



PRINCE GEORGE'S PHILHARMONIC

SEASON 55 | 2020-2021

Jesus Manuel Berard, Music Director



Saturday, November 14, 2020 • 7:30 pm

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Prince George's Community College
Largo, Maryland*

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Prince George's Philharmonic

Jesus Manuel Berard, *Music Director*

Tiffany Lu, *Assistant Conductor*

Saturday, November 14, 2020 • 7:30 pm

Live Stream, Virtual Concert

Grand Theater, Center for Performing Arts

Prince George's Community College, Largo, MD

Tomaso Albinoni (1671-1750)

Adapted by Remo Giazotto (1910-1998)

Arranged by Jesus Manuel Berard

Adagio

Antonín Dvořák (1841-1904)

Serenade in E Major, Op. 22

- I. Moderato
- II. Tempo di Valse
- III. Scherzo: Vivace
- IV. Larghetto
- V. Finale: Allegro vivace

Made possible in part through funding provided by the Prince George's County Council; the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission, Department of Parks and Recreation, Prince George's County; and the Maryland State Arts Council.

Program Notes by Max Derrickson



Tomaso Albinoni

Adagio

Born: Venice, June 8, 1671

Died: Venice, January 17, 1750

The neo-Baroque masterpiece Adagio in G minor is a work so well known that even if you weren't sure of its title, you'd nonetheless recognize it in just a few notes. Its frequent appearance in modern popular culture (appearing as a featured soundtrack in several films, for example) has made it one of the most popular classical pieces of music in history, and rightly so for many of us. Its brilliance is that it embodies a beauty that speaks for all eras in Western music, not just the Baroque. Its creation, however, lurks in mystery.

Albinoni's music was well regarded in his lifetime and after. JS Bach, in fact, thought highly of his work, writing two fugues on themes penned by Albinoni, and using Albinoni's bass lines as exercises for his keyboard students to learn to play and improvise. In fact, many of these bass lines – the bass notes and their notations that told the bass instrument and keyboardist how to play the fundamental parts of the piece at hand, called “figured bass” – survived through Bach's use of them. Albinoni was first and foremost an opera composer, having written (at least, so he claimed) 81 of them. In addition, he was probably the first Italian composer to write concertos using the oboe as the solo instrument. He was considered an important composer in his lifetime, and yet, as sometimes happens in history, Albinoni seems to have faded from public view sometime in his 50s during the 1720s; even his death date was unclear to scholars. Albinoni published little of his music during his life, and what remained, including some of Bach's student's lessons, was collected and eventually held in the State Library of Saxony in Dresden, Germany, until WWII, when the institution was bombed by Allied forces. The 20th Century did few favors for Albinoni, until the Italian musicologist, composer and critic Remo Giazotto began working on Albinoni's biography and catalog of works. And this is when Albinoni's Adagio came to light.

Giazotto reported that in 1949 while cataloging Albinoni's entire works (four years after Dresden was bombed, and almost three hundred years after Albinoni's birth), he was combing through what was left of the Baroque composer's manuscripts saved from the shattered Dresden Library and found an extraordinary scrap of music. It was a fragment of a manuscript showing only a few bars of a melody and a bass line. (Another recollection tells that a quick-thinking librarian saved what he could of Albinoni's collection during the bombing raid and gave that fragment of music to Giazotto.) Giazotto surmised that this fragment was probably the beginning of a slow

movement to a trio sonata, popular with Albinoni, or a sonata da chiesa (instrumental music for several instruments written for the church). By 1958, Giazotto had fleshed out the fragment as an homage to that little known but great composer, using the rules of composition in Albinoni's times to complete the work. Giazotto published and got the copyright for this piece under the title "Adagio in G Minor for Strings and Organ on Two Thematic Ideas and on a Figured Bass by Tomaso Albinoni."

In his original score for this recreated Adagio, Giazotto described his method for creating the piece. His idea was to finish Albinoni's work in period style. But in fact, the Adagio really sounds more like a Baroque piece reimaged in the Romantic tradition. And therein lies its unique beauty, and its popularity. Most lovely is that falling, slowly tripping main theme, which in Baroque times was often used in association with falling tears. The repeating bass line, too, with its persistent pizzicato (plucked strings) creates a kind mystical funeral march, but sublime, out of time, and not of this earth. Especially enchanting is the counterpoint to that falling theme, often answering in a contrasting, upward motion that propels the work along, and the several instants of "space" between the main theme's reprises, such as the suspended moment of time where a solo violin quietly rhapsodizes and cajoles. The ending section is truly a thing of poignant power, where chords build unresolved and suspended, until the final harmonic resolution finishes the work. The pathos that all this creates is what makes the work so moving, and so Romantic. And it rather tips off scholars to the possibility that none of this work came from the pen of Albinoni at all but was completely fabricated by Giazotto. Indeed, later in his life, the musicologist himself backed away somewhat from his original story, and the fragment of the manuscript has never been seen by anyone, apparently, except by possibly Tomaso Albinoni, possibly a phantom Dresden librarian, and composer-historian Remo Giazotto.

The debate continues over Albinoni's Adagio's authenticity, especially since Giazotto's death in 1998. But if there was a bona fide fragment, Giazotto's hand in the finished piece is unquestionably superb in resurrecting a great piece of music. And if, in fact, the entire piece was written by Giazotto and the fragment story is a hoax, the Adagio is no less a great piece of music that will remain adored for the next three centuries.

Tonight's version of Albinoni's Adagio for strings only (no organ) is arranged by Maestro Berard.

This is the Philharmonic's first performance of Albinoni's Adagio.



Antonín Dvořák

Serenade in E Major, Op. 22

Born: Nelahozeves, September 8, 1841

Died: Prague, May 1, 1904

After nearly a decade of sometimes bitter struggles to be recognized as a composer outside of Prague, in 1875 Czech composer Antonín Dvořák received a much needed boost. He entered a composition competition held in Vienna that was founded to help young artists receive pay, commissions, and notice. On the panel of the competition's three famous judges was Johannes Brahms, and they recognized Dvořák's exceptional talents, granting him top prize. It was a major windfall for the young composer. To top off his musical success, Dvořák was recently married and had just welcomed his first son into the world. Life in 1875, after years of professional hardship, was finally looking up, and Dvořák was responding with extraordinary music.

One of the results of 1875's good fortune was his Serenade for Strings, Op. 22 – a set of five miniatures beaming with melodious beauty and good cheer. It was written in only 12 days, and it seems to have been created simply out of the joy of composing. Although the piece would not premiere outside of Bohemia for some time, it became hugely popular in his country and would eventually serve to launch Dvořák's reputation even further outwards. The popularity that Dvořák realized with his neo-Classical "Serenade" form, too, influenced his choice to use that same structural form again for one of the commissions for his Viennese Competition prize, what became his hugely popular Serenade for Winds of 1879, a piece that would bring Dvořák some of his first moments of international fame.

The String Serenade begins with a bucolic gentleness that pervades the entire five movements, and immediately illustrates Dvořák's great gift for melody. The opening theme is a very singable melody, first sung in the violins, then answered by the cellos, and underpinned by steady, pulsating violas. Dvořák also quickly shows his compositional craft – within the limits of a strings-only ensemble we hear what sounds like a large, rich orchestra of strings, achieved by Dvořák by dividing the strings into several harmonizing parts with each other, thereby expanding the registers and harmonics that we hear. Dvořák also initially keeps the ensemble in the lower registers which creates a soft atmosphere – a kind of autumnal sumptuousness – which is surely a characteristic that Brahms appreciated in Dvořák's genius. Before long, however, the softness and the registers begin to soar.

The second movement Minuet adds momentum to the bucolic first, taking shape as a sweeping, darkly colored waltz with a delightfully skipping center section. This is followed by a Scherzo, a quick-silvered run through the mountain meadows. The imitation between the different strings evokes a game of "Tag" and unbridledness, which then pauses in a gorgeous contrasting section

– a love song of several delicate refrains. The scherzo's (third movement) ending is a brief and magical meld of these two contrasts.

The fourth movement, Larghetto, is the Serenade's weightiest movement, though it remains mainly true to the Serenade's pastoral mood. Like Mozart, whose late, slow movements captured an ineffable heartache wrapped in other-worldly brightness, and like Dvořák's contemporary, Mahler, whose slow movements often were described (by Mahler) as making one laugh and cry simultaneously, Dvořák's Larghetto here is radiantly poignant. The theme rolls down slowly and quietly as tears, but one suspects they come from joy.

The Finale follows the Larghetto's beauty with an ebullient call-and-response theme – Dvořák's use of imitation in this entire Serenade, but especially in this final movement, is one of its most enjoyable hallmarks. The Finale incorporates themes from the first and fourth movements, unexpectedly creating a lovely feeling of nostalgia. The final bars, however, are yet again unbridled, like a steeple chase in the strings, and ending brightly, boldly, and brilliantly. Since its premiere in Prague in 1875, the Serenade for Strings has since become one of Dvořák's most beloved chamber masterworks.

This is the Philharmonic's first performance of Dvořák's Serenade, Op. 22.

MUSIC DIRECTOR



JESUS MANUEL BERARD was born in Havana, Cuba, and raised in New York City. His conducting teachers include Otto-Werner Mueller (Yale), Harold Farberman (Conductors Institute at Bard), David Epstein (M.I.T.), and Piero Bellugi and Frank Battisti (New England Conservatory). He studied piano with Carol Rankin, Carolyn Kleiner and Thomas Vogelmann, and voice (bass-baritone) with Marian Thompson, Margarethe Mueller, George Fiore and Lorna Cooke DeVaron. Studies in composition, theory and analysis include Donald Martino and Robert Cogan at the New England Conservatory of Music (B.M., M.M.), and Patricia Carpenter, Jonathan Kramer and Fred Lerdahl at Columbia University (M.A., M.Phil., Ph.D.), for which he wrote his dissertation on the music of Gustav Mahler. Conducting and composition masterclasses include Larry Rachleff, Carl St. Clair, Pierre Boulez, Aaron Copland and Roger Sessions.

A passionate, dynamic and seasoned performer, teacher and scholar, Berard has conducted and taught at the New England Conservatory, Columbia University, American University, Hofstra University and Connecticut College. He has served as music director and conductor of professional organizations such as the Peconic Chamber Orchestra in the Hamptons (New York) and the resident Chamber Players at Connecticut College, as well as the American University Symphony Orchestra, Columbia University Chamber Orchestra, Connecticut College Orchestra, Hofstra University Symphony Orchestra, and the DC Youth Orchestra. Guest conducting engagements have included the Bulgarian State Opera and Philharmonic Orchestra (Burgas), Teatro Lirico of DC, the Embassy Series (Washington, DC), Ridotto (New York), the Richmond Philharmonic Orchestra (Virginia), the New Music festivals at the University of Maryland School of Music and UNC East Carolina University School of Music, the orchestras of Georgetown University, Long Island University and the University of Maryland, and the Pennsylvania Music Educators Association State Orchestra Festival. He is also in demand as a clinician, adjudicator and competition judge.

Recent U.S. venues include the Kennedy Center Concert Hall, Terrace Theatre and Millennium Stages, The White House (for President Barack Obama), The State Department (for Secretary of State Hillary Clinton), The Washington National Cathedral, The Smithsonian Institution, Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center (University of Maryland), Westhampton Beach Performing Arts Center (New York), Temple University Performing Arts Center (Philadelphia), Jordan Hall (Boston), and the GALA Hispanic Theatre, the Austrian Embassy and THEARC in Washington, DC. Berard has collaborated with Marvin Hamlisch, Lorin Maazel, Leonard Slatkin, Benjamin Zander and Carlos Miguel Prieto, and he has performed with Antal Dorati, Seiji Ozawa, Gunther Schuller, Robert Craft and Robert Shaw, among others. Media appearances include articles in The New York Times and The Washington Post, as well as ABC's Good Morning America, National Public Radio's "All Things Considered," and WTOP Radio and WETA Classical Radio in Washington, DC. He lives in Savage, Maryland, New York City and on Long Island, NY.

ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR



Conductor **Tiffany Lu** hails from Tampa, FL as well as the D.C.-Maryland region. She is honored to join the faculty of Sewanee University of the South as Music Director of the Sewanee Symphony Orchestra. Lu currently also serves as Conducting Associate of the Pierre Monteux School and Music Festival (Hancock, ME) and assistant conductor with the Prince Georges' Philharmonic (Bowie, MD).

During the 2019-2020 season, Lu debuted as guest conductor with the Symphony New Hampshire and the Millikin-Decatur Symphony Orchestra. From 2015-2020, she was Music Director of the Wilmington Community Orchestra, and Assistant Conductor with the Capital City Symphony, creating groundbreaking and creative programming. She was also selected as Conducting Fellow for the Allentown Symphony in 2019 and 2020. Lu's diverse skill set includes professional work as a performing violinist (The Florida Orchestra, Annapolis Symphony Orchestra), music librarian (National Orchestral Institute, DC Youth Orchestra Program, and the Music School of Delaware), and recording producer (Smithsonian Chamber Players, Virginia Symphony Orchestra).

Lu holds degrees from Princeton University, Ithaca College, and the University of Maryland.

A Short History of the Prince George's Philharmonic

The Philharmonic had its beginnings in Bowie, when, in December 1965, the Prince George's Civic Orchestra, under the direction of Lloyd Farrar, gave its first concert at the new Bowie High School. In May 1968, the orchestra performed for the dedication of Prince George's Community College, in the new Queen Anne Fine Arts auditorium, which then served as a principal venue for Philharmonic concerts. At the beginning of the 1969-70 season, the orchestra, renamed the Prince George's Symphony, gave the first concert under its new conductor Emerson Head, Associate Professor of Music at the University of Maryland. The Symphony presented five to ten concerts each season at many different locations in the County, its principal funding support coming from the Maryland-National Capital Park and Planning Commission (M-NCPPC).

In 1977, Conductor Head and most members of the orchestra split from the Prince George's Symphony Board of Directors, and incorporated under the name of Prince George's Philharmonic. Both the Symphony and the Philharmonic continued performing for several more years, until the Prince George's Symphony closed its books in 1984.

The Philharmonic has continued to provide music for Prince George's County since that time. Emerson Head was succeeded, for the 1979-80 season, by Kenneth Kiesler, now director of the University Orchestras at the University of Michigan. Then, at the beginning of the 1980-81 season, Ray Fowler became conductor and music director of the Philharmonic, continuing at the helm for just over 20 years. During these years, the Philharmonic developed its outstanding "Symphony Kids" program, which provides instrumental music lessons to young students. In 2001, Charles Ellis succeeded Maestro Fowler as conductor and music director; he enlarged the size and repertoire of the orchestra, and initiated the Side-by-Side program whereby selected student instrumentalists from County schools perform with the orchestra in one selection at each season's February concert.

In the fall of 2015, the Philharmonic began its celebratory 50th Anniversary season, to include, in addition to six concerts, two special recitals and a *grande finale* reception at the end of the season. The orchestra was stunned by the death of Charles Ellis on New Year's Day 2016, but named Blair Skinner as resident conductor, and under his leadership, finished the 50th season as Maestro Ellis had planned it. The Philharmonic began the search process for a new music director, and selected Jesus Manuel Berard as its new conductor and music director. Maestro Berard begins his fourth season this fall.

Over 55 years, the Philharmonic has grown in the breadth of music that it presents and in its collaboration with talented guest artists and choruses, it has received critical acclaim for its performances. We perform 5 or 6 concerts each season at various venues in Prince George's County; with the Covid-19 pandemic, however, our 54th season came to an abrupt halt in March 2020. We continue our 55th season, bringing to you, virtually, delightful music written for stringed instruments and performed by a small ensemble of the Philharmonic strings. We look forward to resuming, as soon as possible, our regular schedule, and providing outstanding musical entertainment and education to Prince George's County and the surrounding area.

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Thomas Kelly

Therese Lutz

Marja Maddrie

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Suzanne Lomax

Michelle Ruiz

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Prince George's Philharmonic

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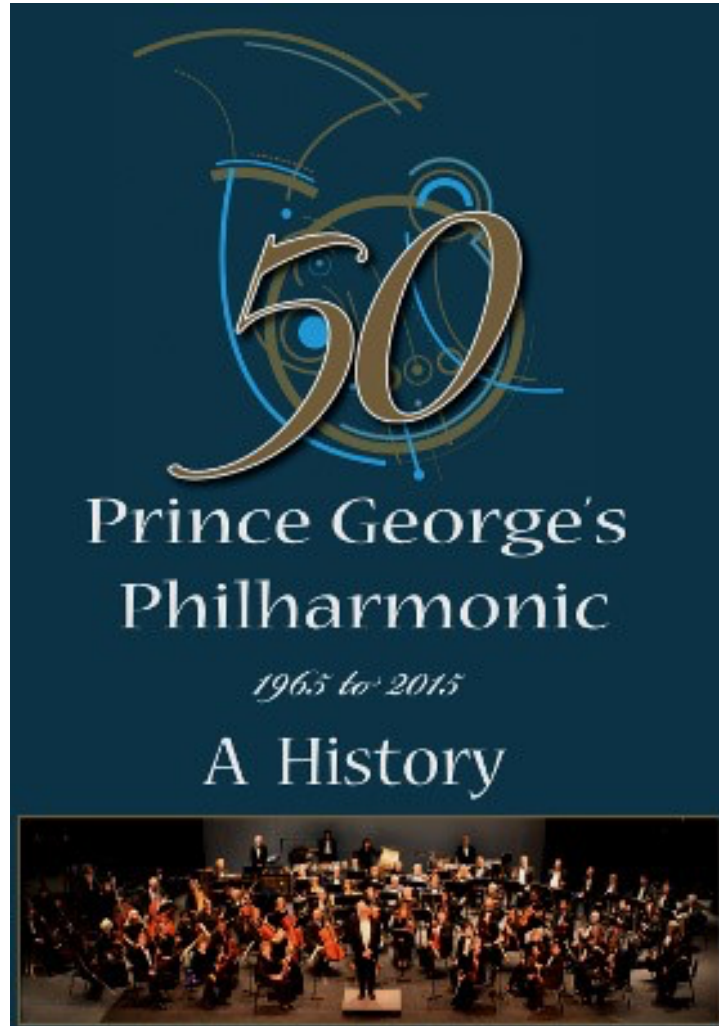
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The Prince George's Philharmonic celebrated its 50th Anniversary during the 2015—2016 season.

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<http://pgphilharmonic.org/historybook.html>