

HART HOUSE ORCHESTRA

HENRY JANZEN, PRINCIPAL CONDUCTOR &
MUSIC DIRECTOR

WINTER CONCERT

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 15TH, 2024
HART HOUSE GREAT HALL
UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

PROGRAMME

Overture to "Benvenuto Cellini"

Hector Berlioz

Concerto No. 2 for Clarinet, in E-flat major, Op. 74

Carl Maria von Weber

1. Allegro
2. Romanze: Andante con moto
3. Alla Polacca

with Clarinet soloist Sean Lin

— *INTERMISSION* —

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

Sir Edward Elgar

Theme (Enigma: Andante)

Variation I (L'istesso tempo) "C.A.E."

Variation II (Allegro) "H.D.S-P."

Variation III (Allegretto) "R.B.T."

Variation IV (Allegro di molto) "W.M.B."

Variation V (Moderato) "R.P.A."

Variation VI (Andantino) "Ysobel"

Variation VII (Presto) "Troyte"

Variation VIII (Allegretto) "W.N."

Variation IX (Adagio) "Nimrod"

Variation X (Intermezzo: Allegretto) "Dorabella"

Variation XI (Allegro di molto) "G.R.S."

Variation XII (Andante) "B.G.N."

Variation XIII (Romanza: Moderato) " * * * "

Variation XIV (Finale: Allegro) "E.D.U."

Hector Berlioz: Overture to the opera Benvenuto Cellini



Orchestration: 2 flutes, piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 4 bassoons, 4 horns, 4 trumpets, 2 cornets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, cymbals, triangle, bass drum, and strings. Performance time: approximately 11 minutes.

Even though Berlioz claimed to detest Italian music, some of his best compositions were inspired by the 15 months that he spent in Italy as the recipient of the prestigious Prix de Rome awarded by the French Academy of Arts. He loved the people and their culture, the sunny landscapes, the enticing way of life. One of the works directly inspired by his stay in Italy is his first opera *Benvenuto Cellini*, on which he started to work in 1834, a couple of years after his return to France. The opera is very loosely based on the memoirs of the 16th century Florentine sculptor, goldsmith and musician Benvenuto Cellini. (Berlioz privately identified with Cellini's artist-hero personality).

The opera was a failure redeemed by some dazzling - though apparently bewilderingly modern – music. It closed after three performances, was performed only three times during the composer's lifetime, and has been very rarely performed ever since. The only fragment of the opera that was a success from the get-go was the rousing, crowd-pleasing overture, which quickly became a favourite in the orchestral repertoire. Berlioz recalled that the overture was as enthusiastically applauded, as the rest of the opera was hissed.

The overture to *Benvenuto Cellini* is a mini-drama in itself. It begins with a spirited fanfare, and, in the span of some ten minutes, encompasses music of solemnity, lyricism, passion (recalling Cellini's love for his fiancée Teresa), and sure-fire orchestral brilliance.

Carl Maria von Weber: Clarinet Concerto No. 2 in E flat, op.74



Orchestration: solo clarinet, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 bassoons, 2 horns, 2 trumpets, timpani and strings. Performance time: approximately 23 minutes

It is an interesting coincidence that both Weber and Mozart (who also happened to be cousins-in-law, although Weber was 30 years younger) composed masterpieces for the clarinet inspired by their warm friendship with virtuosos of the instrument: Anton Stadler, in Mozart's case, and Heinrich Joseph Baermann, principal clarinetist of the Munich court orchestra, in Weber's case.

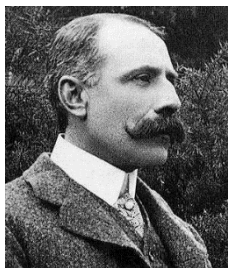
Weber is best known for his opera *Der Freischütz*, which is considered the first German romantic opera. Although he composed a great variety of instrumental music, including symphonies and piano concertos, it is only his concerti for clarinet that entered the repertoire. Weber's contributions to the clarinet include also a concertino, a set of variations, a quintet and a grand duo, but none of them attained the popularity of the concertos.

The Clarinet Concerto No. 2 in E flat, was composed and premiered in 1811, with Baermann, the dedicatee playing the solo clarinet. According to the composer's diary, Baermann "played in a heavenly manner" and the work was greeted with "frantic applause."

The mechanics of the clarinet developed a considerably in the quarter century between Mozart's time and 1811, when Weber first met Baermann. That allowed Weber to explore a much wider expressive range, and to highlight the romantic aspects of the instrument. Among the special features of this concerto are the many dramatic contrasts between the instrument's brilliant high notes and the dark, rich sonority of the lower range.

The first movement of the Concerto (*Allegro*) is in a traditional sonata form. After a majestic orchestral introduction, the clarinet makes a dramatic entrance with a three-octave leap from high to low, and then immediately rebounding back. The second movement (*Romanze*) is operatic in character: in the second half of that movement, the clarinet could be mistaken for a vocal solo, with the orchestra playing short chords in the manner of recitativo secco, as used by Mozart in his operas. The rondo finale (*Alla polacca*) makes use of a polonaise rhythm, and becomes ever more virtuosic for the soloist as it unfolds with an especially brilliant conclusion.

Edward Elgar: Variations on an Original Theme, op.36 (Enigma Variations)



Orchestration: 2 flutes (second doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, triangle, bass drum, cymbals, organ ad libitum, and strings. Performance time: approximately 30 minutes

The genesis of Elgar's Enigma variations is one of the most moving and heart-warming stories in the history of classical music: On an October day in 1898, Elgar came home after a long day teaching. After dinner, in order to relax, he sat down at the piano to doodle. Elgar later recalled what happened next.

"...I began to play, and suddenly my wife interrupted by saying: 'Edward, that's a good tune.' I awoke from the dream. 'Eh! Tune, what tune!' And she said, 'Play it again, I like that tune.' I played and strummed, and played, then she exclaimed: 'That's the tune.' The voice of my wife asked with a sound of approval, 'What is that?' I answered, 'Nothing – but something might be made of it.'"

Just for fun, Elgar started to toy with the tune, trying to make musical caricatures of some of his friends, and trying them on his wife Alice, to see if she could guess the subject. Soon enough, out of that spontaneous exchange grew the serious idea of a set of orchestral variations.

The Variations were composed in 1898 and 1899. They were dedicated "...to my friends pictured within" and given the title "Variations on an original theme, Op.36". The first performance, conducted in London by Hans Richter, took place on 19 June 1899, but it was not until 13 September in Worcester, however, that the Variations were heard in their final form after Elgar had added a further 100 bars to the end of "E.D.U." to make a more powerful conclusion. The reception was enthusiastic and it propelled Elgar to fame.

In all, fourteen people and a dog are featured in the variations:

Variation I - C.A.E.: Elgar's wife, Alice, lovingly portrayed.

Variation II - H.D.S.P.: Hew David Steuart-Powell, a pianist with whom Elgar played in chamber ensembles.

Variation III - R.B.T.: Richard Baxter Townshend, a friend whose caricature of an old man in an amateur theatre production is captured in the variation.

Variation IV - W.M.B.: William Meath Baker, country squire, gentleman and scholar, informing his guests of the day's arrangements.

Programme notes by Joseph Nachman

Variation V - R.P.A.: Richard Arnold, son of the poet Matthew Arnold.

Variation VI - Ysobel: Isabel Fitton, an amateur viola player from a musical family living in Malvern.

Variation VII - Troyte: Arthur Troyte Griffith, a Malvern architect and close friend of Elgar throughout their lives - the variation focuses on Troyte's limited abilities as a pianist.

Variation VIII - W.N.: Winifred Norbury, known to Elgar through her association with the Worcestershire Philharmonic Society - the variation captures both her laugh and the atmosphere of her eighteenth-century house.

Variation IX - Nimrod: A J Jaeger, Elgar's great friend whose encouragement did much to keep Elgar going during the period when he was struggling to secure a lasting recognition. "Jaeger" is the German for "hunter," and Nimrod is the "mighty hunter" mentioned in the book of Genesis. Nimrod is the most beloved of the variations. It has become popular in its own right and is sometimes used at solemn occasions. It is always played at the London Cenotaph as part of the Service of Remembrance; it was also played at Princess Diana's funeral.

Variation X - Dorabella: Dora Penney, daughter of the Rector of Wolverhampton and a close friend of the Elgars. The music suggests the stammer with which she spoke in her youth.

Variation XI - G.R.S.: George Sinclair, organist at Hereford Cathedral, although the variation allegedly portrays Sinclair's bulldog Dan paddling in the River Wye after falling in.

Variation XII - B.G.N.: Basil Nevinson, an amateur cellist who, with Elgar and Hew Steuart-Powell, completed the chamber music trio.

Variation XIII - *:** Probably Lady Mary Lygon, a local noblewoman who sailed for Australia at about the time Elgar wrote the variation, which quotes from Mendelssohn's Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage.

Variation XIV - E.D.U.: Elgar himself, Edoo being Alice's pet name for him. It echoes themes from two variations: "C.A.E." and "Nimrod" referring to his wife Alice and his friend Jaeger, which Elgar acknowledged to be the greatest influences on his life and art.

But what about the Enigma? The word "*Enigma*", serving as a title for the theme of the Variations, was added to the score at a late stage, after the

manuscript had been delivered to the publisher. In a letter to Jaeger, Elgar associated the Enigma with the theme of the variations, but hinted that the actual theme is never heard:

“The enigma 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 and larger theme ‘goes,’ but is not played—so the principal Theme never appears. . .”

He also hinted that the Enigma was a familiar tune. Not surprisingly, this unleashed a storm of speculations as to what the Enigma theme is. A number of tunes have been proposed including, but not limited to: Auld Lang Syne (forcefully rejected by the composer); Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star; Rule Britannia; the slow movement of Mozart’s Prague symphony; and the slow movement of Beethoven’s Pathétique piano sonata.

However, there is no convincing solution to the puzzle, and it will continue to be subject of scholarly papers and doctoral dissertations. Probably only Elgar’s wife Alice and his friend Jaeger knew the secret – if, indeed, there was one. It is quite possible that this was one of Elgar’s practical jokes, and that there is no tune. It seems, though, that the Enigma theme will remain forever unguessed, just as the composer intended.

Henry Janzen, Music Director and Principal Conductor



Henry Janzen's formative influences include Masterclasses with Menahem Pressler and William Primrose at the Banff School of Fine Art coupled with advanced studies in New York City with renowned pedagogues Lillian Fuchs, Arianna Bronne, Raphael Bronstein and Nathan Gordon. Subsequent teaching positions include the University of Western Michigan, Wayne State University and University of Western Ontario. For the past 20 years Mr. Janzen has taught in

the Orchestral, Applied and Chamber Music areas at the University of Guelph. In addition to regular orchestral and opera performances he has been heard in performances across North America and Europe including Prague, Salzburg and Vienna. Mr. Janzen has appeared with such diverse groups as the New York String Ensemble, Greenwich (Connecticut) Choral Society and Rackham Symphony Choir.

As conductor he has served with distinction the Michigan Youth Symphony, the Clarion Choir and Orchestra, the Dearborn Symphony, and the University of Guelph Orchestra. Some of his memorable performance opportunities were the private funeral ceremony for Henry Ford II; with Lloyd Bridges in the TV movie "In the Nick of Time"; performances at the Premier Centre in Detroit with Gladys Knight and the Pips; the installations of firstly Archbishop and then Edmund Cardinal Szoka and a mass for 100,000 people with Pope John Paul II.

Sean Lin, Clarinet soloist



Sean Lin is a freelance clarinetist and performer based in the Greater Toronto Area. While not a musician by trade, Sean has been playing the clarinet for nearly 20 years and is highly active in the community music scene in Toronto. Though largely self-taught, Sean's learnings with esteemed pedagogues Richard Thomson, Susan Barber-Kahro, and Le Lu have been invaluable. Ensembles that Sean has played with include the Toronto Sinfonietta, Greater Toronto Philharmonic,

Rosedale Symphony, and the Hart House Symphonic Band (in which he previously played as principal clarinet for over 10 years). Sean has also participated in the community program of the Toronto Summer Music Festival, where he performed with Gabriel Radford and Michael Chiarello of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra. In addition to orchestral playing, Sean is

also an avid chamber musician who often performs in chamber groups at recital series such as OpenScore and Appassionata at the University of Toronto.

Sean joined the Hart House Orchestra in 2018 and has been serving as principal clarinet since 2022. As the winner of the 2023 Concerto Competition, Sean is thrilled to be playing Weber's 2nd Clarinet Concerto with the group in his first ever performance of a full-length concerto. Apart from music, Sean's other hobbies include photography, tennis, and skating. Sean graduated from the University of Toronto with an M.Eng and BAsC in mechanical engineering, and currently works as a data analyst at Loblaw's, making bank for Mr. Bank.

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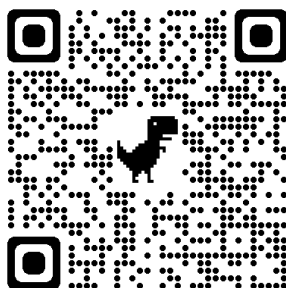
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Phoenix Wong

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Robert Hall*

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