



DAVID SCHIFF  
**PREFONTAINE**

FRANCESCO LECCE-CHONG  
EUGENE SYMPHONY



## WHY PRE?

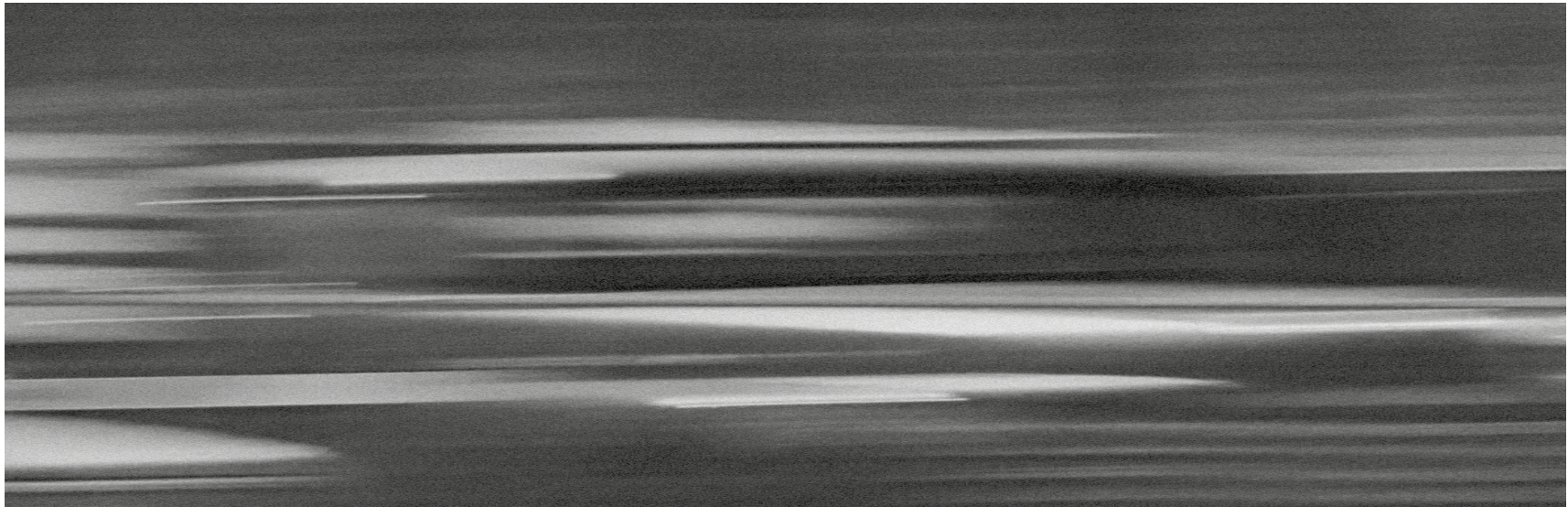


Seven years ago, when the audacious idea of bringing the World Athletics Championships to Eugene was formally adopted, local stakeholders promised it would be far more than just another track meet. They said it would be “transformational,” both for the sport, and the community at large.

And now, with the global showcase just a few weeks away, those assurances have begun to take shape as Oregon prepares to welcome the world’s greatest track and field athletes to Hayward Field for 10 days of exhilarating competition. It will mark the first time that this prestigious event has been held in the U.S., and by hosting an estimated 2,000 athletes representing more than 200 nations, it will

be the second-largest sporting event in the world this year. Truly, an unprecedented moment in time.

From the beginning, the challenge for the city of Eugene, Lane County, and really, all Oregonians, became a question of how to best connect with this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. In short, what exactly does transformational mean and what does it look like? The answers have slowly begun to emerge over the past few years with the unveiling of numerous ambitious projects, but few struck a chord quite like the Eugene Symphony’s idea to commission an original piece of music by an Oregon composer to celebrate the life and legacy of one of America’s most iconic distance runners, Steve Prefontaine.



## Why Pre ?

To begin with, he is one of our own. Born and raised in the hardscrabble town of Coos Bay, he achieved his greatest fame as a runner at the University of Oregon, setting numerous collegiate and American records along the way, making UO track meets must-see events, and becoming one of the first to stand up against the hypocrisy of amateur athletics.

His gut-wrenching fourth-place finish in the 5,000 meters at the 1972 Munich Olympics when he was only 21 years old – a race that he elevated by taking the lead with two laps to go and forcing it to the finish line in an astonishing four-minute final mile – showed the world what he was made of.

Yet Pre also had a profound effect off the track. Besides being a tireless champion for athletes' rights, he was a frequent volunteer at a local junior high school, he founded a running club for the inmates at the Oregon State Penitentiary, and he was a vocal advocate for healthy air quality as he fought to eliminate the practice of field burning. With his front-running style, indomitable spirit and rebellious nature, Pre captured the imagination of thousands of young runners across the globe.

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Research Consultant

## PREFONTAINE

Eugene Symphony's musical homage to the life and legacy of legendary Oregon runner Steve Prefontaine was a collaboration between Oregon composer David Schiff, Oregon Contemporary Theatre (OCT), and sports journalist Curtis Anderson. It was conceived to premiere in the lead-up to the World Track and Field Championships originally scheduled to take place in Eugene in August of 2021. Schiff, Anderson, OCT Producing Artistic Director Craig Willis, and Eugene Symphony Music Director & Conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong and then-Executive Director Scott Freck worked closely to bring the project to life, including a trip to Prefontaine's hometown of Coos Bay, Oregon, where they visited his sister, Linda, who has served as Creative Consultant. She led the creative team on a tour of the city, specifically locations connected to her brother: the house where he grew up, the trails and tracks and where he trained and raced while in high school, an exhibit of memorabilia at a local museum, and the cemetery where he is buried. David Schiff wrote about the visit and the piece that it inspired:

"The visit to Coos Bay filled my mind with musical ideas and images and before long the shape of the work began to emerge.

The beautiful changing vistas of the drive from Eugene, the specific locales of Steve Prefontaine's life, and the huge and lasting impression he made on his home town, his home state, and on runners from all over the world were all sources of inspiration. When I returned home, I read as much as I could find about his life and his ideas. He had a flair for expressing his core values in memorable phrases. One of the most famous is: 'To give anything less than your best is to sacrifice the gift.' While this phrase sums up the endless dedication and discipline that Steve Prefontaine gave to running, it also applies to the gifts that each of us may have, and the challenge of nurturing them. As I began to compose, this phrase turned into a musical theme, first played on the flugelhorn at the opening of the first movement. This 'motto' also led me to think of the work as a concerto for orchestra that would showcase the gifts of all the orchestral musicians, a symphonic tribute in three movements: *Terrain* can be heard as the changing impressions of mountains, woods, streams, dunes, bay and ocean that I encountered on the drive from Eugene to Coos Bay and back. It is written in the form of a passacaglia-variations on a repeated



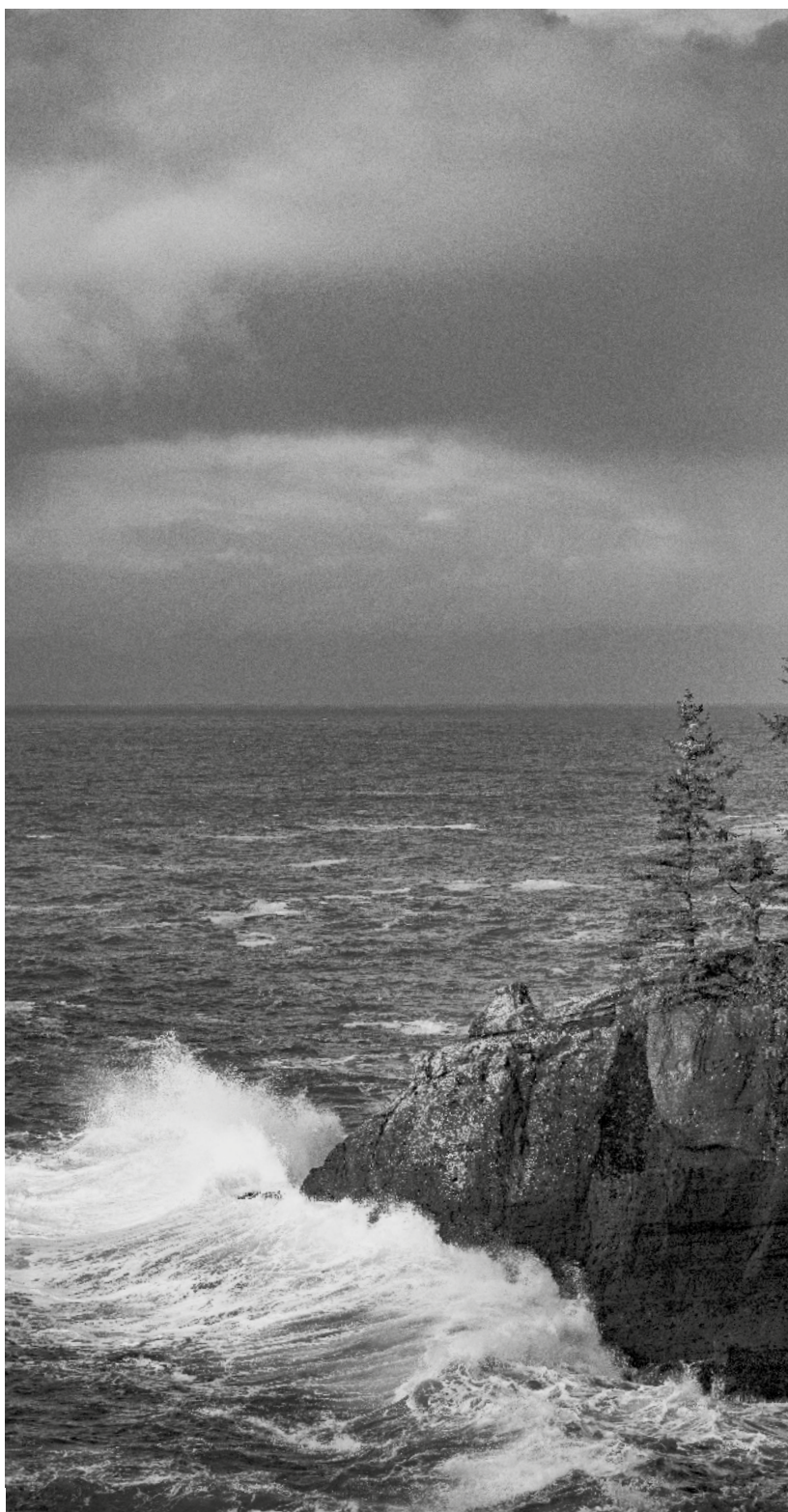
ostinato, but I inverted the usual texture of this form, placing the ostinato in the upper register rather than the bass. The listener can think of the repeated treble figure as an image of the Cascade Mountains, the defining spinal column of the Oregon landscape. I wanted the music to evoke and celebrate the environment that shaped Steve Prefontaine's entire life. Just as the musical texture turns the usual pattern of a passacaglia upside down, the music reverses chronology, moving from death to life. The musical journey begins at the site in Eugene known as Pre's Rock where so many people have left memorial tributes ever since Prefontaine's tragic death in a car accident on May 30, 1975, then traces the way to the Oregon coast, where he was born and grew up. Near the end of the movement nature gives way to human activity with the sounds of the port and the timber mills of Coos Bay.

*School Days* sprang from our visit to Marshfield High School in Coos Bay, where Steve Prefontaine found his calling as a runner, and where his skill and his charisma already made him a legend among his classmates. Here I drew also on my own distant memories of playing tuba in the New Rochelle High School marching band for half-time shows and parades.

*5K* is named for the race most closely identified with Steve Prefontaine. It is organized as a sequence of twelve compact fugues that represent 12 laps in a 5K race, each one approximating Steve Prefontaine's actual best timings, and each scored for a different group of players, beginning with small ensembles and gradually building to include the entire orchestra. Each lap has its own theme and character, ranging from exhilaration to exhaustion to final victory."

*Prefontaine* is scored for two flutes, piccolo, two oboes, English horn, three clarinets including E flat clarinet, saxophone, three bassoons including contrabassoon, four horns, three trumpets, three trombones including bass trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion, and strings.

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## WATER SINGS FIRE

*Water Sings Fire* for orchestra was commissioned by the League of American Orchestras and the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra with the generous support of the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program. Carlos Miguel Prieto conducted the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra for the premiere performances at the Orpheum Theater in New Orleans, Louisiana, in January 2019.

The piece draws inspiration from Leigh Bardugo's short story, *When Water Sang Fire* – a feminist origin myth to the Hans Christian Andersen classic, *The Little Mermaid* – in which themes of ambition and betrayal are explored allegorically through Ulla's transformation from obscure mermaid to tempestuous sea witch.

With nimble precision, Ulla manipulates the mer-music's magical properties – a show of power irresistible to an ambitious prince whose lack of natural talent drives his relentless pursuit of the throne. In the end, Ulla's ability to transform wishes into reality rewards the treachery of the young prince, and it costs her everything.

The loss of her voice, friend, and form illustrate the degradation of her true source of personal power. Desperate to survive, Ulla uses a magical mirror to amplify her weakened voice with the support of “all these broken, betrayed girls” reflected in the mirror. Together, they build a song of storm magic to pull apart the prince’s ill-begotten prize. Bardugo writes that following Ulla’s descent, she clutches her memories, and “... held each sorrow like a chafing grain of sand, and grew her grudges like pearls.”

While this piece does not strictly adhere to the narrative arc of the story, its episodic form strings together grievances, while Ulla, who frets in the deep, waits for the “lonely, the ambitious, the clever, the frail, for all those willing to strike a bargain. She never waits long.”

Like the story, the sparse textures of the opening moments conjure the barren lands stripped of life by Ulla’s storm, and slowly builds with the sorrow of each painful memory re-lived. The themes resonate with societal changes that challenge our nation – as we strive to give voice to the wronged and the disenfranchised. The work is dedicated, with

hope and with gratitude, to “women who sing truth though the world rains fire upon them.”

*Water Sings Fire* was recognized as a National Finalist for the 2024 American Prize in Composition for Orchestra Music (Professional Division).

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& Kate Verotsky, 2025





## **FRANCESCO LECCE-CHONG**

### **CONDUCTOR**

American conductor Francesco Lecce-Chong has established himself as a respected leader in the orchestral world through his acclaimed performances, innovative projects, and passionate advocacy for the arts. He was appointed Music Director of two US orchestras, the Eugene Symphony and the Santa Rosa Symphony, before he turned 30. With those groups, he successfully launched several groundbreaking projects, commissioning over a dozen major orchestral works, and building innovative community partnerships. Now, in his seventh season leading the Santa Rosa Symphony, he has grown the orchestra's reputation as one of the most exciting and important regional orchestras in the US with performances at one of the renowned concert halls in the world, the Green Music Center. In the 2024/25 season, Lecce-Chong takes on the role of Artistic Partner with the Eugene Symphony, a newly created position which allows him to further develop his artistic vision with the orchestra.



Lecce-Chong regularly appears with major orchestras around the country from the San Francisco Symphony to the New York Philharmonic, collaborating with top soloists such as Renée Fleming and Itzhak Perlman. His subscription debut with the San Francisco Symphony was described by the *San Francisco Chronicle* as “first rate” and pointed out the “vitality and brilliance of the music-making he drew from members of the San Francisco Symphony”. Other recent subscription debuts include the Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, Utah Symphony, North Carolina Symphony, The Louisville Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra. In 2023, Lecce-Chong debuted in Europe at the prestigious George Enescu Festival with the Romanian National Radio Orchestra, which led to an immediate reinvitation and established a regular relationship with the orchestra.

Through his leadership, Lecce-Chong has fostered an unparalleled dedication to the future of the orchestral art form through commissions, community initiatives, and arts education. One of his first large-scale endeavors was the “First Symphony Project,” which consisted of major commissions from the next generation

of renowned composers across four seasons, complete with multiple residencies in the communities. In less than a decade, he has brought over a dozen major new orchestral works into the repertoire from composers like Pulitzer Prize winner Ellen Taaffe Zwilich, Grammy winner Michael Daugherty, Conrad Tao, Clarice Assad, and Gabriella Smith.

Lecce-Chong is equally committed to the opera repertoire, having first conducted performances of Strauss’ *Ariadne auf Naxos* at age 24 in New York City. He continued to build his opera credentials as staff conductor with the Santa Fe Opera and leading performances with The Florentine Opera in Milwaukee. More recently, he led the Eugene Symphony through the most ambitious project in its history: a semi-staged presentation of Wagner’s *Tristan und Isolde*. In Santa Rosa, Lecce-Chong conducted and directed Mozart’s *The Magic Flute*, complete with his own original dialogue, in addition to partnering with a local arts high school to create a multi-disciplinary experience of the opera.



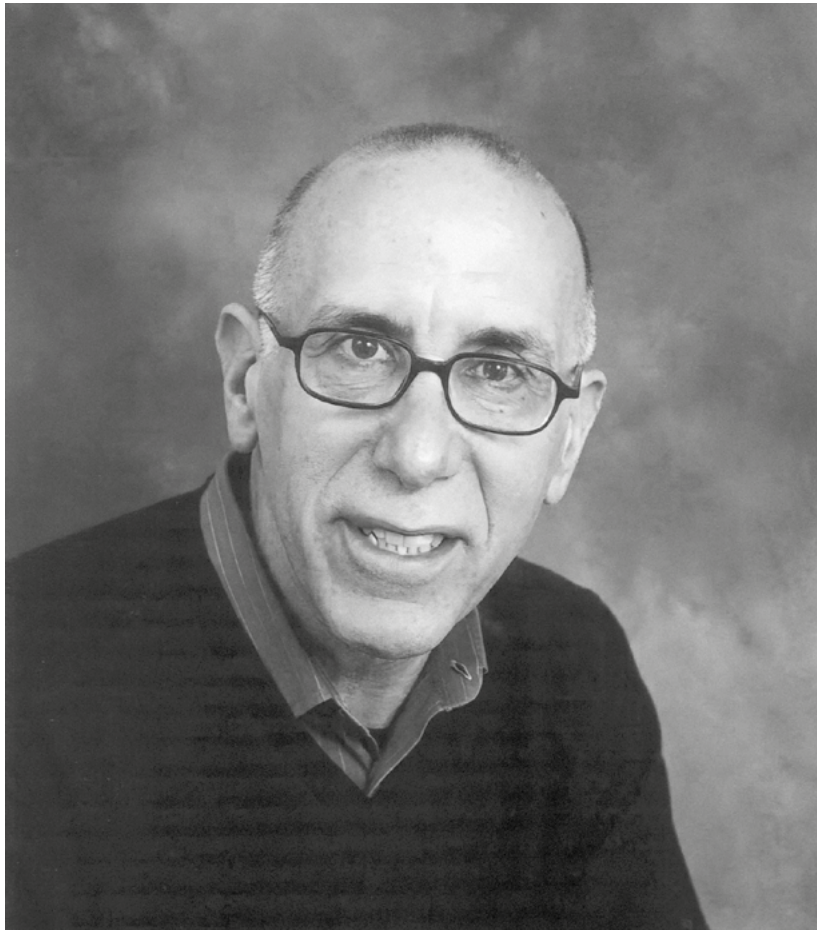
## EUGENE SYMPHONY

Eugene Symphony is a cultural leader in the Pacific Northwest and the only professional orchestra serving Lane, Linn, Douglas, Benton, and Jackson counties. Through inspiring performances and innovative educational programs, the Symphony brings symphonic music to audiences across the southern

Willamette Valley. For more than six decades, Eugene Symphony has built a reputation for artistic excellence, performing with renowned musicians like Yo-Yo Ma, Itzhak Perlman, Renée Fleming, and Branford Marsalis. It is also recognized as a launchpad for rising conductors, with past Music Directors Marin Alsop, Miguel Harth-Bedoya, and Giancarlo Guerrero leading major American orchestras.

Beyond the concert hall, Eugene Symphony is committed to breaking down barriers to symphonic music. Its community engagement initiatives provide access to music for diverse populations, including low-income youth, students in rural areas, and individuals experiencing homelessness, mental illness, or developmental disabilities. Programs like Family Musical Adventures, free public performances, and school outreach help ensure that everyone can experience live symphonic music. Eugene Symphony's programming reflects the region's vibrant culture, incorporating multimedia productions, storytelling, and collaborations with local artists, nonprofits, and businesses. With a dynamic presence in the community, the Symphony continues to inspire, educate, and connect audiences through the power of music.





## **DAVID SCHIFF**

### COMPOSER

Composer and author David Schiff was born in New York City in 1945. He began to study the piano when he was four, later took up the tuba and the bass, and wrote his first composition when he was nine, inspired by hearing Aaron Copland's *Billy the Kid*. His works include operas, chamber music, sacred music, jazz compositions, and symphonic works.

His orchestral music has been performed by many American orchestras and his chamber works, many commissioned by Chamber Music Northwest, have been played at festivals in Tanglewood, Aspen, Aldeburgh (UK), Paris, and Beijing. Schiff holds degrees in literature from Columbia University and Cambridge University, and in music from the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied with Ludmila Ulehla, John Corigliano and Ursula Mamlok, and The Juilliard School where he studied with Elliott Carter. He is the author of books about Elliott Carter, George Gershwin and Duke Ellington, and has written articles about music for *The New York Times*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The Nation* and *The Times Literary Supplement* of London. From 1980 until his retirement in 2019, Schiff was the R. P. Wollenberg Professor of Music at Reed College, where he taught theory and composition, and conducted the orchestra.



## **ANDREA REINKEMEYER**

### COMPOSER

Andrea Reinkemeyer is an internationally performed American composer and mentorship-focused pedagogue. Widely commissioned by orchestras, universities, and chamber ensembles across the United States, critics hail both Reinkemeyer's mastery of synesthetic soundscapes and her unwavering interrogation of human nature and urgent sociopolitical issues.

Distributed by Murphy Press and ADJ•ective New Music, Reinkemeyer's music is featured on the discographies of several soloists and chamber musicians: Idit Shner, Primary Colors Trio, In Mulieribus, and both Post-Haste Reed Duo and A/B Duo. Sought after by artists across a wide range of musical mediums, Reinkemeyer's recent commissions include work for prestigious organizations such as the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and Albany Symphony Orchestra, renowned conductors like H. Robert Reynolds, as well as contemporary ensembles, solo performers, visual artists, and universities.

The current Director of Composition in the Dewberry Family School of Music at George Mason University, Reinkemeyer's career has been defined by ambitious mentorship-focused initiatives. She holds degrees in music composition from the University of Michigan (M.M.; D.M.A.) and University of Oregon (B.M.). Born and raised in Oregon, Reinkemeyer has also lived in Springfield, Virginia, Ann Arbor, Michigan and Bangkok, Thailand.





## **EUGENE SYMPHONY**

### **Violin**

Searmi Park  
Alice Blankenship  
David Burham  
Junheng Chen  
Stephen Chong  
Colin Dixon  
Ryan Downs  
Benjamin Ehrmantraut  
Julia Frantz  
Yvonne Hsueh  
Lisa McWhorter  
Claudia Miller  
Erika Nagamoto  
Caius Oprea  
Sigrun Oprea  
Isabel Pinney  
Nicholas Price  
Jay Sedloff  
Emma Simmons  
Sophie Therrell  
Jannie Wei  
Sarah Wilfong Joblin  
Hannah Willard  
Alwyn Wright  
Sofie Yang

### **Viola**

Arnaud Ghillebaert  
Pamela Burovac  
Sharon Eng  
Adam Fishburn  
Daren Fuster  
Anamaria Ghitea  
Daphne Gooch  
Leslie Straka  
Kimberlee Uwate

### **Cello**

Anne Ridlington  
Eric Alterman  
Austin Bennett  
Kathryn Brunhaver  
Ann Grabe  
Jim Pelley  
Erin Ratzlaf  
Noah Seitz  
Titus Young

### **Double Bass**

Keith Wymer  
Tyler Abbott  
Kevin Brown  
Rick Carter  
Richard Meyn  
Forrest Moyer  
Greg Nathan

### **Flute**

Kristen Halay  
Rachel Rencher  
Emily Stanek

### **Oboe**

Melissa Peña  
Cheryl Wefler  
Dietrich Koch

### **Clarinet**

Michael Anderson  
Isaac Beu  
Carol Robe

### **Saxophone**

Idit Shner

### **Bassoon**

Benjamin Greanya  
Daniel Yim  
Steve Vacchi

### **Horn**

Margarite Waddell  
Frances Pinkham  
Leander Star  
Lydia Van Dreele  
Claire Worsey

### **Trumpet**

Bryce Schmidt  
Dave Bender  
Mikio Sasaki

### **Trombone**

Graham Middleton  
Lars Campbell  
Keven Kraus

### **Tuba**

Michael Grose

### **Timpani**

Will Reno

### **Percussion**

Austin Cernosek  
Tim Cogswell  
Brian Gardiner  
Jonas Koh

### **Harp**

Jane Allen

### **Keyboard**

Hung-Yun Chu



## PRODUCTION

Recorded in Silva Concert Hall, Hult Center for the Performing Arts  
(Eugene, OR), USA, on October 19, 2023

### *Creative Consultant (Prefontaine)*

Linda Prefontaine

### *Research Consultant (Prefontaine)*

Curtis Anderson

### *Executive Producer*

Scott Freck

### *Recording Producer*

Daniel Cho

### *Recording Engineer*

Bill Barnett (Gung-Ho Studio)

### *Recording Underwriter*

Jordan Schnitzer (The Harold  
& Arlene Schnitzer CARE Foundation)

### *Score publishers*

Prefontaine © Lauren Keiser Music Publishing  
Water Sings Fire © Reinke Dink Ink

### *Label Manager*

Timothée van der Stegen

### *Design*

Pragma Création

### **Cover Photo**

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# DAVID SCHIFF

# PREFONTAINE

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**Francesco Lecce-Chong**  
*Conductor*

**Eugene Symphony**

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**DAVID SCHIFF (b. 1945)**

Prefontaine "A Symphonic Tribute" (2021)

- |                |       |
|----------------|-------|
| 1. Terrain     | 10:08 |
| 2. School Days | 7:31  |
| 3. 5K          | 16:40 |

**ANDREA REINKEMEYER (b. 1976)**

- |                            |       |
|----------------------------|-------|
| 4. Water Sings Fire (2018) | 13:58 |
|----------------------------|-------|

**Total Running Time**

**48:20**