innocent, and at the end, as unbearably sad as music can get. The orchestration is (for Mahler) reduced, without heavy brass; horns and trumpets are more modest in number than in other movements. The arpeggiated harp chords, the rocking, lullaby phrasing, the soprano imitating the cant of a choirboy: the music pushes time and history away, ending with the promise that everyone will wake to joy in heaven yet stay asleep forever.

—*Simon Morrison, Professor of Music*

MAHLER - TEXT AND TRANSLATIONS

Das himmlisches Leben Aus "des Knaben Wunderhorn"

Wir genießen die himmlischen Freuden,
D'rum tun wir das Irdische meiden.
Kein weltlich' Getümmel
Hört man nicht im Himmel!

The Heavenly Life From "The Youth's Magic Horn"

We revel in heavenly pleasures,
Leaving all that is earthly behind us.
No worldly turmoil
Is heard in heaven;

Lebt alles in sanftester Ruh!
Wir führen ein englisches Leben!
Sind dennoch ganz lustig daneben!
Wir tanzen und springen,
Wir hüpfen und singen!
Sankt Peter im Himmel sieht zu!

We all live in sweetest peace.
We lead an angelic existence,
And so we are perfectly happy.
We dance and leap,
And skip and sing;
Saint Peter in Heaven looks on.

Johannes das Lämmlein auslasset,
Der Metzger Herodes d'rauf passet!
Wir führen ein geduldig's,
Unschuldig's, geduldig's,
Ein liebliches Lämmlein zu Tod!
Sankt Lucas den Ochsen tät schlachten
Ohn' einig's Bedenken und Achten;
Der Wein kost' kein Heller
Im himmlischen Keller;
Die Englein, die backen das Brot.

Saint John has lost his lambkin,
And butcher Herod is lurking:
We lead a patient,
Guiltless, patient,
Darling lambkin to death.
Saint Luke is slaying the oxen,
Without the least hesitation;
Wine costs not a farthing
In the Heavenly tavern;
The angels bake the bread.

Gut' Kräuter von allerhand Arten,
Die wachsen im himmlischen Garten!
Gut' Spargel, Fisolen
Und was wir nur wollen,
Ganze Schüsseln voll sind uns bereit!
Gut' Äpfel, gut' Birn' und gut' Trauben;
Die Gärtner, die alles erlauben!
Willst Rehbock, willst Hasen?
Auf offener Straßen
Sie laufen herbei!

Fine sprouts of every description,
Are growing in Heaven's garden.
Fine asparagus, fine herbs,
And all we desire,
Huge platefuls for us are prepared.
Fine apples, fine pears and fine grapes,
The gardeners let us pick freely.
You want venison, hare?
In the open streets
They go running around.

Sollt' ein Fasttag etwa kommen,
Alle Fische gleich mit Freuden
angeschwommen!
Dort läuft schon Sankt Peter
Mit Netz und mit Köder,
Zum himmlischen Weiher hinein.[N]
Sankt Martha die Köchin muß sein!

And when there's a holiday near,
All the fishes come joyfully
swimming;
And off runs Saint Peter
With net and with bait,
Towards the celestial pond.
Saint Martha will have to be cook!

Kein' Musik ist ja nicht auf Erden,
Die unsrer verglichen kann werden.
Elftausend Jungfrauen
Zu tanzen sich trauen!
Sankt Ursula selbst dazu lacht!

There's no music at all on the earth
Which can ever compare with ours.
Eleven thousand virgins
Are set dancing.
Saint Ursula herself laughs to see it!

Cäcilia mit ihren Verwandten
Sind treffliche Hofmusikanten!
Die englischen Stimmen
Ermuntern die Sinnen!
Daß alles für Freuden erwacht.

Cecilia with her companions
Are splendid court musicians.
The angelic voices
Delight the senses,
For all things awake to joy.

ABOUT

SARA SHIFF

Soprano Sara Shiff, who began her vocal studies at the MacPhail Center for Music in her hometown of Minneapolis, Minnesota, has won First Place in the Minnesota Sings "Ten Years in the Making" Competition, the MacPhail Concerto/Aria Competition, the Schmidt Vocal Competition, and the Dakota Valley Symphony Concerto/Aria Competition. She made her role debut as Pamina in Princeton University's *Die Zauberflöte*, appeared as featured soloist with the Princeton Camerata Orchestra, and, as winner of the Princeton University Concerto/Aria Competition, performed as soloist with the Princeton University Orchestra at Powers Field in the Reunions Fireworks Concert.

Notable performances include *Zweite Dame* in the Berlin Opera Academy, premiering scenes from Sarah Kirkland Snider's *Hildegarde*, scenes from *Norma* and upcoming scenes from *La Traviata* in Glee Club's Opera Scenes Workshop. Supported by the Stone/Davis History Senior Thesis Prize, her research has led her through opera house archives throughout Europe, and she has completed two intensive Italian language programs through Princeton in Pisa and Laboratorio Teatrale.

A senior majoring in History with a minor in Vocal Performance, Shiff sings in the Chamber Choir, serves as a Whitman College Community Living Advisor and Princeton University Concerts Student Ambassador, and participates in the Music Mentor Program with Rachel Glodo and the Sinai Scholars program at Chabad. She previously co-led an opera club project with Grammy-winner Anthony Roth Costanzo '04 providing Metropolitan Opera access to students.

Sara studies in the studio of David Kellett and coaches with Sarah Pelletier, Liv Redpath, and Gabriel Crouch; under their guidance, she is preparing applications for Master's programs at music conservatories, with the ultimate goal of an international operatic career. Her previous teachers include Elizabeth Bishop, Dr. Wendy Zaro-

Mullins, and Dennis Petersen. She extends her deepest gratitude to Michael Pratt and PUO for this extraordinary opportunity and to her family and friends – especially her mom – for their steadfast support.

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 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.

MICHAEL PRATT

The 2024-2025 season marks 47 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 (now the Music Minor in 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 Commencement 2019 he was awarded the President’s Award for Distinguished Teaching by President Christopher Eisgruber.

In October 2023 he published his first novel, *The Copyists*.

PRINCETON UNIVERSITY ORCHESTRA

Violin I

Kelly Kim*
Melody Choi
Yuri Lee
Daniel Lee
Eleanor Clemans-Cope
Kyle Foster
Kodai Speich
Ian Barnett
Amy Baskurt
Grace Opong
Caitlyn Flexer
Christine Miller
Andrew Liu

Violin II

Shannon Ma +
Natasha Wipfler-Kim
Yoonseo Jung
Josh Wolford
Andrew Park
Katherine Monroe
Felix Zhang
Vasanth Visweswaran
Miriam Waldvogel
Julie Kim
Isabella Jung

Viola

Dorothy Junginger+
Callia Liang
Dhyana Mishra
Justin Yi
Trey Hydock
Angelica She
Sonia Pillai
Alena Zhang
Amelia Hanbury
Vittorio Samaniego

Violoncello

Kaivalya Kulkarni+
Aaron Dantzer
Jack Gallahan
Alexandra Ebanks
Will Robles
Roger Brooks
Elliott Kim
Maurice Neuman
Abby Czuchlewski
Yehyun Hong
Tansen Patel-Bose
Brandon Cheng

Contrabass

Tendekai Mawokomatanda +
Henry Beard
Emma von Scheliha
Cara Turnbull
Jack Hill

Flute and Piccolo

Heidi Gubser +
Jessica Hou
Alessandro Troncoso
Audrey Yang +

Oboe

Anya Anand +
Ishan Ghosh
Kade Jackson
Claire Kho
Abigail Kim +

Clarinets

Jacob Jackson
Caroline Johnson
Daniel Kim
D.K. Lee +
Kyle Tsai +

Bassoons

James Dyson
Eleanor Ha +
Christopher Li +
Anna Pratico

French Horns

Spencer Bauman +
Ian Kim +
Nicolas Feng
Daniel Liu
Jake Tessnow

Trumpets

Matt Cline +
Nicholas Lorenzen +
Gabriel Chalick

Trombones

Remzi Abaci
Artha Abeysinghe +
William Parson

Tuba

Wesley Sanders +

Timpani

Shivam Kak
John Wallar

Percussion

Ian Chang
Kerrie Liang
Malik Resheidat
John Wallar

Keyboard

Milo Salvucci

Harp

Chloe Lau +
Lucy Harper +

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- Instrument acquisition, rental, and maintenance
- Engagement with the local music community

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The Department of Music at Princeton University provides its undergraduates—whether they major or minor in Music—the opportunity to learn from a world-renowned faculty of scholars and composers. Performance opportunities include student-led and departmental ensembles like symphony orchestras, multi-genre choruses, jazz, contemporary music, African music, steel band, laptop orchestra, and much more, and students have access to private instrumental and voice lessons from eminent performing artists. The graduate program offers two distinct and prestigious Ph.D. programs in composition or musicology; graduate students receive fully-funded, immersive experiences conducting research, advancing their craft, and collaborating with faculty within Princeton University's inspiring, interdisciplinary campus.

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