Richard Strauss:
A Birthday Celebration

Rutgers Symphony Orchestra

Kynan Johns, Conductor
Saya Callner, Assistant Conductor
Jason Moore, Assistant Conductor

with
Tao Zhang, Violin

Friday, December 5, 2014 | 7:30 p.m.
Nicholas Music Center
Mason Gross Performing Arts Center
Douglass Campus

Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey
Program

Hymn to the Sun

Kevin Puts
(b. 1972)

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77

Johannes Brahms
(1833–1897)

I. Allegro non troppo
II. Adagio
III. Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace

Tao Zhang, Violin

Intermission
Eine Alpeninfonie, Op. 64
Richard Strauss
(1864–1949)

I. Nacht (Night)
II. Sonnenaufgang (Sunrise)
III. Der Anstieg (The ascent)
IV. Eintritt in den Wald (Entry into the wood)
V. Wanderung neben dem Bache (A walk along the brook)
VI. Am Wasserfall (At the waterfall)
VII. Erscheinung (A vision)
VIII. Auf blumige Wiesen (Onto flowery meadows)
IX. Auf der Alm (On the mountain pasture)
X. Durch Dickicht und Gestrüpp auf Irrwegen
   (Wrong turns through the thicket and brush)
XI. Auf dem Gletscher (On the glacier)
XII. Gefahrvolle Augenblicke (Perilous moments)
XIII. Auf dem Gipfel (At the summit)
XIV. Vision (A vision)
XV. Nebel steigen auf (The fog rises)
XVI. Die Sonne verdüstert sich allmählich
   (The sun is gradually obscured)
XVII. Elegie (Elegy)
XVIII. Stille vor dem Sturm (Calm before the storm)
XIX. Gewitter und Sturm, Abstieg
   (Thunder and rainstorm, the descent)
XX. Sonnenuntergang (Sunset)
XXI. Ausklang (End of the day)
XXII. Nacht (Night)
Program Notes

Thy dawning is beautiful in the horizon of the sky.
Thy rays, they encompass the lands ... thou bindest them by thy love.

—Akhenaton, *Hymn to the Sun*

In the score to his work *Hymn to the Sun* (2008), composer Kevin Puts provides the text above by Akhenaton, the 14th-century Egyptian king. Akhenaton rejected the old gods of Egypt, inaugurating the monotheistic cult of sun god Aton. Puts writes the following about the text:

This ancient Egyptian appeal to the deific sun was the inspiration for my orchestral concert-opener *Hymn to the Sun*. I imagined a wild, sacred dance to call forth the sun and all its powers, and then the sudden and magnificent rising on the horizon. The image of the sun’s rays binding all the lands is particularly moving to me in the context of today’s tense global climate. During the time I composed this piece, I had the amazing fortune of witnessing the sun’s rising from the summit of Mount Haleakalā on the Hawaiian island of Maui, an experience Mark Twain described as the ‘sublimest spectacle’ of his life.

Puts’s *Hymn to the Sun* was commissioned by the Sun Valley Summer Symphony, in Sun Valley, Idaho. The work was premiered on August 3, 2008, under the direction of Alasdair Neale.

Puts has earned degrees in composition from Yale University and the Eastman School of Music. He has taught composition at the University of Texas and the Peabody Institute. Among the many awards Puts has received is the 2012 Pulitzer Prize for his opera *Silent Night*. His works have been performed by many leading ensembles,
including the Atlanta Symphony; the Saint Louis Symphony, with conductor Leonard Slatkin; the Cincinnati Symphony, led by conductor Paavo Järvi; and the Boston Pops, under the direction of conductor Keith Lockhart.

—Jason Moore, MM, orchestral conducting

In 1848, at age 15, Johannes Brahms heard Beethoven’s Violin Concerto for the first time; the soloist was the 17-year-old virtuoso Joseph Joachim. Brahms was impressed by Joachim, who was just two years his senior, but they would not meet for another five years. The next time their paths crossed, Brahms was in the midst of his first long-term tour—nearly eight months in duration—with Ede Reményi, the Hungarian violinist and composer. Reményi was hoping to renew his friendship with the already renowned Joachim along the way, but at their reunion Joachim was instead drawn to Reményi’s talented young accompanist. Brahms and Joachim became immediate friends.

At Joachim’s invitation, Brahms visited the violinist in Göttingen, Germany, the following summer. Their friendship instantly renewed, the two studied and performed together. The friendship was not based entirely on work, however. For Joachim’s 22nd birthday, Brahms and two friends performed a little piece Brahms had composed for the occasion. Titled Hymne zur Verherrlichung des grossen Joachim (Hymn for the glory of the great Joachim) is described as a “burlesque serenade for string trio.” Still in its infancy, the friendship with Joachim would be one of the most important relationships of Brahms’s life. It was Joachim who introduced Brahms to Robert and Clara Schumann, a relationship that had a lasting impact—both professionally and personally—on the young composer. It was only natural that Brahms would eventually compose a work for his friend and advocate.

Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 77, began to evolve in the summer of 1878. Joachim was involved in the project early on, primarily advising
Of the work’s composition and collaboration Karl Geiringer writes:

Notwithstanding the composer’s small acquaintance with violin technique, tacitly admitted both by Brahms and Joachim, the concerto as first written confronted the soloist with a whole series of new and difficult problems. These mainly tax the left hand: the greatest demands are made with regard to double-stopping, the ability to span large intervals, and certainty of attack in skipping from the lowest to the highest register. It is significant that Brahms conscientiously asked his friend’s advice on all technical questions—and then hardly ever followed it.

The work was initially conceived as a four-movement piece. Brahms ultimately replaced the two central movements with what he described as a “feeble” Adagio movement. The Adagio is situated between an Allegro non troppo (the “non troppo” added at the pleading of Joachim) and the final movement, Allegro giocoso, ma non troppo vivace – poco più presto. Joachim premiered the piece in Leipzig on January 1, 1879, with Brahms at the podium. The initial reception was not positive: it was labeled “unplayable” and described as a “concerto against the orchestra.” Violinist Bronisław Huberman elaborated, stating, “It is a concerto for violin and against the orchestra—and the violin wins.” At the premiere, the work was paired with Beethoven’s Violin Concerto (also a three-movement work in D major) at Joachim’s insistence. This was an appropriate choice musically, and it brought their friendship full circle from Brahms’s initial hearing the piece and Joachim’s performing it 46 years earlier.

―Jason Moore

Richard Strauss composed Eine Alpensinfonie (An Alpine Symphony), Op. 64, between 1911 and 1915. It was his first major orchestral work in 10 years, though he had made some sketches as early as 1902. Strauss himself conducted the Dresden Hofkapelle at the premiere of the symphony, October 28, 1915. The work’s first
United States performance was on April 28, 1916, with Leopold Stokowski conducting the Philadelphia Orchestra.

_Eine Alpensinfonie_ is the last of Strauss’s tone poems and also the least performed. A reason for the latter is that the work requires a very large orchestra, including, notably, a sizable percussion section. This was, in fact, the largest orchestra Strauss had demanded. The composer said of his use of it, “At last I have learned to orchestrate. I wanted to compose, for once, as a cow gives milk.”

The piece was perhaps inspired by a hike the boyhood Strauss had taken in Upper Bavaria, about which he later wrote: “The next day I described the whole hike on the piano. Naturally huge tone paintings and smarminess à la Wagner.” This was more than a decade before he wrote his parents, when he began to compose the tone poem, that it “would begin with a sunrise in Switzerland ....” Strauss had earlier written more extensively, in a letter to his friend Ludwig Thuille:

> Recently we made a great hiking party to the top of the Heimgarten, on which day we walked for twelve hours .... There one has a splendid view .... Then we hiked down the other side to Lake Walchensee, but we took a wrong trail and had to climb around in the midday heat for three hours with no path ... Lake Walchensee is a beautiful lake, but makes a melancholy impression since it is enclosed by forests and high mountains ... a terrible thunderstorm overtook us, which uprooted trees and threw stones in our faces. We hardly had time to find a dry spot before the storm broke. Lake Kochelsee, a very romantic and beautiful lake, made huge waves so that it was impossible to even think about crossing it. After the storm had passed we had to settle for walking all the way around the lake, whether we wanted to or not ... tired, soaked to the skin .... The hike was interesting, unusual, and original in the highest degree.

_An Alpine Symphony_ is also inspired by Nietzsche’s 1888 essay “Der Antichrist” (The Antichrist), as Strauss wrote in his diary in 1911:

> It is clear to me that the German nation will achieve new creative energy only by liberating itself from Christianity ... I shall call my alpine symphony _Der Antichrist_ since it represents moral purification through one’s own strength, liberation through work, worship of eternal, magnificent nature.

—Saya Callner, DMA, orchestral conducting
Rutgers Symphony Orchestra

Conductor: Kynan Johns
Assistant Conductors: Saya Callner, Jason Moore

First Violin
Wen-Tso Chen, Co-concertmaster
Tao Zhang, Co-concertmaster
Go Woon Choi, Assistant Concertmaster
Yerim Kwon, Assistant Concertmaster
Hyun Joon Shin
DanBee Park
Lindsey Gamble
Ga Young Cho
James Keene
Melissa Lisboa-Underwood
Nikki Airhart
Cristopher Basso
Kippum Lee
Shannon Merlino

Second Violin
Xinou Wei, Principal
Yu Jin Oh, Assistant Principal
Caroline Yoshimoto
Daniel Jang
Chang Ho Lim
Michael Szeles
Andriy Gavrish
Grace Lee
Teresa Lim
Emily Gaab
Mark Perfect
Natalie Caravaglio

Viola
On You Kim, Principal
Jen-Hsuan Liao, Co-principal
Sara Rossi, Assistant Principal
Ji Youn Choi
Arman Alpyspaev
Jaewon Chung
Shuli Tang
Nicole Wright
Seth Van Embden
Jacob Shur
Joseph Burke

Violoncello
Jordan Enzinger, Principal
Joon Whan Kim, Assistant Principal
Diana Golden
Matthias Iff
Alex Nelson
Yoonjin Park
Sha Wu
Kevin Maa
Veronica Paralles

Contrabass
Emilio Guarino, Principal
Francis Wagner, Assistant Principal
Craig Yoder
Jason Bloomquist
Daniel Merriman
Ray Bohn
Alexander LaRocca
Adam Austerlitz
**Flute and Piccolo**
Hilary Jones, Principal
Natasha Loomis, Co-principal
Juhye Lee
Minji Kwon

**Oboe and Cor Anglais**
Lillian Copeland, Principal
Wyatt Beekman
Wei Wang

**Clarinet**
Dena Orkin, Principal
Soojin Huh, Principal
Daniel Choi
Anthony Ciccone
Jean Gould
Tallyn Wesner

**Bassoon**
Casey Gsell, Principal
Wen Hsieh, Co-Principal
Jonathan Livolsi
Daniel Parrente

**Horn**
Mimi Zhang, Principal
Jessie Mersinger
Elizabeth Benson, Co-principal
Giovanni Garcia, Co-principal
Kevin Ayres
Tom Bourgault
Kyle Kraft
Bo Dungan
James Perry

**Trumpet**
Arthur Zanin, Principal
Cyril Bodnar
Angel Narvaez
Don Batchelder

**Trombone**
Matthew Walley, Principal
Alec Hanslowe
Jessica Cates

**Bass Trombone**
Jeffrey Smith, Principal

**Tuba**
Caleb Adams, Principal
Mark Montari

**Timpani**
Paul Nalesnik, Principal

**Percussion**
Christine Ching-Yu Chen, Principal
Chui Ling Tan
Tom O’Hara

**Harp**
Lynette Wardle
Fran Duffy

**Organ**
Samuel Rowe

**Piano/Celesta**
Michael Bulychev-Okser
About the Artists

Chinese violinist **Tao Zhang** has earned degrees from San Francisco Conservatory of Music, the Yale School of Music, and the State University of New York–Purchase College. He has worked with artists such as Ani Kavafian, Pinchas Zukerman, Kurt Mazur, and James Levine. Zhang is a doctor of musical arts degree candidate at the Mason Gross School of the Arts, where he is studying with Carmit Zori.

**Kynan Johns** is conductor and director of orchestras at the Mason Gross School of the Arts. A protégé of Maestro Lorin Maazel, he has served as resident conductor at the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia, in Valencia, Spain, to both Maazel and Zubin Mehta. A native of Australia, Johns has conducted the Israel Philharmonic, the Rotterdam Philharmonic, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Vienna Chamber Orchestra, the Filarmonica della Scala, the Netherlands Radio Symphony Orchestra, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra, and the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra. In opera, he has worked at London’s Covent Garden and at Italy’s famed La Scala; conducted *Don Giovanni*, *Madame Butterfly*, *Don Carlos*, *Luisa Miller*, and Maazel’s 1984 in Valencia; *Don Giovanni* for the Oper Magdeburg; Britten’s *Turn of the Screw* in Rouen; and *La Bohème* for the State Opera of South Australia. Cover conductor for the recent opera sensation *Anna Nicole* at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, Johns worked with the New York City Opera on Adès’s *Powder Her Face*, Chin’s *Alice in Wonderland*, and Offenbach’s *La Périchole*. In addition, he conducted Kurt Weill’s *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny* for the Manhattan School of Music. Johns debuted with the Dortmund Philharmonic, the Lisbon Metropolitan Orchestra, and the Israel Symphony Orchestra, returning to the Limburg Symphony, the Netherlands; Orquesta Clásica Santa Cecilia, Madrid; and the Asturias Symphony Orchestra. He has been awarded the inaugural Centenar...
Medal by the Australian government for his service to music. Johns is represented by Columbia Artists Management Inc. (CAMI). Recognized nationally as a leading conservatory orchestra, Rutgers Symphony Orchestra (RSO) is composed of top graduate and undergraduate musicians enrolled at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. The orchestra presents an annual concert series of six symphonic programs, a main-stage opera, and two popular programs. RSO aims to prepare students for professional careers as orchestral musicians by tackling major symphonic repertoire, including the Mahler, Strauss, Beethoven, and Brahms symphonic cycles. Each season the orchestra hosts student composition readings and recordings. The annual RSO Concerto Competition provides winners solo performance opportunities the following season.

As the flagship ensemble of the Mason Gross instrumental program, RSO has performed at Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, New York’s Symphony Space, and the New Jersey Performing Arts Center. The orchestra has played with some of world’s leading conductors and soloists, including Maestros James Judd, Andrea Quinn, and Rossen Milanov; soloists Lara St. John, Philippe Quint, Barbara Dever, Thomas Studebaker, Nancy Gustafson, Susan Starr, Ruth Laredo, and Alexander Ivashkin; Paquito D’Rivera; and pop artists Ray Charles and Jay-Z. RSO has recorded on the Naxos label and is the only university orchestra in the nation with a regular national radio broadcast. It can be heard on WWFM, 89.1.
About the Music Department

The Music Department at the Mason Gross School of the Arts has a faculty of 34 full-time and approximately 70 part-time members. There are approximately 455 students enrolled in its seven degree programs: bachelor of music, bachelor of arts, master of music, master of arts, artist diploma, doctor of philosophy, and doctor of musical arts. The mission of all music degree programs is to develop well-educated professional musicians who have a deep historical and theoretical understanding of all aspects of music. The program provides students with traditional, well-grounded conservatory training while preparing them for the changing world of the arts in the 21st century.

Proceeds from the sale of tickets for this concert support scholarship funds for music students.

About Nicholas Music Center

- Fire regulations strictly prohibit smoking in Nicholas Music Center. Smoking is permitted outside the building only.
- FIRE NOTICE: The nearest exits are located by the red signs; exits are located to the right and left of the stage and lobby.
- Please turn off all phones and pagers before entering the performance area.
- Latecomers may have to wait to be seated until an appropriate pause in the program.
- The taking of photographs and the possession or use of audio or video recorders during performances are prohibited.
- The Lost and Found is located at the Mason Gross School of the Arts ticket office, next to the Philip J. Levin Theater, across Bettenbender Plaza.
- Water fountains are located on both sides of the lobby.

Ticket Office Hours

Weekdays: Mondays to Fridays, 10 a.m. to 5:30 p.m.
Weekends: Saturdays, noon to 5:30 p.m.
Performances: one hour before curtain

Hours will vary during university holidays.