



JOHN DUNNEGAN
GOTTSCH

PRINCESS YURIEVSKAYA

SUNSET

HUIFANG CHEN, VIOLIN | DAVID CALHOUN, CELLO | LEEFEI CHEN JENKINS, HARP

SOUTH FLORIDA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

SEBRINA MARÍA ALFONSO

John D.

GOTTSCH

(b. 1950)

Sunset (2017)	
1	I. From Ocean's Depths – 2:35
2	II. An Island Is Born – 2:10
3	III. With Life Teeming – 3:02
4	IV. And Soaring Magnificent Frigates Vigilant – 2:13
5	V. For the Impending Tempest – 2:27
6	VI. Raising the Waters – 1:46
7	VII. As the Island Sunsets Into the Sea 3:01

Princess Yurievskaya (2018)	
8	I. Allegretto festoso – 1:06
9	II. Vivace con slancio – 0:31
10	III. Maestoso trionfale – 1:21
11	IV. Allegretto dolente – 1:23
12	V. Prestissimo deciso – 2:23
13	VI. Larghetto serio – 2:34
14	VII. Allegro con doloroso – 1:58
15	VIII. Presto animato – 1:57
16	IX. Allegro nobilmente – 2:25
17	X. Andante con dolore – 4:55
18	XI. Allegro appassionato – 4:37
19	XII. Tempo di valzer viennese – 5:37
20	XIII. Allegro appassionato – 5:10
21	XIV. Presto agitato 1:03

John D. Gottsch (b. 1950)

Sunset • Princess Yurievskaya

John D. Gottsch was born in New Orleans, Louisiana and spent his youth in the lake country of Florida, swimming in swamps, always on the lookout for alligators, rattlesnakes and water moccasins. His explorations along the rivers of the state formed the foundation of his enduring love for its beauty and wildlife. Gottsch now splits his time between Baltimore and Key West. He has been a lifelong composer and several of his compositions reflect his deep appreciation of the outdoors.

Sunset (2017)

While at Mallory Square in Key West, as a large crowd enjoyed the setting sun, *Sunset* was conceived. To Gottsch, the moment yearned for musical fanfare tempered by the fragility of the island thus highlighting its vulnerability to climate change. *Sunset's* seven connected movements bring to life the essence of Key West. The first movement represents the birth of the island, *From Ocean's Depths*. The second movement is a fanfare as *An Island Is Born*. This is followed by *With Life Teeming*, with the fourth movement celebrating the ubiquitous birds of the island, *And Soaring Magnificent Frigates Vigilant*, and on guard for the approaching hurricane in movement five, *For the Impending Tempest*. The fifth movement culminates in the fury of a hurricane, conceived and written as Hurricane Irma swept the Florida Keys. The eye of the hurricane is represented by a sudden silence, with the lament of a frigate bird caught in the storm. The sixth movement, *Raising the Waters*, signifies the aftermath of destruction and flooding with rapid ascending musical figures. The final movement, *As the Island Sunsets Into the Sea*, is a fanfare primarily of descending musical gestures to conclude the piece.

Princess Yurievskaya (2018)

Princess Yurievskaya (née Catherine Dolgorukova) was the mistress of Tsar Alexander II who later became his wife in a morganatic marriage after the death of the Empress in 1881. As Catherine's noble yet destitute father died when she was young, it was necessary for her to attend a school for well-born girls supported by the Tsar. At a routine inspection of the school in 1864, the Tsar met Catherine and was immediately smitten. It had been a sad and stressful time for both of them: Catherine who had lost her father and was penniless, and the Tsar who had suffered both the death of his son Nicholas, the Tsarevich, and concurrent loss of conjugal relations with the Empress on medical advice due to her tuberculosis. The pair met and were immediately and wildly wrenched out of their depression with their love. Catherine encouraged the Tsar to continue his Russian reforms, begun after his coronation, with the freeing of the serfs.

The orchestral symphonic poem, *Princess Yurievskaya*, begins with Catherine (violin solo) as a happy young girl (*Allegretto festoso*), who finds her gifts as a woman (*Vivace con slancio*, *Maestoso trionfale*). With the death of her father, she falls into despair (*Allegretto dolente*) and eventually finds a life for herself in the Smolny Institute for Noble Maidens (*Prestissimo deciso*). Alexander (cello solo) became Tsar with his coronation (coronation march, *Larghetto serio*) in 1855 and, troubled by the plight of the serfs (*Allegro con doloroso*), frees them (dance of the serfs – *Presto animato*). His reign was mostly untroubled (*Allegro nobilmente*) when he suffered two nearly simultaneous tragedies: the death of the Tsarevich and the withdrawal of relations of the Empress. His meeting with Catherine at an inspection of her school lifts them both out of despair (*Andante con dolore*) and they find themselves hopelessly in love and passionately “attacking each other like cats” (*Allegro appassionato*).



Catherine and the Tsar remain blissfully in love producing three healthy children (*Tempo di valzer viennese*). Clouds build on the horizon, however, as reactionary forces make several unsuccessful assassination attempts on the Tsar. The Empress dies of her tuberculosis and the Tsar, as promised, marries Catherine, giving legitimacy to her children, and to her he grants the title "Princess Yurievskaya." As rumors of another assassination plot swirl about the Winter Palace, Princess Yurievskaya becomes frantic about the danger of the Tsar's plans for a marshal parade. As she desperately pleads with him not to go, the Tsar attempts to reassure her. Finding her inconsolable, he at last takes the Princess into his arms, and lifting her onto a table makes love to her. The Tsar

then leaves the palace for the parade and shortly thereafter one bomb and then another are hurled at his carriage. The Tsar, mortally wounded, is carried back to the Winter Palace and placed in the foyer where the Tsarevich, Alexander III, and his son, the young Nicholas, stand grief-stricken as Princess Yurievskaya descends the stairs still in the white night gown that she had worn making love to her beloved husband. Realizing to her horror what has happened, she crouches and speaks to the Tsar. On hearing him utter his last words and take his last breath, she throws herself on his broken body (*Presto agitato*).

Jacqueline Lorber
President/CEO of South Florida Symphony Orchestra

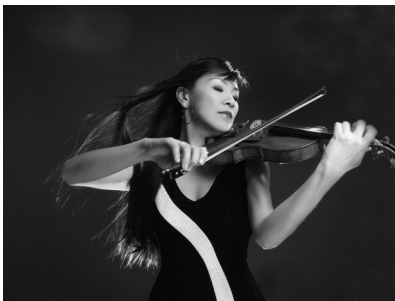
South Florida Symphony Orchestra



South Florida Symphony Orchestra (SFSO), founded by Maestra Sebrina María Alfonso in 1997, provides exciting and enriching cultural experiences through Masterworks concerts with internationally renowned guest soloists in Fort Lauderdale, Miami and Key West. Guided by the belief that music is pivotal to community engagement, SFSO also brings vibrancy and strengthens public commitment to the arts through its transformative outreach and educational programming, including Symphony in the Schools – serving more than 85,000 culturally underserved students since its inception. SFSO operates around the core belief that music matters, delighting, inspiring and educating the communities it serves through music.

southfloridasymphony.org

Huifang Chen



As a dynamic and diverse musician, violinist, and conductor, Huifang Chen enjoys a dual career as a performer and an educator. She is currently the concertmaster of South Florida Symphony Orchestra, music director of the Greater Miami Youth Symphony and a professor of violin at the New World School of the Arts in Miami. She was a member of the Florida Philharmonic Orchestra from 1994 until its demise in 2003. Chen studied with Jascha Brodsky at the Curtis Institute of Music. As an international violin soloist, she has appeared with many orchestras around the globe including the Taipei Symphony Orchestra in Taiwan and Brno Philharmonic in the Czech Republic, among others. As a committed violin pedagogue, many of Chen's students are frequent winners at both local and international competitions. Many now attend top music schools such as the Curtis Institute of Music and The Juilliard School, and many others are members of professional orchestras.

David Calhoun



David Calhoun was appointed principal cellist of South Florida Symphony by Maestra Sebrina Maria Alfonso in 2017. Calhoun has appeared as principal cellist with the American Symphony Orchestra at Lincoln Center, American Ballet Theatre at the Metropolitan Opera House, the Brooklyn Philharmonic at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, the American Composers Orchestra and the New York City Opera on tour. He has also given performances of chamber music with artists such as Ani Kavafian, Sidney Harth, Eric Friedman, Menahem Pressler, the Shanghai Quartet, tours with Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and the Metropolitan Opera, and a 15-year-residence with the Orion Music Piano Quartet at The Metropolitan Museum of Art. Calhoun has been the soloist on live broadcasts for radio stations WQXR and WNYC in New York, and invited by Philip Glass to make the first solo recording of his cello concerto *Naqoyqatsi* at Looking Glass Studios.

Leefei Chen Jenkins



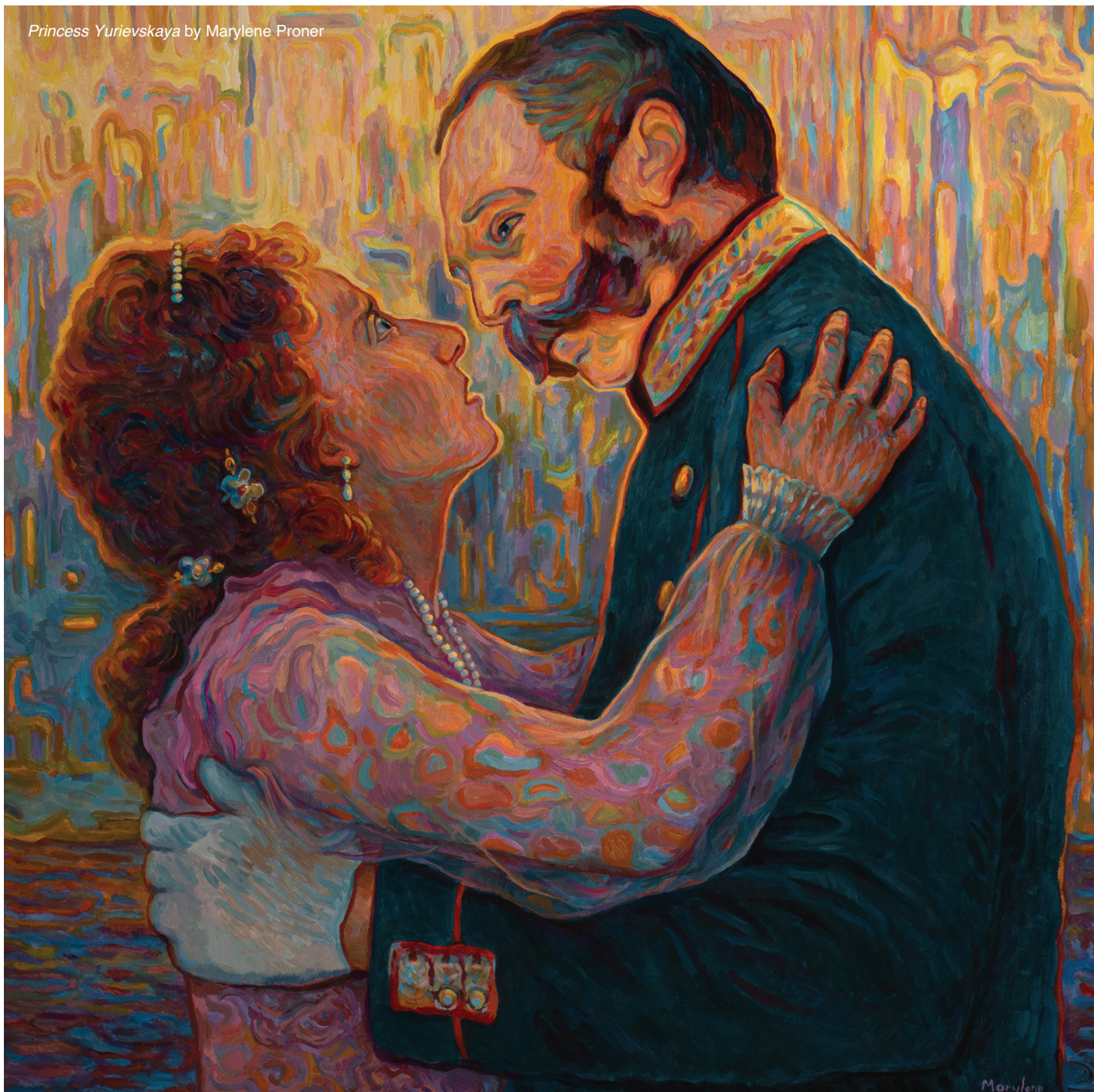
Leefei Chen Jenkins, principal harpist with South Florida Symphony Orchestra, received her Bachelor of Music degree from Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh. She graduated from Indiana University Bloomington, and then completed her Master's degree at the University of Miami with a full scholarship. In 2008, Chen Jenkins graduated from the University of Miami with a Doctoral degree in Music (DMA). Chen Jenkins was a winner of the National Harp Anne Adams Competition from the American Harp Society. She also made outstanding contributions to the Ressa Family Hospital Performance Project at the University of Miami Frost School of Music, which were highlighted in the *Miami Herald* and *Miami Magazine*.

Sebrina Maria Alfonso



John Gottsch's orchestral symphonic poem, *Sunset*, is dedicated to Maestra Sebrina Maria Alfonso for her devotion to music and her love for Key West where she was born and raised. After impressive career successes, Maestra Alfonso returned home in 1997 to make a dream come true: bringing orchestral music, with all its associated educational and cultural benefits, to the southernmost island in the continental US. In late 1998, with huge community support, the Key West Symphony made its debut. Subsequently renamed, the South Florida Symphony Orchestra (SFSO) is the only professional orchestra that performs full seasons in Key West, Fort Lauderdale and Miami. Award-winning Maestra Alfonso has established herself as a dynamic musical force. She is one of the few female conductors in the world. Her creativity has established SFSO as a leader in innovative collaborations, which are evolving the classical music art form and attracting new audiences. A champion of American composers, her premiere of Gottsch's *Sunset* is just another in a long string of accomplishments.

Princess Yurievskaya by Marylene Proner



John D.
GOTTSCH
(b. 1950)

1–7 Sunset (2017) 17:14

8–21 Princess Yurievskaya (2018) 37:00

WORLD PREMIERE RECORDINGS

Huifang Chen, Violin 8–21

David Calhoun, Cello 8–21

Leefei Chen Jenkins, Harp 8–21

South Florida Symphony Orchestra

**Sebrina María Alfonso,
Music director**



A detailed track list can be found inside the booklet.

**Recorded: 10–11 March 2020 at the Rose and Alfred Miniaci
Performing Arts Center, Nova Southeastern University,
Ft. Lauderdale, Florida, USA**

Producers: John D. Gottsch, Joe Hannigan

Engineer, editing, mixing and mastering:

Joe Hannigan at Weston Sound

Booklet notes: Jacqueline Lorber

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A co-production with South Florida Symphony Orchestra

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AMERICAN CLASSICS

John D. Gottsch spent his youth in the lake country of Florida, which instilled in him a love of nature that has informed his music ever since. His symphonic poem *Sunset* is almost cinematic in its opulence and in its depiction of both the beauty and fragility of Key West, and the area's vulnerability to climate change. By contrast, *Princess Yurievskaya* charts the passionate love of Catherine Dolgorukova and Tsar Alexander II from their first meeting and eventual marriage, to his assassination. This vivid narrative is full of exciting dances and torrid romance, irradiated with evocative orchestral solos.

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Playing
Time:
54:19