

UMD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



PHOTO BY ALISON HARBAUGH

UMD School of Music presents

UMD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

ENIGMA VARIATIONS

James Ross, music director

Saturday, October 10, 2015 . 8PM
Elsie & Marvin Dekelboun Concert Hall

PROGRAM

Antonín Dvořák (1841–1904)
Carnival Overture, Op. 92

Igor Stravinsky (1882–1971)
Divertimento from *The Fairy's Kiss*
I. Sinfonia
II. Swiss Dances
III. Scherzo
IV. Pas de deux

INTERMISSION

NEW ENIGMAS

Geoff Sheil (b.1987)
C.J.
Quinn Dizon (b.1989)
Concertante
Bryce Fuhrman (b.1990)
Us

Edward Elgar (1857–1934)
Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 36 ("Enigma Variations")
Theme and Variation I ("C.A.E.")
Variation II ("H.D.S.-P.")
Variation III ("R.B.T.")
Variation IV ("W.M.B.")
Variation V ("R.P.A.")
Variation VI ("Ysobel")
Variation VII ("Troyte")
Variation VIII ("W.N.")
Variation IX ("Nimrod")
Variation X (Intermezzo, "Dorabella")
Variation XI ("G.R.S.")
Variation XII ("B.G.N.")
Variation XIII ("* * *-Romanza)
Variation XIV ("E.D.U."); Finale

UMD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: ABOUT THE ARTISTS

James Ross is presently the Director of Orchestral Activities at the University of Maryland, Conducting Faculty at The Juilliard School and Orchestra Director of the National Youth Orchestra USA at Carnegie Hall.

Ross has served as assistant conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, as William Christie's assistant to Les Arts Florissants and as music director of the Yale Symphony Orchestra. He has conducted such diverse orchestras as the Leipzig Gewandhaus, the Utah Symphony, the Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, the Orquesta Ciudad Granada, the Harrisburg Symphony Orchestra, the Orquesta Sinfónica of Galicia, the Neubrandenburger Philharmonie, the Binghamton Philharmonic, the Kwazulu-Natal Philharmonic and the National Symphony Orchestra at The Kennedy Center in side-by-side concerts with UMSO. His principal conducting teachers are Kurt Masur, Otto-Werner Mueller, Seiji Ozawa and Leonard Bernstein.

As a horn soloist, he has performed with such orchestras as the Boston Symphony, the Boston Pops, the Bavarian Radio Orchestra, the Leipzig Radio Orchestra and the Leipzig Gewandhaus. When he was awarded Third Prize in the Munich International Horn Competition in 1978, he became the first American and one of the youngest competitors ever to do so. His performances and recordings as principal horn of the Gewandhaus, including the Strauss *Four Last Songs* with Jessye Norman, helped him gain international recognition as an artist.

As a teacher, Ross has served on the faculties of Yale University, the Curtis Institute of Music, Haverford and Bryn Mawr colleges, and as a guest artist at the Toho School of Music in Tokyo, Japan. He also teaches conducting each summer at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in Santa Cruz and has recently relinquished his position as Artistic Director of the National Orchestral Institute where his leadership helped to animate change in the orchestral landscape of the United States. He is internationally recognized for his work advancing the

future of orchestras through cross-genre collaborations especially with choreographer Liz Lerman, director Doug Fitch and video artist Tim McLoraine.

PROGRAM NOTES

Carnival Overture, Op. 92

ANTONÍN DVOŘÁK

Born September 8, 1841, Nelahozeves, Bohemia
Died May 1, 1904, Prague

Near the end of his life Dvořák composed a series of graphically descriptive symphonic poems, rather different from anything he had done before. Earlier, however, he adhered to the older practice of labeling brief “programmatic” works “overtures,” and in the spring of 1891 he conceived a series of three such works, to be related thematically and presented under the collective heading “Nature, Life and Love.” He composed the first two that year; by the time he completed the third, early in 1892, he had decided to publish the three overtures separately, under the titles *In Nature's Realm* (Op. 91), *Carnival* (Op. 92) and *Othello* (Op. 93). He introduced the first two on April 28, 1892 in the last concert he conducted in Prague before setting off for New York as director of the newly established National Conservatory of Music. On October 31 of the same year, less than a month after his arrival in New York, he made his conducting debut in Carnegie Hall, in a concert of his own music that included the entire “triple overture,” as he called this cycle. That gesture has not been repeated very frequently since then; the first and last parts of the triptych, in fact, are seldom performed at all, while its brilliant centerpiece has become one of the best-known of this composer's shorter orchestral works.

Dvořák outlined specific programs for these three overtures; the one for *Carnival* has certain features in common with the episode in Lenau's *Faust* on which Liszt based his famous *Mephisto Waltz*, and with the scenario the Swedish composer Hugo Alfvén gave out for the first of his three Swedish Rhapsodies, *Midsummer Vigil*, composed in 1903. In Dvořák's program, a solitary wanderer comes to a Bohemian town in which a carnival is in progress

and he is swept into the revelry as night falls, engulfed by the tumultuous gaiety and surrounded by “eager young couples.” One such couple separates from the throng long enough for a tender dialogue to take place, but the interlude is brief; the revelry returns with redoubled energy, an exultant celebration of the life-force itself that simply sweeps everything before it.

Divertimento from *The Fairy’s Kiss*

IGOR STRAVINSKY

Born June 17, 1882, Oranienbaum, Russia

Died April 6, 1971, New York City

For her spectacular Paris season of 1928, the dancer Ida Rubinstein approached a number of prominent composers for new ballet scores based on music by earlier masters. Ravel was asked to arrange some piano pieces by Albéniz, but because of complications over the rights to that music he composed an original work instead, which he called *Bolero*. Stravinsky, at the suggestion of the painter Alexandre Benois, was asked for a score based on music of Tchaikovsky: there were no complications, and *The Fairy’s Kiss* was produced just five days after the Ravel premiere.

Some eight years earlier, for the ballet impresario Serge Diaghilev, Stravinsky had written *Pulcinella*, based on themes by (or at that time attributed to) Pergolesi, whose music he had not known but which he grew to love. Ida Rubinstein’s commission, as he recounted in his *Chronicles of My Life*, was accepted because of his fondness for Tchaikovsky “and, still more, the fact that . . . the time fixed for the performance would mark the 35th anniversary of his death . . . It would give me an opportunity of paying my heartfelt homage to Tchaikovsky’s wonderful talent.”

In choosing a subject for the ballet, Stravinsky said, he “turned to a great poet with a sensitive soul whose imaginative mind was wonderfully akin to that of the musician.” The Hans Christian Andersen story he chose was “The Ice Maiden,” set in the Swiss Alps. In this tale, a Fairy pursues a woman and her small child through a winter storm, wrests the child from his dying mother’s arms and gives him a

magic kiss; years later, when the boy has grown to manhood, the Fairy returns on his wedding day to claim him as her own and carry him away; in the epilogue they are seen on the Eternal Heights, as the Fairy bestows on him the kiss of immortal love.

Stravinsky knew Tchaikovsky’s music well, and his affection for it is documented in his own works both before and after *The Fairy’s Kiss*, whose score he inscribed, “I dedicate this ballet to the memory of Pyotr Tchaikovsky, identifying his muse with the Fairy, and it is from this fact that the ballet becomes an allegory. His genius has in like degree marked the score with a destined kiss — a mystic influence which bespeaks the whole work of the great artist.” He pointedly did not make use of any of Tchaikovsky’s own ballet music in *The Fairy’s Kiss*, but for the most part drew upon the songs and piano pieces.

The *Humoresque*, Op. 10, No. 2, is one of the pieces used here. Others are the *Lullaby in a Storm*, the tenth of the 16 Children’s Songs, Op. 5; the *Natha Valse*, fourth of the Six Pieces, Op. 51; the *Scherzo humoristique*, *Feuille d’album* and *Nocturne*, Nos. 2, 3 and 4, respectively, of the Six Pieces, Op. 19; the well-known song to Goethe’s words, “None but the lonely heart,” and the twelfth of the 24 pieces in the Children’s Album for piano, Op. 39, *The Peasant Plays the Concertina*. Tchaikovsky’s themes retain their original character, while subjected to ingenious variations and clothed in Stravinsky’s own distinctive coloring.

The ballet’s premiere was given in Paris on November 27, 1928; it was not until 1934 that Stravinsky extracted portions of the score to form the suite that he called a divertimento, and which he revised somewhat in 1949 (having also arranged it for violin and piano). Not all the Tchaikovsky works mentioned above are represented in the Divertimento, which was drawn from the first three of the ballet’s four tableaux and represents about half of the complete score. Its four interconnected sections are headed SINFONIA, SWISS DANCES, SCHERZO and PAS DE DEUX — the last comprising an Adagio, Variations and Coda.

UMD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA: PROGRAM NOTES (cont'd)

Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 36 ("Enigma Variations")

EDWARD ELGAR

Born June 2, 1857, Broadheath, England

Died February 23, 1934, Worcester

It was Elgar himself who first used the term "enigma" in speaking of this work, though its genesis was neither puzzling nor profound. "After a long and tiresome day's teaching," he recalled (he was giving violin lessons then), "aided by a cigar, I musingly played on the piano the theme as it now stands." He then proceeded to entertain his wife by altering the theme as it might be played by — or reflect the characteristics of — certain of their friends. The work thus conceived, actually Elgar's first major composition for large orchestra, was composed swiftly in the spring of 1899 and enjoyed a pronounced success when the illustrious conductor Hans Richter introduced it in London on June 19 of that year. Three months later Elgar himself conducted a performance at Worcester (with the coda added, presumably on Richter's advice) that confirmed his status as a master whose only rival in the orchestral sphere, according to more than a few commentators, was Richard Strauss.

Strauss had introduced his own self-congratulatory tone poem *A Hero's Life* in March of that year. Elgar's score also includes a self-portrait, but a much briefer one, which is actually the last in a series that includes portraits of more than a dozen other individuals. In a note to his friend and publisher August Jaeger (of the firm of Novello), himself the subject of Variation IX, Elgar stated that he had written the variations as he imagined the respective individuals depicted therein might have done "if they were asses enough to compose." The origin of the theme, however, he steadfastly refused to clarify or discuss, stating, "The Variations should stand simply as a piece of music. I will not explain — its dark saying must be left unguessed, and I warn you that the apparent connection between the variations and the theme is often of the slightest texture; further, through and over the whole set another larger

theme 'goes,' but it is not played. . . . So the principal theme never appears, even as in some late dramas. . . the chief character is never on the stage."

Over the years there have nevertheless been many "educated guesses," and even contests, to determine the source of the theme. These have ranged from "Auld lang syne" to "Rule Britannia" to Mozart's "Prague" Symphony and his opera *Così fan tutte*. There is, to be sure, a Dorabella involved in Variation X, but no trace there of *Così*, while quotations from Beethoven and Mendelssohn are prominent in Variations IX and XIII, respectively, but *not* as components of variations. Amid all this still unsorted hunting, one might well ask why Elgar would have troubled to title this work "Variations on an *Original Theme*" if the theme had in fact been borrowed from Mozart or any other source.

Elgar himself, still refusing to identify the theme in any specific sense in his later years, described it as expressing his "sense of loneliness as an artist." The music critic Ernest Newman, who admired Elgar (and this work in particular) profoundly, suggested that friendship itself may have been the "larger theme which is not played." In any event, if the theme itself remains elusive or enigmatic, Elgar made his descriptive intentions clear enough (with a single exception). Following the initial statement of the theme (*Andante*), the *dramatis personae* appear as numbered here:

Theme and Variation I ("C.A.E."). The composer's wife, Caroline Alice Elgar

Variation II ("H.D.S.-P."). Huw David Steuart-Powell, an amateur pianist

Variation III ("R.B.T."). Richard Baxter Townshend, a popular author who enjoyed mimicry and whose voice rose in pitch during excited performances

Variation IV ("W.M.B."). William Meath Baker, a country squire, barking orders to his guests and making a brusque exit

Variation V ("R.P.A."). Matthew Arnold's son Richard, good-natured but given to daydreaming

Variation VI ("Ysobel"). Miss Isabel Fitton, an amateur violist who always had trouble crossing from one string to another

Variation VII ("Troyte"). Arthur Troyte Griffith, an architect persistently unsuccessful in his attempts at playing the piano

Variation VIII ("W.N. "). Not so much a portrait of Miss Winifred Norbury, a music-lover and non-stop talker, as an evocation of her splendid house, the scene of numerous performances and gatherings of musicians

Variation IX ("Nimrod"). Representing Elgar and his closest friend, the aforementioned August Jaeger (whose surname is the German word for "hunter," ergo "Nimrod"), engaged in a discussion of Beethoven, whose *Pathétique* Sonata is cited in the opening of this variation

Variation X (Intermezzo, "Dorabella"). Dora Penney (Mrs. Richard Powell, daughter of the Rector of Wolverhampton, was a vivacious young woman whose curious speech pattern Elgar tried to imitate. (His remark to her that she of all people ought to have guessed the identity of his theme has been cited in support of the "Rule Britannia" possibility, since the figure of Britannia appeared on the old British penny.)

Variation XI ("G.R.S. "). George Robertson Sinclair, organist of Hereford Cathedral, whose bulldog Dan barks as he jumps into the River Wye to fetch a stick

Variation XII ("B.G.N. "). Basil G. Nevinson, an amateur cellist who played trios with Elgar and H.D.S.-P.

Variation XIII ("* * *"--Romanza). Lady Elgar is said to have inserted the asterisks, presumably to cloud the identity of Lady Mary Lygon, who had sailed for Australia at about the time Elgar began composing the Variations; the citation of Mendelssohn's overture *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* was thought to allude to her ocean trip. The possibility was raised, however, that the allusion may have been to Helen Weaver, to whom Elgar had been engaged in 1883–1884 and who also sailed to Australia, but in this case as an emigrant rather than a visitor. It

now seems most likely that the unidentified subject was actually Alice Stuart-Wortley, daughter of the English painter Sir John Everett Millais. Elgar had a close relationship with her for some 35 years; she was the secret dedicatee of his Violin Concerto in 1910, and probably of his Second Symphony as well.

Variation XIV ("E.D.U. ") and Finale. A self-portrait, of which Elgar (called "Edoo" by his wife) noted: "Written at a time when friends were dubious and generally discouraging as to the composer's musical future, this variation is merely intended to show what E.D.U. intended to do. References are made to two great influences upon the life of the composer: C.A.E. and Nimrod. The whole work is summed up in the triumphant broad presentation of the theme in the major."

In this evening's performance there are three additional variations, one each composed by Geoff Sheil, Quinn Dizon and Bryce Fuhrman, all current students of composition at the University of Maryland. James Ross will provide commentary from the stage on how this project came about.

Notes by Richard Freed ©2015

UMD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

James Ross, Music Director | Mark Wakefield, Orchestra Manager

VIOLIN

Amyr Joyner, concertmaster
(Dvořák, Stravinsky)
Audrey Wright, concertmaster
(Elgar)
Sarah Park, principal 2nd
(Dvořák)
Heather MacArthur, principal
2nd (Stravinsky)
Laura Colgate, principal 2nd
(Elgar)
Livia Amoruso
Victoria Bergeron
Lydia Chernicoff
Haley Dietz
Jack Hayden
Dana Judy
Andrew Juola
Celaya Kirchner
Alaina LaPanse
Hannah Lee
Tiffany Lu
Zach Matteson
Antranik Meliksetian
Hannah Moock
Jesse Munoz
Duo Shen
Katherine Smolen
Judith Tsoi
James Worley

VIOLA

Caroline Castleton,
principal (Dvořák, Stravinsky)
Valentina Shohdy,
principal (Elgar)
Emma Baker
Rebecca Barnett
Mike Kim
Emily Kurlinski
Ted McAllister
John McIntyre
Eva Mondragon
Dana Rokosny

CELLO

Molly Jones, principal
(Dvořák, Stravinsky)
Kacy Clopton, principal (Elgar)
Frances Borowsky
Katy Chiang
Peter Franklin
Gabriel Hightower
Brian Kim
Geoffrey Manyin
Katherine McCarthy
Kathleen Monroe

BASS

Francis Desiderio
Patrick Fowler
Paul Hunt
Ian Saunders

FLUTE

Annemarie Dickerson
Emily Murdock
Grace Wang

PICCOLO

Annemarie Dickerson
Emily Murdock

OBOE

Stacia Cutler
Elizabeth Eber
Santiago Vivas-Gonzales

ENGLISH HORN

Stacia Cutler
Santiago Vivas-Gonzales

CLARINET

Joseph Beverly
Bethany Lueers
Caitlin Rowden
Michele Von Haugg

BASS CLARINET

Michele Von Haugg

BASSOON

Samuel Fraser
Ronn Hall

HORN

David Locke
Avery Pettigrew
Alexander Rise
Clinton Soisson

TRUMPET

Bonni Lee Beebe
Samantha Laulis
Alex Ridgell
Frank Stroup

TROMBONE

Nathaniel Reynolds
Nicholas Hogg

BASS TROMBONE

Matthew Myers

TUBA

Andrew Dougherty

TIMPANI

Brad Davis
Laurin Friedland
Chris Herman

PERCUSSION

Brad Davis
Laurin Friedland
Chris Herman
Andrew Konstant
Robert Schroyer

HARP

Samantha Bittle

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