



## Elgar's Enigma

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September 29-October 1, 2023

### **| Elgar's Enigma**

**HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**  
**[Carolyn Kuan, Music Director](#)**

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### **ELGAR'S ENIGMA**

Friday, September 29, 2023 / 8:00 p.m.

Saturday, September 30, 2023 / 8:00 p.m.

Sunday, October 1, 2023 / 3:00 p.m.

Belding Theater, The Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts

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**CAROLYN KUAN, *conductor***  
**HSO BRASS QUINTET**

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**FRANZ SCHUBERT**  
(1797-1828) **Symphony No. 8 minor, D. 759**  
Allegro moderato  
Andante con moto

**GERARD SCHWARZ**  
(b. 1947) **Concerto for Brass Quintet and Orchestra**  
(After Handel Op. 6, No. 2)

**DANIEL McCARTHY**  
(b. 1955) **American Dance Music, Concerto for Brass**  
**Quintet and Percussion with Orchestra**  
*Unsquare Dance Latina*  
*Serenade*  
*Jazz*  
*ROKIT!*

## ? INTERMISSION?

**EDWARD ELGAR**  
(1857-1934) **Variations on an Original Theme, "Enigma," Op.**  
**36**

Enigma: Andante  
Variation I (C.A.E.): L'istesso tempo  
Variation II (H.D. S.-P.): Allegro  
Variation III (R.B.T.): Allegretto  
Variation IV (W.M.B.): Allegro di molto  
Variation V (R.P.A.): Moderato  
Variation VI (Ysobel): Andantino  
Variation VII (Troyte): Presto  
Variation VIII (W.N.): Allegretto  
Variation IX (Nimrod): Adagio  
Variation X (Dorabella): Intermezzo: Allegretto  
Variation XI (G.R.S.): Allegro di molto  
Variation XII (B.G.N.): Andante  
Variation XIII (\* \* \*): Romanza: Moderato  
Variation XIV (E.D.U.): Finale: Allegro

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*The 2023-24 Masterworks Series*  
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The post of Music Director is endowed by The Beatrice Fox Auerbach Foundation. Cameras and recording equipment are not permitted during the performance. As a courtesy to the performers and other audience members, please turn off watch alarms and cell phones.

The Hartford Symphony Orchestra receives major support from the Greater Hartford Arts Council, the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, and with support from the Department of Economic and Community Development, Connecticut Office of the Arts which also receives support from the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

## About the Artists



**The Hartford Symphony Orchestra Brass Quintet** is comprised of the principal brass players of the HSO. The ensemble is actively involved in educational programs and committed to performing repertoire of neglected American composers of color and diversity, and composers with connections to Connecticut. Some of the composers that have appeared on HSO BQ programs include: Reena Esmail, J. Rosamond Johnson, Anne Louise Brillon de Jouy, Zenobia Powell Perry, Florence Price, Billy Strayhorn, George Walker and Gwyneth Walker.

In addition to their regular positions with the HSO, they have also performed individually with such notable ensembles as the Boston Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, L'Orchestre de la Suisse Romande, San Francisco Symphony, Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, Boston Pops Orchestra, Sarasota Symphony,

Springfield Symphony Orchestra, Boston Modern Orchestral Project, Pittsburgh Ballet and Opera Orchestra, Waterbury Symphony Orchestra, Vermont Symphony, Cape Symphony, Des Moines Metro Opera, and the Grammy Award Winning Chestnut Brass Company.

Current teaching affiliations of the players include The Hart School (College & Community Division), University of Connecticut, New England Conservatory Preparatory School, and the University of Southern Maine.

You might run into one of them no matter *where* you attend a concert in New England!

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#### **HSO Brass Quintet**

Jarrold Briley, tuba  
Brian Diehl, trombone  
Barbara Hill, horn  
Kenny Piatt, trumpet  
John Charles Thomas, trumpet

### **Program Notes**

#### **Franz Schubert (Born January 31, 1797 in Vienna Died November 19, 1828 in Vienna)**

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Symphony No. 8 in B minor, D. 759, "Unfinished" (1822)

World Premiere: *December 17, 1865*

Last HSO Performance: *HSO Premiere*

Instrumentation: *flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, French horn, trumpet, trombone, timpani, strings*

Duration: *25'*

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The mystery surrounding the composition of the "Unfinished" Symphony is one of the most intriguing puzzles in the entire realm of music. The work was left incomplete not because Schubert's death intervened, as happened with Mozart's *Requiem*, Bartók's Viola Concerto or Puccini's *Turandot*. Indeed, the Eighth Symphony occupied Schubert fully six years before his death at the pathetically early age of only 31. It is known that Schubert composed the first two movements of this "Grand Symphony," as he referred to it, in the autumn of 1822, and then abruptly stopped work. He sent the manuscript to his friend Anselm Hüttenbrenner, who was supposed to pass it on to the Styrian Music Society of Graz in appreciation of an honorary membership that that organization had conferred upon Schubert the previous spring. Anselm, described by Schubert's biographer Hans Gal as a "peevish recluse," never sent the score. Instead, he squirreled it away in his desk, where it gathered dust for forty years. It was not until

1865 that he presented it for performance to Johann Herbeck, director of Vienna's Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde, in return asking that one of his own tedious overtures also be included on the concert. Schubert's magnificent torso was an immediate success at its premiere, and has since maintained its position as one of the most popular symphonic pieces ever written.

Lacking conclusive evidence, writers on Schubert have advanced a fascinating variety of explanations as to why the young composer never completed the last two planned movements of this Symphony. Among others: he was too ill with syphilis; he could not be bothered with the labor of writing down the last two movements; his friends believed he was basically a song composer rather than an instrumental composer, and their arguments caused him to lose faith in this large work; the last two movements were lost; he despaired of ever having a work of this scale performed; a new commission intervened; Hüttenbrenner's servant used the manuscript to start a fire. All of these have been proven false. The truth is that, despite exhaustive research, there is no conclusive evidence to support any single theory. The explanation currently given the greatest credence is that Schubert thought he could not match the wonderful inspiration of the first two movements in what was to follow, so he abandoned this Symphony for work on another project and simply never returned to complete it.

Schubert's "Unfinished" Symphony is notable for the beauty of its themes, the richness of its orchestration, the sincerity of its emotional expression, and the clarity of its structure. The first movement is a sonata-allegro form that begins without introduction. The first theme, in the dark tonality of B minor, is made up of three components: a brooding, eight-measure phrase heard immediately in unison cellos and basses; a restless figure for violins; and a broad melody played by oboe and clarinet. As the music grows in intensity and dynamic level, it modulates to the key of the second theme, the bright, contrasting tonality of G major. This theme, one of the most famous melodies ever written for orchestra, is played by cellos over a syncopated accompaniment in violas and clarinets. A series of decisive chords and a tossing-about of fragments of the second theme bring the exposition to a close. The development, based entirely on the movement's opening phrase, begins softly in unison cellos and basses. This lengthy central section rises to great peaks of emotional tension before the recapitulation begins with the restless violin figure of the first theme. The oboe-clarinet theme is heard again, as is the renowned second theme, before the movement ends with restatements of the cello and bass phrase that began both the exposition and the development. The second movement is in the form of a large sonatina (sonata form without a development section) and flows like a calm river, filled with rich sonorities and lovely melodies. Of it, Alfred Einstein wrote, "The whole movement in its mystery and unfathomable beauty is like one of those plants whose flowers open only on a night of the full moon."

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**Gerard Schwarz (Born August 19, 1947 on Weehawken,. New Jersey) George Frideric Handel (Born February 23, 1685 in Halle, Germany Died April 14, 1759 in London)**

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Concerto for Brass Quintet and Orchestra (after the Concerto Grosso in F major, Op.

6, No. 9, HWV 327) (1739)

Last HSO Performance: *HSO Premiere*

Instrumentation: *harpsichord, strings, brass quintet*

Duration: 10'

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Between 1738 and 1740, when his success with Italian opera in London was beginning to wane, Handel turned his attention to English-language oratorio and produced a series of concertos that could be used either as intermission features or for independent performance. The Organ Concertos, Op. 4 (1738) and Op. 7 (1740), were intended specifically for his own performance between the parts of his oratorios. The Concerti Grossi, Op. 6 of September-October 1739 could serve a similar function (they did so during Handel's oratorio series later that season) or they could be played by anyone who acquired the music. Handel, in fact, made the Op. 6 Concerti Grossi available for general purchase by subscription, the only of his instrumental compositions to be so published. The works became popular so quickly that Walsh, Handel's publisher, reported the following April, "[They] are now played in most public places with the greatest applause."

Handel wrote the twelve Concertos of his Op. 6 with astonishing speed — September 29 to October 30, 1739 — most of them apparently completed in a single day. These wondrous pieces, coming some twenty years after Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos*, the only other orchestral music from the Baroque era of comparable stature, were old-fashioned for their day. They used the *concerto grosso* form — utilizing a small group of soloists rather than an individual player — that had been developed in Italy during the last half of the 17th century and been perfected by Arcangelo Corelli with his Concerti Grossi, Op. 6, published in Rome in 1714. Handel's entourage of soloists comprises two violins and a cello which compete/collaborate (the term "concerto" means both simultaneously) with a string orchestra bolstered by harpsichord. The movements, four to six in number, generally alternate in tempo between slow and fast, with some imitative writing spicing the quick sections. Handel's strength, however, was melody, and these Concertos are less densely packed with complex counterpoint than are the *Brandenburgs*. In expression, though, they are in no way inferior to Bach's masterpieces because of Handel's unfailing thematic invention, sense of tonal balance, harmonic ingenuity and invigorating rhythms. Of the Op. 6 Concerti Grossi, Percy M. Young wrote, "In these works it is tempting to see the peaks of Handel's creative genius. Elsewhere the flame of inspiration may leap momentarily higher, but nowhere else has the consistency of imaginative thought so triumphal a progress."

The Concerto for Brass Quintet and Orchestra is an arrangement of Handel's Concerto Grosso in F major, Op. 6, No. 9 by Gerard Schwarz, who began his career as Principal Trumpet of the New York Philharmonic from 1972 to 1977. Schwarz had begun conducting even before he left the Philharmonic, and he thereafter served as Music Director of the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, New York Chamber Orchestra, Mostly Mozart Festival in New York, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, and, most notably, the Seattle Symphony, where, during his 26-year tenure, he established it among the country's leading orchestras, becoming especially noted for his

performances and recordings of 20th-century American composers. Schwarz is also a gifted composer and arranger who has written for orchestra, concert band, chamber ensembles and voice. He created the Concerto for Brass Quintet for an appearance of the Canadian Brass with the Mostly Mozart Festival during his tenure there. His arrangement includes three movements of Handel's Op. 6, No. 9: an movement full of bounding, high spirits; a *Larghetto* of touching pathos; and an exuberant *Allegro* in fugal style.

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### **Daniel McCarthy (Born November 20, 1955 in Onekama, Michigan)**

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American Dance Music, Concerto for Brass Quintet and Percussion with Orchestra (1995)

World Premiere: 1997

Last HSO Performance: *HSO Premiere*

Instrumentation: *piccolo, flute, oboe, clarinet, bass clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet, trombone, bass trombone, timpani, percussion, strings, brass quintet*

Duration: 10'

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Daniel McCarthy, born in Onekama, Michigan in 1955, has enjoyed a wide-ranging career as composer, conductor, educator and author. Before joining the faculty of the University of Akron School of Music as Professor and Chair of the Composition Department in 2000, he had taught music theory and directed jazz and new music ensembles at Lakeland College in Ohio, Indiana State University and DePauw University. After receiving his undergraduate degree at Kent State University in 1978, McCarthy worked as a studio and club trumpet player and writer and arranger for commercial recordings, radio and TV jingles, and rock and dance groups in the Cleveland area. In 1982, he returned to his roots in classical music, started composing seriously, and went on to earn a master's degree in composition from the University of Akron and a doctorate from Kent State. McCarthy has also been active in the performance and promotion of new music, founding and directing the Akron New Music Festival, Akron New Music Ensemble, Composer's Institute at the Interlochen Center for the Arts, Indiana State University Contemporary Music Festival, and Midwest Composer's Forum. He has also served as President of the Cleveland Composer's Guild, co-authored the textbook *Theory for Today's Musician* with University of Akron faculty colleague Ralph Turek, and conducted the Interlochen Festival Orchestra, Cleveland Chamber Symphony and Terre Haute Symphony Youth Orchestra. His compositions, eclectic in style and many featuring wind and percussion instruments, have been performed widely, recorded on the Albany, Centaur, d'Note Classics, Gasparo and Klavier labels, and earned him commissions, awards and grants from the Ohio Arts Council, Indiana Arts Commission, Indiana State University Arts Endowment, University of Akron, and National Arts Endowment, as well as the Ohio Music Educators Association Composer of the Year Award, Connie Weldon Prize, International New Music Consortium Award, and Life Time Achievement Citation

from the Michigan State Legislature. Daniel McCarthy is also an advanced black belt martial artist in Tae Kwon Do and Asian Weapons.

“*American Dance Music*,” according to the note published in the score, “was commissioned by Rhythm & Brass in 1995 for a piece that would be musically challenging for the group and appealing to audiences. The work celebrates uniquely American music popularized by American dance crazes.

“The *Unsquare Dance* pairs tuba and xylophone in a sophisticated ‘hoe-down’ with frequent meter changes creating music that is very ‘un-square.’ *Latina* is patterned after the ‘Lambada,’ the dance made famous in the film *Dirty Dancing*, and combines Latin rhythms with a Baroque-style canon. *Serenade* recalls the 1940s-style slow dance with a Tommy Dorsey-like trombone solo and a musical language of modern jazz. *Jazz* borrows from 1950s be-bop and the influences of Dizzy Gillespie, Gerry Mulligan and Stan Kenton with another tuba and xylophone duet. *ROKIT!* is dedicated to the composer’s favorite rock/funk group, Tower of Power. With an important drum solo, this movement combines the elements of jazz, rock and funk prevalent in such 1970s-styles groups as Blood, Sweat & Tears and Chicago.”

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**Sir Edward Elgar (Born June 2, 1857 in Broadheath, England Died February 23, 1934 in Worcester)**

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Variations on an Original Theme, “Enigma,” Op. 36 (1898-1899)

World Premiere: *June 19, 1899*

Last HSO Performance: *May 10, 2020*

Instrumentation: *flute, piccolo, oboe, clar, bassoon, contra bassoon, french horn, trumpet, trombone, tuba, timpani, percussion, strings*

Duration: 29'

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In 1920, George Bernard Shaw, brandishing his steely tipped pen like a curmudgeonly sword, wrote, “The phenomenon of greatness in music had vanished from England with Purcell.... England had waited two hundred years for a great English composer, and waited in vain.... For my part, I expected nothing of any English composer; and when the excitement about *The Dream of Gerontius* began, I said, wearily, ‘Another Wardour-street festival oratorio!’ But when I heard the ‘Enigma’ Variations [in 1899] I sat up and said, ‘Whew!’ I knew we had got it at last.” Bernard Shaw, who wrote music criticism in his early days in London, was given to excitement over few musical matters that were not Richard Wagner, but he saw in these two works — the “Enigma” Variations and the oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius* — the long-desired emergence of a major creative personality in British music. That composer, Edward Elgar, had been writing for over twenty years when he undertook these two pieces in 1898, but they were the first to gain him a solid reputation not only among his countrymen but abroad as well.



Elgar's triumph in London came by a Continental route, through the eminent German conductor Hans Richter. Richter, who played a major role in the popularization of Wagner's music in the Britain, had a close relationship with the English musical community and its audiences, and for his series of concerts there in 1899 he investigated new scores by English composers that might be presented on his programs. His agent in London regularly dispatched manuscripts to Germany, and one such parcel arrived with an especially high recommendation. It contained the score for a new set of "Variations on an Original Theme" by Elgar. Richter's enthusiasm grew as he read through the pages, and he determined to present the work not only in London, but also on his provincial concerts. Those performances spread the composer's fame so quickly and successfully that he was knighted for his services to British music only five years later, in 1904.

Throughout his life Elgar had a penchant for dispensing startling or mystifying remarks just to see what response they would elicit. Turning this trait upon his music, he added the sobriquet "Enigma" above the theme of the work after it had been completed. He posited not just one puzzle here, however, but three. First, each of the fourteen sections was headed with a set of initials or a nickname that stood for the name of the composer's friend portrayed by that variation. Though the speculation on the identity of the individuals began immediately, Elgar did not confirm any guesses until 1920. The second mystery dealt with the theme itself, the section that specifically bore the legend, "Enigma." It is believed that the theme represented Elgar himself (note the similarity of the opening phrase to the speech rhythm of his name — Ed-ward EL-gar), thus making the variations upon it portraits of his friends as seen through his eyes. Elgar gave a helpful clue to the solution of this mystery when he used the melody again, in *The Music Makers* of 1912, and said that it stood there for "the loneliness of the creative artist." The final enigma, the one that neither Elgar offered to explain nor for which others have been able to find a definitive solution, arose from a statement of his: "Furthermore, through and over the whole set another and larger theme 'goes' but is not played.... So the principal theme never appears, even as in some recent dramas — e.g., Maeterlinck's *L'Intruse* and *Les Sept Princesses* — the chief character is never on stage." Conjectures about this unplayed theme that fits each of the variations have ranged from *Auld Lang Syne* (which guess Elgar vehemently denied) to a phrase from *Parsifal*. One theory was published by the Dutch musicologist Theodore van Houten, who speculated that the phrase "never, never, never" from the grand old tune *Rule, Britannia* fits the requirements, and even satisfies some of the baffling clues Elgar had spread to his friends. ("So the principal theme *never* appears.") We shall never know for sure. Elgar took the solution to his grave.

*Variation I (C.A.E.)* is a tender depiction of the composer's wife, Caroline Alice, who was not only his loving spouse but also his most trusted professional advisor.

*Variation II (H.D. S.-P.)* represents the warming-up finger exercises of H.D. Steuart-Powell, a piano-playing friend who was a frequent chamber music partner of Elgar.

*Variation III (R.B.T.)* utilizes the high and low woodwinds to portray the distinctive voice of Richard Baxter Townsend, an amateur actor with an unusually wide vocal range.

*Variation IV (W.M.B.)* suggests the considerable energy and firm resolve of William Meath Baker.

*Variation V (R.P.A.)* reflects the frequently changing moods of Richard Penrose Arnold, son of the poet Matthew Arnold.

*Variation VI (Ysobel)* gives prominence to the viola, the instrument played by Elgar's pupil, Miss Isobel Fitton.

*Variation VII (Troyte)* describes the high spirits and argumentative nature of Arthur Troyte Griffith.

*Variation VIII (W.N.)* denotes the charm and grace of Miss Winifred Norbury.

*Variation IX (Nimrod)*, named for the great-grandson of the Biblical Noah, who was noted as a hunter, is a moving testimonial to A.J. Jaeger, an avid outdoorsman and Elgar's publisher and close friend. The composer wrote, "This Variation is a record of a long summer evening talk, when my friend grew nobly eloquent (as only he could be) on the grandeur of Beethoven, and especially of his slow movements."

*Variation X (Dorabella): Intermezzo* describes Miss Dora Penny, a young friend hesitant of conversation and fluttering of manner.

*Variation XI (G.R.S.)* portrays the organist George R. Sinclair and his bulldog, Dan, out for a walk by the River Wye. The rhythmic exuberance of the music suggests the dog's rushing about the bank and paddling in the water.

*Variation XII (B.G.N.)* pays homage to the cellist Basil G. Nevinson.

*Variation XIII (\* \* \*)*: *Romanza* was written while Lady Mary Lygon was on a sea journey. The solo clarinet quotes a phrase from Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage Overture* and the hollow sound of the timpani played with wooden sticks suggests the distant rumble of ship's engines.

*Variation XIV (E.D.U.): Finale*, Elgar's brilliant self-portrait, recalls the music of earlier variations.