



THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**MEMPHIS**

Rudi E. Scheidt  
School of Music

# UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

*PRESENTS*

## **ELGAR'S ENIGMA VARIATIONS**

Prof. Daniel Brier, conductor  
Fabian Schneider, graduate assistant

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OCTOBER 23, 2025 | 7:00 PM

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**SFPAC** SCHEIDT FAMILY  
PERFORMING  
ARTS CENTER

Rudi E. Scheidt School of Music  
Jacob Allen, Interim Director  
College of Communication and Fine Arts  
Deb Burns, Dean

# PROGRAM

Entr'acte

Caroline Shaw  
(b. 1982)

Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage, Op. 27

Felix Mendelssohn  
(1809-1847)

Fabian Schneider, Conductor

-Intermission-

Variations on an Original Theme, Enigma, Op. 36

Edward Elgar  
(1857-1934)

Theme

I. (C.A.E.)

II. (H.D.S-P.)

III. (R.B.T)

IV. (W.M.B)

V. (R.P.A)

VI. (Ysobel)

VII.(Troyte)

VIII. (W.N)

IX. (Nimrod)

X. (Dorabella) – Intermezzo

XI. (G.R.S.)

XII. (B.G.N.)

XIII. (\*\*\*) – Romanza

XIV. (E.D.U) – Finale

(Played without pause)

# UNIVERSITY OF MEMPHIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Prof. Daniel Brier, conductor  
Fabian Schneider, graduate assistant

## VIOLIN I

Sebastian Gaviria (Concertmaster)  
Ana Sofia Ramirez  
Cecelia Erbe  
Langston Suggs  
Sarah Enoch  
Gabby Greggory

## OBOE

Jesus Salazar (Principal)  
Simon Dickerson

## CLARINET

Shihao (Hugh) Zhu (Co-Principal)  
Joseph Burgos (Co-Principal)

## VIOLIN II

Lina Lumumba (Principal)  
John Jesuyemi  
Autumn Colley  
Khalid Lopez  
Hailey Smith

## BASSOON

Lora Yopp (Principal)  
Mollie Coates (Co-second, alphabetical order)  
Caiden Ross (Co-second)  
Ian West (Contrabassoon)

## VIOLA

Andrew McGuire (Principal)  
Mario Henrique Rasoto Batista  
Dario Oliveria Santos  
Jonathan Bagoyado  
Rex (Danica) Brown

## HORN

Brittany Cooper (Principal)  
Juan Garay (Assistant)  
Kelsey Pegues  
Nicholas Cacolyris  
Rhys Roberts

## CELLO

Ella Bondar (Principal)  
Matthew Griener  
Miriam Henderson  
Ruby Thurman  
Asamoah Oppong  
Ina Torres O'Ryan  
Julian Severs  
Elijah Yancey

## TRUMPET

Christian Chiasson (Principal)  
Fausto Mejia  
Tyler Scott

## TROMBONE

Dylan Mashburn (Co-Principal)  
Evan Green (Co-Principal)  
Cal Elrod (Bass)

## DOUBLE BASS

Gesiye Okoya (Principal)  
Egypt Burton  
Jonathan Hodges  
Ebony Gipson

## TUBA

Ryan Winans

## TIMPANI

Colton Renfrow

## FLUTE

Nicole Rodriguez (Co-Principal)  
Catie Balsamo (Co-Principal)  
Ellie Poppas

## PERCUSSION

Allison Kiefer  
Daniel Padron  
Christopher Palmer

## PROGRAM NOTES

### *Entr'acte*

Caroline Shaw (b.1982)

Entr'acte was written in 2011 after hearing the Brentano Quartet play Haydn's Op. 77 No. 2 — with their spare and soulful shift to the D-flat major trio in the minuet. It is structured like a minuet and trio, riffing on that classical form but taking it a little further. I love the way some music (like the minuets of Op. 77) suddenly takes you to the other side of Alice's looking glass, in a kind of absurd, subtle, technicolor transition.

- Caroline Shaw

### *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage (Meeresstille und glückliche Fahrt), Op. 27*

Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)

Johann Wolfgang von Goethe (1749-1832) occupies a place at the center of the German literary canon. A poet, novelist, and playwright, he is to the German language what William Shakespeare is to the English. Felix Mendelssohn, through his ebullient music and public advocacy for the music of J.S. Bach, holds a secure place in the German musical canon.

As the son of one of Berlin's wealthiest and most cultured families, the young Felix received an education and upbringing unparalleled. From the private orchestra at his disposal to the tutelage of the intellectual elite, Mendelssohn's parents nurtured his exceptional talent and provided him with the most favorable upbringing possible. Naturally, his education included readings from Germany's greatest man of letters and thought, Goethe. Two of Goethe's poems, *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, captured the nineteen-year-old composer's imagination.

The first poem reads:

Silence, deep rules over the waters  
Calmly slumbering lies the main  
While sailor views with trouble  
Nought but one vast level plain  
Not a zephyr is in motion!  
Silence fearful as the grave!  
In the mighty waste of ocean  
Sunk to rest is every wave. (1795)

The second poem reads:

The mist is fast clearing  
And radiant is heaven  
While Aeolus loosens  
Our anguish-fraught bond.  
The zephyrs are sighing Alert is the sailor.  
Quick! Nimble be plying!  
The distance approaches  
I see land beyond! (1795)

## PROGRAM NOTES (CONTINUED)

Goethe's brief paired poems contrast the eerie stillness of a windless sea with the joyful motion of a ship once the breeze returns. Mendelssohn's overture beautifully mirrors this journey from stillness to exhilaration. He described its opening as "a pitch gently sustained by the strings... barely audible... the whole stirs sluggishly... until finally it comes to a halt with thick chords, and the Prosperous Voyage sets out." From this hushed beginning, the music grows ever more animated—its rhythmic energy and radiance vividly charting the course ahead.

### *Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 36 "Enigma"*

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Edward Elgar, who grew up in his father's music shop in Worcester, England, learned composition by studying the scores displayed on its shelves. With little formal training beyond violin lessons, he built a career as a versatile freelance musician—playing violin and bassoon, conducting, and teaching. His early experience leading a small ensemble at the Powick asylum, where he arranged music for whatever instruments were available, proved formative. In 1889, he married Caroline Alice Roberts, whose steadfast belief in his talent inspired him to realize his creative potential. Over the next three decades, Elgar became the first English composer in centuries to achieve international renown. After his wife's death, he would never again complete a major work.

Until age 40, Elgar's fame was largely confined to his home region. That changed in 1899 with the Enigma Variations, a set of orchestral portraits inspired by a melody he conceived while improvising at the piano. Encouraged by his wife, he transformed the tune into fourteen variations, each depicting one of their friends. The premiere under Hans Richter was a triumph, establishing Elgar's reputation overnight. The title "Enigma," added mysteriously to the score, hints at a hidden, unplayed theme—an unsolved puzzle that continues to intrigue listeners and scholars more than a century later. - Daniel Brier

What follows are descriptive notes written by the composer for production with the original pianola rolls.

## PROGRAM NOTES (CONTINUED)

### Theme

#### Variation I - C. A. E. (Caroline Alice Elgar)

"There is no break between the theme and this movement. The variation is really a prolongation of the theme with what I wished to be romantic and delicate additions; those who knew C.A.E. [Caroline Alice Elgar—the composer's wife] will understand this reference to one whose life was a romantic and delicate inspiration."

#### Variation II - H. D. S.-P. (Hew David Steuart-Powell)

"Hew David Steuart-Powell was a well-known amateur pianist and a great player of chamber music. He was associated with B.G.N. (Cello) and the Composer (Violin) over many years in this playing. His characteristic diatonic run over the keys before beginning to play is here humorously travestied in the semiquaver passages; these should suggest a Toccata, but chromatic beyond H.D.S.-P.'s liking."

#### Variation III - R. B. T. (Richard Baxter Townshend)

Richard Baxter Townshend, whose Tenderfoot books are now so well known and appreciated. The Variation has a reference to R.B.T.'s presentation of an old man in some amateur theatricals—the low voice flying off occasionally into 'soprano' timbre.

The oboe gives a somewhat pert version of the theme, and the growing grumpiness of the bassoons is important.

#### Variation IV - W. M. B. (W. M. Baker)

A country squire, gentleman and scholar. In the days of horses and carriages it was more difficult than in these days of petrol to arrange the carriages for the day to suit a large number of guests. This variation was written after the host had, with a slip of paper in his hand, forcibly read out the arrangements for the day and hurriedly left the music room with an inadvertent bang of the door.

In bars 15-24 are some suggestions of the teasing attitude of the guests.

## PROGRAM NOTES (CONTINUED)

### Variation V - R. P. A. (Richard P. Arnold)

Richard P. Arnold, son of Matthew Arnold. A great lover of music which he played (on the pianoforte) in a self-taught manner, evading difficulties but suggesting in a mysterious way the real feeling. His serious conversation was continually broken up by whimsical and witty remarks.

The theme is given by the basses with solemnity and in the ensuing major portion there is much light-hearted badinage among the wind instruments.

### Variation VI - Ysobel (Isabel Fitton)

A malvern lady, an amateur viola player. It may be noticed that the opening bar, a phrase made use of throughout the variation, is an 'exercise' for crossing the strings—a difficulty for beginners; on this is built a pensive and, for a moment, romantic movement.

### Variation VII - Troyte (Troyte Griffith)

A well-known architect in Malvern. The boisterous mood is mere banter. The uncouth rhythm of the drums and lower strings was really suggested by some maladroit essays to play the pianoforte; later the strong rhythm suggests the attempts of the instructor (E.E.) to make something like order out of chaos, and the final despairing "slam" records that the effort proved to be vain.

### Variation VIII - W. N. (Winifred Norbury)

Really suggested by an eighteenth-century house. The gracious personalities of the ladies are sedately shown. W. N. was more connected with music than others of the family, and her initials head the movement; to justify this position a little suggestion of a characteristic laugh is given.

## PROGRAM NOTES (CONTINUED)

### Variation IX - Nimrod (A. J. Jaeger)

The variations are not all "portraits" some represent only a mood, while others recall an incident known only to two persons. Something ardent and mercurial, in addition to the slow movement (No. IX), would have been needful to portray the character and temperament of A. J. Jaeger (Nimrod).

The variation bearing this name is the record of a long summer evening talk, when my friend discoursed eloquently on the slow movements of Beethoven, and said that no one could approach Beethoven at his best in this field, a view with which I cordially concurred. It will be noticed that the opening bars are made to suggest the slow movement of the Eighth Sonata (Pathétique).

Jaeger was for years the dear friend, the valued advisor and the stern critic of many musicians besides the writer; his place has been occupied but never filled.

### Variation X - Dorabella (Dora Penny)

INTERMEZZO. The pseudonym is adopted from Mozart's "Cosi fan tutti." The movement suggests a dance-like lightness.

The inner sustained phrases at first on the viola and later on the flute should be noted.

### Variation XI - G. R. S. (George Robertson Sinclair, Mus. D.)

George Roberston Sinclair, Mus. D., late organist of Hereford Cathedral. The variation, however, has nothing to do with organs or cathedrals, or, except remotely, with G. R. S. The first few bars were suggested by his great bulldog Dan (a well-known character) falling down the steep bank into the river Wye (bar 1); his paddling up stream to find a landing place (bars 2 and 3); and his rejoicing bark on landing (2nd half of bar 5). G. R. S. Said, "Set that to music." I did; here it is.



## PROGRAM NOTES (CONTINUED)

### Variation XII - B. G. N. (Basil G. Nevinson)

Basil G. Nevinson, an amateur cello player of distinction and the associate with H. D. S.-P. And the writer (violin) in performances of many trios—a serious and devoted friend. The variation is a tribute to a very dear friend whose scientific and artistic attainments, and the whole-hearted way they were put at the disposal of his friends, particularly endeared him to the writer.

### Variation XIII - \*\*\* (Lady Mary Lygon)

The asterisks take the place of the name of a lady who was, at the time of the composition, on a sea voyage. The drums suggest the distant throb of the engines of a liner, over which the clarinet quotes a phrase from Mendelssohn's "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage."

### Variation XIV - E. D. U. (Edward Elgar, nicknamed Edu by his wife from the German Eduard)

FINALE: bold and vigorous in general style. Written at a time when friends were dubious and generally discouraging as to the composer's musical future, this variation is merely to show what E.D.U. (a paraphrase of a fond name) intended to do.

References made to Var. I (C.A.E.) and to Var. IX (Nimrod), two great influences on the life and art of the composer, are entirely fitting to the intention of the piece.

The whole of the work is summed up in the triumphant broad presentation of the theme in major.