

PROGRAM

ONE HUNDRED TWENTIETH SEASON

Chicago Symphony Orchestra

Riccardo Muti Music Director

Pierre Boulez Helen Regenstein Conductor Emeritus

Yo-Yo Ma Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant

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Thursday, March 17, 2011, at 8:00

Saturday, March 19, 2011, at 8:00

Tuesday, March 22, 2011, at 7:30

Charles Dutoit Conductor

John Sharp Cello

Kenneth Olsen Cello

Katinka Kleijn Cello

Berlioz

Roman Carnival Overture, Op. 9

Penderecki

Concerto grosso for Three Cellos and Orchestra

Andante sostenuto

Andante con moto

Allegro con brio

JOHN SHARP

KENNETH OLSEN

KATINKA KLEIJN

First Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances

INTERMISSION

(continued)

Elgar

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

Theme (Andante)

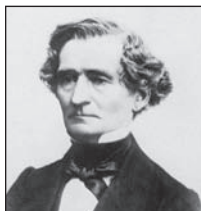
1. C.A.E. (Andante)
2. H.D.S.-P. (Allegro)
3. R.B.T. (Allegretto)
4. W.M.B. (Allegro di molto)
5. R.P.A. (Moderato)
6. Ysobel (Andantino)
7. Troyte (Presto)
8. W.N. (Allegretto)
9. Nimrod (Adagio)
10. Intermezzo (Dorabella). (Allegretto)
11. G.R.S. (Allegro di molto)
12. B.G.N. (Andante)
13. *** Romanza (Moderato)
14. Finale. E.D.U. (Allegro)

The appearance of John Sharp is endowed in part by the John Ward Seabury Distinguished Soloist Fund.

CSO Tuesday series concerts are sponsored by United Airlines.

Steinway is the official piano of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.

This program is partially supported by grants from the Illinois Arts Council, a state agency, and the National Endowment for the Arts.



Hector Berlioz

Born December 11, 1803, Côte-Saint-André, France.

Died March 8, 1869, Paris, France.

Roman Carnival Overture, Op. 9

Like Beethoven's *Leonore* overtures, this music is what Berlioz was able to save for the concert hall from a troubled opera. But where Beethoven's *Fidelio* has found a secure place in the opera repertory, Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini* is known almost solely for its offspring.

The *Roman Carnival Overture* is not literally the overture to Berlioz's opera; that music, too, has become an orchestral favorite, and to hear Berlioz's own first-hand report, it was the only music applauded at the premiere of the opera on September 10, 1838, at the Paris Opera. "The rest was hissed with

exemplary precision and energy," he later recalled. But even after the humiliation of failing at Europe's most important opera house had begun to fade, and the work itself was virtually forgotten, Berlioz didn't give up on it.

In the early 1840s, when his career as a conductor temporarily overtook that as a composer, Berlioz pulled some of the best music from the opera and fashioned this *Roman Carnival Overture* to add to his concert programs. For Berlioz, it was only a small souvenir of a major work, but from the very first performance

COMPOSED

1843-44

FIRST PERFORMANCE

February 3, 1844, Paris. The composer conducting

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

February 9, 1894, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting

MOST RECENT

CSO PERFORMANCES

December 16, 2000, Orchestra Hall. Lorin Maazel conducting

July 10, 2005, Ravinia Festival. Itzhak Perlman conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, two trumpets and two cornets, three trombones, timpani, cymbals, tambourines, triangle, strings

APPROXIMATE

PERFORMANCE TIME

9 minutes

CSO RECORDINGS

A 1958 performance with Fritz Reiner conducting is included on *From the Archives*, vol. 3

A 1961 performance with Pierre Monteux conducting is included on *Chicago Symphony Orchestra: The First 100 Years*

under his baton in 1844, it found immense success with the public. The opera remained unknown and little appreciated, despite Berlioz's radical revision and an important revival led by Franz Liszt at his prestigious Weimar opera house in 1852. The failure of *Benvenuto Cellini* continued to haunt and mystify Berlioz: "I have just re-read my poor score carefully and with the strictest impartiality," he wrote in his *Memoirs*, "and I cannot help recognizing that it contains a variety of ideas, an energy and exuberance and a brilliance of color such as I may perhaps never find again, and which deserved a better fate." In the meantime, the *Roman Carnival Overture*

enjoyed an untroubled and highly successful career.

The original overture to *Benvenuto Cellini* gave Berlioz the pattern he would use for the *Roman Carnival* and all subsequent overtures: a brief allegro introducing a larger slow section, crowned by the return of the allegro. Here the fast music comes from the Mardi gras finale to act 1; the slow melody is Cellini's tender and expansive aria, now sung by the english horn. The contrast of love song with joyous dance music is highly effective, the orchestration is brilliant even by Berlioz's standards, and, like Beethoven's *Leonore* overtures, it conveys a sense of drama the opera itself rarely achieves. ■

Symphony Center Information



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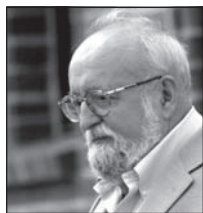


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Krzysztof Penderecki

Born November 23, 1933, Dębica, Poland.

Concerto grosso for Three Cellos and Orchestra

When Penderecki burst on the new-music scene with his searing, noisy *Tbrenody for the Victims of Hiroshima* in 1960, he didn't seem like a composer who would one day write a concerto grosso, a form in vogue more than three hundred years earlier. But the last decades of the twentieth century were a time of stylistic variety and liberation (as well as confusion), and many a composer ended up miles from where his career began. In any event, Penderecki's gear-shifting wasn't an outright reversal—a Jackson Pollock suddenly painting like Renoir—as much as a serious attempt to find a synthesis between new and old, and to discover “a sort of universal language,” as he once said.

Penderecki's entire career has been colored by his understanding and acceptance of the “new” in music. When he studied composition at the Kraków Academy of

Music in the mid-fifties, Poland was awaking from a deep, paralyzing cultural isolation. Penderecki didn't even hear Stravinsky's seminal *The Rite of Spring* of 1913 until sometime around 1956, when he was in his early twenties. That year, a group of composers founded the Warsaw Autumn Festival and programmed “new” music by the founding fathers of modernism, including Stravinsky, Schoenberg, and Webern, as well as contemporary works by Luigi Nono and Karlheinz Stockhausen. (Nono himself came to Poland, armed with scores of recent music.) Penderecki was suddenly exposed not only to twentieth-century classics, but also to the new serialism of Pierre Boulez and the chance music of John Cage.

Penderecki made headlines of his own in 1960 with his *Tbrenody for the Victims of Hiroshima*, a ten-minute, densely layered work

COMPOSED

2000

FIRST PERFORMANCE

June 22, 2001, Tokyo, Japan.
Charles Dutoit conducting
These are the first CSO performances

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, two oboes and english horn, two clarinets, E-flat clarinet and bass clarinet, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, two trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, percussion (triangle tree, bell tree, suspended

cymbal, cymbals, tubular bells, tam-tams, tambourine, tenor drum, military drum, bass drum, glockenspiel, marimbaphone), harp, celesta, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

35 minutes

scored for fifty-two strings that boldly announced the arrival of a new pioneer. Throughout the sixties, Penderecki was regarded as one of the most brilliant and adventuresome figures in music. But he quickly tired of the avant-garde, sensing that it was preventing him from writing the music he really wanted to compose. In the seventies, when he began a second career as a conductor (Penderecki conducted the Chicago Symphony in Schubert's Fifth Symphony and his own *Seven Gates of Jerusalem* in March 2000), the experience of performing Bruckner, Sibelius, and Tchaikovsky pointed the way out of this creative impasse and began to influence his own music in profound ways. This gradual retreat toward more traditional tonal procedures, a full decade before so-called neoromanticism became popular, was viewed by some of his colleagues as the worst kind of cowardice—as an act of betrayal. “The solution to my dilemma was not to go forward,” he later admitted, “and perhaps destroy the whole spirit of music as a result, but to gain inspiration from the past and look back on my heritage.”

Early in his career, Penderecki hinted that he hadn't abandoned the traditions of Western music; some of his most daring scores, including *Polymorphia* of 1961, end tellingly, if incongruously, with resounding major chords. He studied the late-Renaissance counterpoint of the Dutch and Flemish schools before he began the *Stabat Mater* of 1962. With the ambitious, large-scale *Saint Luke Passion*

completed in 1965, Penderecki returned to a traditional form rarely used since the time of Bach and relied on triads to anchor important points in the score.

In the mid-seventies, Penderecki fell under the spell of romanticism, and his output began to reveal the depth of that influence. By the late seventies, in works such as *Paradise Lost*, commissioned by the Lyric Opera of Chicago (and premiered here in 1978), Penderecki had comfortably settled into his most romantic phase. He was not the first composer to undergo a compositional crisis that led him to a more conservative language. But his interest in old-fashioned sensibilities and big, time-honored forms such as the symphony and concerto—which, to progressive composers, reached the end of the line with Prokofiev and Shostakovich—was unexpected and puzzling. “This continuation is something very important to me,” he said at the time, “and all I'm doing now is trying to carry on a tradition.”

In writing this concerto grosso, Penderecki looks all the way back to the tradition of his baroque predecessors. In its heyday, the concerto grosso was the standard vehicle for a small group of soloists in musical dialogue with a larger ensemble (Bach's *Brandenburg Concertos* are the most famous example). But unlike the solo concerto, which flourished in the hands of Mozart and Beethoven, the concerto grosso fell out of favor by the end of the eighteenth century. Today, a concerto for more than one instrument is

something of a rarity, and the idea of writing one for three cellos is essentially unprecedented.

In this work, Penderecki takes his title quite literally, for the work is, in fact, a “big concerto” in style and dimension—grand, imposing, powerful. It does not follow the formal footprint of the baroque form other than in its structural use of blocks of dialogue between soloists and orchestra. Like baroque composers, who loved the challenge of composing for identical solo instruments, Penderecki writes lines for his three cellos that crisscross, mirror, echo each other, and even toss phrases back and forth, like questions and answers. But he also gives each cello its own identity—each one is introduced separately at the beginning and each gets its own separate monologue in the shared cadenza near the end of the final movement.

Like many of Penderecki’s recent scores, the concerto grosso reaches for a common ground between his early and later personas—a reconciliation of sorts between his youthful avant-garde tendencies and his more conservative, romantic nature. Aggressively percussive music alternates with long stretches of eloquent, lyrical music. “I no longer ask myself, ‘Is this music different or original?’” he told *The New York Times* in 1996. “So many new things have been discovered in the twentieth century that now, at the end of the century, we need some kind of synthesis, some musical language which will allow us just to write music.” This concerto grosso, written at the turn of the new century, resonates with the voices of history, but it is Penderecki’s own unmistakable voice that speaks most powerfully. ■



Edward Elgar

Born June 2, 1857, Broadheath, near Worcester, England.

Died February 23, 1934, Broadheath.

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

The temptation to improvise at the piano after a hard day's work surely never produced greater results than on an October evening in the Worcestershire countryside in 1898. Tired out from hours of teaching violin and writing music that would never make him famous, Edward Elgar began to play a tune that caught his wife's ear. Alice asked what it was. "Nothing," he replied, "but something might be made of it." And then, to prove—or perhaps, test—his point, he began to play with it. "Powell would have done this, or Nevinson would have looked at it like this," he commented as he went, drawing on the names of their friends. Alice said,

"Surely you are doing something that has never been done before!"

Alice wasn't quite right, in terms of historical fact—Schumann's *Carnaval*, for example, depicts a number of characters, real and imagined—but she obviously sensed that her husband had hit upon something important—not only to his own faltering career, but for music itself. And so what was begun "in a spirit of humor" was soon "continued in deep seriousness," as Elgar later recalled of the music that would make him famous, along with Powell, Nevinson, and a number of the composer's other friends. On October 24 he wrote to

COMPOSED

October 1898–February 19, 1899

FIRST PERFORMANCE

June 19, 1899, London. Hans Richter conducting

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE

January 3, 1902, Auditorium Theatre. Theodore Thomas conducting. U.S. premiere

CSO PERFORMANCES, EDWARD ELGAR CONDUCTING

April 5 and 6, 1907,
Orchestra Hall

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCE

November 18, 2003,
Orchestra Hall. David
Zinman conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

two flutes and piccolo, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons and contrabassoon, four horns, three

trumpets, three trombones and tuba, timpani, side drum, triangle, bass drum, cymbals, organ, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

29 minutes

CSO RECORDINGS

1974. Sir Georg Solti conducting. London

A 1986 performance (Nimrod variation only) with Sir Georg Solti conducting is included on *From the Archives*, vol. 21

August Jaeger, the closest of all those friends,

. . . I have sketched a set of Variations (orquestra) on an original theme: the Variations have amused me because I've labeled 'em with the nicknames of my particular friends—you are *Nimrod*. That is to say, I've written the variations each one to represent the mood of the “party”—I've liked to imagine the “party” writing the var: him (or her) self and have written what I think they wd. have written—if they were asses enough to compose—it's a quaint idea & the result is amusing to those behind the scenes & won't affect the hearer who “nose nuffin.”

The work went well. On November 1, Elgar played at least six variations for Dora Penny, now known as Dorabella, or variation 10. On January 5, Elgar wrote to Jaeger: “I say—those variations—I *like* 'em.” By February 22 he told Dorabella that the variations were done, “and yours is the most cheerful. . . . I *have* orchestrated you well.” The orchestration of the piece took the two weeks from February 5 to 19, 1899. Elgar then sent the score off to Hans Richter, the great German conductor known for championing both Wagner and Brahms. Elgar waited a long, nervous month for a response, but Richter recognized the quality of this music and agreed to give the premiere in London. For Elgar, already in his forties and

not yet a household name, even in England, Richter's advocacy was decisive.

The first performance was a great success for both Elgar and for British music. The critics recognized the work as a landmark, and although one was aggravated that the dedication “To my friends pictured within” didn't name names, he was at least honest enough to admit that the music stood handsomely on its own. The friends have long ago been identified, but a greater question still remains. At the time of the premiere, Elgar wrote:

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, even as in some late dramas—e.g., Maeterlinck's *L'intruse* and *Les sept princesses*—the chief character is never on the stage.

Those are words Elgar later came to regret, for the public's curiosity often overshadowed the music. Elgar himself only made matters worse by divulging that the “larger theme” fit in counterpoint with his original theme, by telling Arthur Troyte Griffith (variation 7) that the theme “is so well known that it is extraordinary that no one



Edward and Caroline Alice Elgar just after their marriage

has spotted it,” and by admonishing Dorabella that she, of all people, had not guessed it. Several melodies have been favored over the years, including “God Save the King,” “Rule, Britannia!,” and, most

often, “Auld lang syne,” but to date the *Enigma* still maintains its place in Elgar’s title. (Dorabella and her husband Richard Powell once asked Elgar outright about “Auld lang syne” and he denied it, but by

format, Elgar contributed his own comments on this circle of men and women in his life. Here, then, follows the portrait gallery, with some of Elgar’s remarks.

Theme. This is an original melody, as Elgar’s title boasts, born that October night in 1898 and without connections to anyone in the composer’s life. (It has been suggested that those important first four notes perfectly set the composer’s own name, but, as we shall see, Elgar saves himself for last.) It’s worth remembering, however, that when he wrote *The Music Makers* (an autobiographical, *Ein Heldenleben* kind of work) in 1912, he recalled this theme to represent the loneliness of the creative artist.

1. (C.A.E.) Caroline Alice Elgar was the composer’s wife. “The

variation,” Elgar writes, “is really a prolongation of the theme with what I wished to be romantic and delicate additions; those who knew C.A.E. will understand this reference to one whose life was a romantic and delicate inspira-



Hew David Stuart-Powell, Variation 2



Richard Baxter Townshend, Variation 3



William Meath Baker, Variation 4

then he was so tired of the whole mystery that many doubted the sincerity of his answer.)

For full descriptions of the “friends pictured within,” we are indebted to the invention of the piano roll; when the Aeolian Company later issued the *Enigma* Variations in this newfangled

tion.” She was his muse; after Alice died in 1920, Elgar never really worked again. The little triplet figure in the oboe and the bassoon at the very beginning mimics the whistle with which Elgar signaled Alice whenever he came home.

2. (H.D.S.-P.) Hew David Stuart-Powell played chamber

music with Elgar. “His characteristic diatonic run over the keys before beginning to play is here humorously travestied in the semiquaver [sixteenth note] passages; these should suggest a toccata, but chromatic beyond H.D.S.-P.’s liking.” (Their frequent partner was Basil Nevinson, variation 12.)

3. (R.B.T.) Richard Baxter Townshend, who regularly rode through the streets of Oxford on his bicycle with the bell constantly ringing, is here remembered for his “presentation of an old man in some amateur theatricals—the low voice flying off occasionally in ‘soprano’ timbre.” (Dorabella also recognized the bicycle bell in the pizzicato strings.)

4. (W.M.B.) William Meath Baker was “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.”

5. (R.P.A.) Richard Penrose Arnold was a son of Matthew Arnold and “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.” In the middle section we learn that “his serious conversation was continually broken up by whimsical and witty remarks.”

6. (Ysobel) Isabel Fitton was an amateur violinist. “The opening bar, a phrase made use of throughout the variation, is an ‘exercise’ for crossing strings—a difficulty for begin-



**Richard Penrose
Arnold, Variation 5**



**Isabel Fitton,
Variation 6**



**Arthur Troyte
Griffith, Variation 7**



**Winifred Norbury,
Variation 8**

ners; on this is built a pensive, and for a moment, romantic movement.”

7. (Troyte) Arthur Troyte Griffith, an architect, was one of Elgar’s closest friends. “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 in vain.”

8. (W.N.) Winifred Norbury lived at Sherridge, a country house, with her sister Florence. The music was “really suggested by an eighteenth-century house. The gracious personalities of the ladies are sedately shown”—especially Winifred’s characteristic laugh.



Alfred Jaeger,
Variation 9

9. (Nimrod) Nimrod is the “mighty hunter” named in Genesis 10; Alfred Jaeger (“Jaeger” is German for “hunter”) was Elgar’s greatest and dearest friend. That is apparent from this extraordinary music, which is about the strength of ties and the depth of human feelings. These forty-three bars of music have come to mean a great deal to many people; they are, for that reason, often played in memoriam, when common words fail and virtually all other music falls short. The variation records “a long summer evening talk,



Dora Penny,
Variation 10

when my friend discoursed eloquently on the slow movements of Beethoven.” The music hints at the slow movement of the *Pathétique* Sonata, though it reaches the more rarefied heights of Beethoven’s last



Dr. George R.
Sinclair and his dog
Dan, Variation 11

works. Dorabella remembered that Jaeger also spoke of the hardships Beethoven endured, and he urged Elgar not to give up. Elgar later wrote to him: “I have omitted your outside manner and have only seen the good lovable honest SOUL in the middle of you. The music’s not good enough: nevertheless it was an attempt of your E.E.” Jaeger died young, in 1909. Twenty years later Elgar wrote: “His place has been occupied but never filled.”

10. (Dorabella) Dora Penny, later Mrs. Richard Powell, and to the Elgars, always Dorabella, from Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*. Her variation, titled *Intermezzo*, is shaded throughout by “a dancelike lightness,” and delicately suggests the stammer with which she spoke in her youth.

11. (G.R.S.) Dr. George R. Sinclair was the organist of Herford Cathedral, though it’s his beloved bulldog Dan who carries the music, first falling down a steep bank into the River Wye, then paddling up stream to a safe landing. Anticipating the skeptics, Elgar writes “Dan” in bar five of the manuscript, where Dr. Sinclair’s dog barks reassuringly (low strings and winds, fortissimo).

12. (B.G.N.) Basil G. Nevinson was a fine cellist who regularly joined Elgar and Hew David Steuart-Powell (variation 2) in chamber music. The soaring cello melody 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.”

13. (***) The only enigma among the portraits: just asterisks in place of initials, and “Romanza” at the top of the page. The clarinet quoting from Mendelssohn’s *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* midway through points to Lady Mary Lygon, who supposedly was crossing the sea to Australia as Elgar wrote this music (she wasn’t). “The drums suggest the distant throb of a liner,” Elgar writes. Although Elgar eventually confirmed the attribution, it has never entirely satisfied a suspicious public. Dorabella claimed that in the composer’s mind, the asterisks stood for “My sweet Mary.”

14. (E.D.U.) Edu was Alice’s nickname for her husband. This is his self-portrait, written “at a

time when friends were dubious and generally discouraging as to



**Basil G. Nevinson,
Variation 12**



**Lady Mary Lygon,
Variation 13**

the composer’s musical future.” Alice and Jaeger, two who never lost their faith in him, make brief appearances. The music is forceful, even bold. It’s delivered with an unusual strength known best to late

TRACKING DOWN THE ENIGMA

In 1953 the *Saturday Review* sponsored a contest for the best solution to the identity of Elgar’s “enigma.” The top prizes (the composer’s daughter Carice Elgar Blake was one of the judges) were awarded to the Agnus Dei from Bach’s B minor mass, the trio “Una bella serenata” from Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*, the slow movement of Tchaikovsky’s *Pathétique* Symphony, and “God Save the Queen.” None, however, seemed particularly convincing and the search continued. In 1976 Theodore Van Houten proposed “Rule, Britannia!” which includes a phrase that’s nearly identical to the opening of the *Enigma* and

should have been obvious to Dora Penny, “of all people,” as Elgar remarked, because the British penny was engraved with the figure of Britannia. In 1984 Derek Hudson showed even more persuasively how a phrase of “Auld lang syne” fits Elgar’s theme and many of the variations.

In 1991, Joseph Cooper, a British pianist, proposed a new solution. He claimed he stumbled upon the answer thirty years ago at a performance of Mozart’s *Prague* Symphony in Royal Festival Hall in London, but chose to keep it a secret. As he followed a score during that long-ago concert, Mr. Cooper noticed, midway through

the slow movement, echoes of the opening of Elgar’s *Enigma* Variations. The two passages aren’t identical rhythmically—moreover, Mozart is in G major, Elgar in G minor—but they are strikingly similar. There are other connections: two weeks before Elgar invented his theme at the piano, he had heard the *Prague* Symphony. Mozart’s symphony also was the closing work on the concert of June 19, 1899, when the *Enigma* Variations were given their first performance. Although Elgar authority Jerrold Northrop Moore hailed Cooper’s solution, other scholars, Elgar lovers, and puzzle fanatics remain unconvinced.

bloomers, the defiance of an outsider intent on finding an audience, and the confidence of a man who has always wished to be more than another variation on a theme.

A parting word about the title. The work wasn't at first called *Enigma*. Elgar used the word for the first time in a letter to Jaeger written at the end of May 1899, three months after the score was finished. *Enigma* is written on the title page of the autograph

manuscript, but it's written in pencil and not by Elgar. When the Chicago Symphony introduced this music to the United States in 1902, the program page listed it only as "Variations, op. 36." ■

Phillip Huscher is the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra.