

ELGAR *Introduction and Allegro and Variations on an Original Theme 'Enigma'*

Elgar represented the Victorians' dream come true: at last an English composer to rival the Germans. But Elgar can also be viewed as a historical figure and his music as evidence of the mood of his times. Born into a middle class family in the music business, he grew up in musical surroundings even playing the violin in the orchestra at the Three Choirs Festival.

Elgar's music is full of the confidence of the prevailing mood of the time. The *Introduction and Allegro*, composed in 1905, is a delightfully pastoral string work, unusually scored for string quartet and orchestra which are combined and contrasted in the manner of the *concerto grosso*.

The *Variations on an Original Theme* is arguably Elgar's most often played work. In each movement Elgar depicted an unnamed friend but, from the initials given and other clues, we have been able to identify most of the people involved. However, although the 'enigma' of the theme has been the subject of much speculation, no definitive answer has been found. Premiered by Hans Richter in 1899 at St James's Hall in London, the *Enigma Variations* is typical of Elgar's music – a mixture of strength and sentimentality with beautiful tunes and great dollops of brass.

The fourteen variations are mostly short and descriptive of some of his friends' characteristics and mannerisms such as the laughter of Winifred Norbury in the eighth variation and the attractive stammer of Dora Penny in the tenth. The ninth, *Nimrod*, the longest and best known of the variations, represents a discussion about Beethoven between Elgar and his publisher, Alfred Jaeger. The eleventh variation portrays George Sinclair, organist of Hereford Cathedral, and in particular his bulldog, Dan, as the dog falls into the river Wye.

The initials on Elgar's original sketch and the presence of a quote from Mendelssohn's *Calm sea and prosperous voyage* in the thirteenth variation, seemed to indicate that it was dedicated to Lady Mary Lygon, a friend who was about to sail to Australia. On the final score, however, the initials were replaced by three asterisks and it has been suggested that it could be dedicated to Helen Weaver, to whom Elgar had once been engaged but who later emigrated to New Zealand. There is no doubt that enigma or not, Elgar succeeded in creating a work of music which can stand shoulder to shoulder with the best orchestral works of its time.

BRITTEN *Our Hunting Fathers*

Far from being a glorification of hunting for pleasure, Britten composed a celebration of the act of hunting in all its gory glory. Commissioned by Norfolk and Norwich Triennial Festival in 1936, it was Britten's first large work for orchestra and remains one of his most creative, savage and tender as well as more difficult pieces to perform. Hence its relatively rare appearances on the concert platform.

After the ominous minor chord of the opening, W.H. Auden's poem serves as a dark *Prologue*, full of premonitions in the text, wonderfully scored for voice in the form of recitative. In *Rats away!* the soprano seems to try to dodge the rats coming at her from every direction as she prays for salvation before exclaiming a rather relieved 'Amen!' at the end. *Messalina* is the name of a small child who has lost her pet monkey. A beautiful and tender vocal line provides a welcome respite after dealing with the disgusting rats. Thomas Ravenscroft's *Dance of Death*, its fourth movement, depicts a hunt with dogs and hawks, all called by their individual names by the soprano who guides them, coaxes them and sets them up for their prey. The jolly march which sets the party on its way leads into the sudden wild chase. At the end of the chase

it is the soprano who expresses the mood. A tired 'Whurret' is heard followed by the names of some of the dogs who come to receive praise from the hunter. Finally comes the victory flight of the hawk on the last high 'Whurret'. As it makes its soft landing on the hunter's glove, the orchestra imitates the soprano and closes the song. The final movement is also an *Epilogue* in the form of a recitative as in the beginning. Quietly, like an animal integrating into the thickest forest, the music loses itself among the foliage.

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PROLOGUE

They are our past and our future; the poles between which our desire unceasingly is discharged.

A desire in which love and hatred so perfectly oppose themselves, that we cannot voluntarily move, but await the extraordinary compulsion of the deluge and the earthquake.

Their finish has inspired the limits of all arts and ascetic movements.

Their affections and indifferences have been a guide to all reformers and tyrants.

Their appearances in our dreams of machinery have brought a vision of nude and fabulous epochs.

O pride so hostile to our charity.

But what their pride has retained we may by charity more generously recover.

MESSALINA

Ay me, alas, heigh ho, heigh ho!
Thus doth Messalina go
Up and down the house a-crying,
For her monkey lies a-dying.
Death, thou art too cruel
To bereave her of her jewel;
Or to make a seizure
Of her only treasure.
If her monkey die
She will sit and cry:
Fie, fie, fie, fie, fie!

DANCE OF DEATH *Hawking for the Partridge*

Whurret!	Duty	Beauty
	Quando	Timble
	Travel	Trover
	Jew	Damsel

Hey dogs hey! Ware haunt hey!

Sith sickles and the shearing scythe
Hath shorn the fields of late,
Now shall our hawks and we be blithe,
Dame Partridge ware your pate!
Our murdering kites
In all their flights
Will seld or never miss
To truss you ever and make your bale our bliss.

Whurret!	Wanton	Sugar	Mistress
	Sempster	Faver	Minx
	Callis	Dover	Sant
	Dancer	Jerker	Quoy

Whurret!	Tricker	Crafty	Minion
	Dido	Civil	Lemmon
	Cherry	Carver	Courtier
	Stately	Ruler	German let fly!

O well flown, eager kite, mark!
We falconers thus make sullen kites
Yield pleasure fit for kings,
And sport with them in those delights,
And oft in other things.

EPILOGUE

Our hunting fathers told the story
Of the sadness of the creatures,
Pitied the limits and the lack
Set in their finished features;
Saw in the lion's intolerant look,
Behind the quarry's dying glare,
Love raging for the personal glory
That reason's gift would add,
The liberal appetite and power,
The rightness of a god.

Who nurtured in that fine tradition
Predicted the result,
Guessed love by nature suited to
The intricate ways of guilt;
That human company could so
His southern gestures modify
And make it his mature ambition
To think no thought but ours,
To hunger, work illegally,
And be anonymous?

*W.H. Auden
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A3 Studios

BERNARD HAITINK *conductor*

Bernard Haitink has enjoyed a long and distinguished career as an orchestral and operatic conductor. Amongst the major positions he has held are Chief Conductor and latterly Honorary Conductor of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra, Principal Conductor of the London Philharmonic Orchestra, Music Director of the European Union Youth Orchestra, Chief Conductor and Music Director of the Sächsische Staatskapelle Dresden, Music Director of Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Music Director of The Royal Opera, Covent Garden.

He is also a regular guest with the world's leading orchestras and opera companies, and his discography includes some of the finest recordings in the world. His CDs of the symphonies of Mahler, Bruckner and Beethoven with the Concertgebouw, and of Brahms and Bruckner with the Vienna Philharmonic have been widely acclaimed. Equally renowned are his opera recordings which have included

Peter Grimes and *Don Carlos* with The Royal Opera; *Don Giovanni*, *Così fan tutte* and *Figaro* with Glyndebourne; and the complete *Ring* cycle with the Bayerische Rundfunk. Those with the London Philharmonic Orchestra have included works by Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Elgar and Vaughan Williams.

Bernard Haitink has received many awards, most notably an Honorary KBE in 1977, the Erasmus Prize in 1991, a House Order of Orange-Nassau in 1999 and the Companion of Honour in 2002.



Clive Barda

HEATHER HARPER *soprano*

Although she shot to worldwide attention in 1962 taking the soprano part in the world première of Britten's *War Requiem* at two weeks' notice, Heather Harper had already been known to television audiences for her polished *Traviata* broadcast by the BBC. She sang much opera, but never neglected her concert work on which she concentrated with fierce intensity and exceptional musicianship.

No other British singer ever covered as much repertoire and at such a high level of performance as she did. A Strauss specialist, she sang roles ranging from The Empress in Strauss's *Die Frau ohne Schatten* and Elsa in Wagner's *Lohengrin* with which she made her debut at the Bayreuth Festival, to a gutsy Countess in Mozart's *The Marriage of Figaro* at New York's Met. She also championed modern music and many notable composers dedicated pieces to her. Michael Tippett wrote the role of Nadia in his last opera, *The Icebreak* for her, and the solo soprano part in his third symphony. It is her close association with Britten however, which will be remembered most warmly in this country, as she was a member of the trusted small group of singers who worked regularly at the Aldeburgh Festival.

LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has long established a high reputation for its versatility and artistic excellence. These are evident from its performances in the concert hall and opera house, its many award-winning recordings, its trail-blazing international tours and its pioneering education work.

Kurt Masur has been the Orchestra's Principal Conductor since September 2000, extending the line of distinguished conductors who have held positions with the Orchestra since its foundation in 1932 by Sir Thomas Beecham. These have included Sir Adrian Boult, Sir John Pritchard, Bernard Haitink, Sir Georg Solti, Klaus Tennstedt and Franz Welser-Möst. Vladimir Jurowski was appointed the Orchestra's Principal Guest Conductor in March 2003.

The London Philharmonic Orchestra has been resident symphony orchestra at the Royal Festival Hall since 1992 and there it presents its main series of concerts between September and May each year. In summer, the Orchestra moves to Sussex where it has been the resident symphony orchestra at Glyndebourne Festival Opera for over 40 years. The Orchestra also performs at venues around the UK and has made numerous tours to America, Europe and Japan, and visited India, Hong Kong, China, Australia and South Africa.

01 **15:24** **EDWARD ELGAR 1857 – 1934**
Introduction and Allegro for string quartet and string orchestra, Op.47 (1904 – 1905)

27:28 **BENJAMIN BRITTEN 1913 – 1976**
Our Hunting Fathers Op.8 (1936) (Words by W.H. Auden)
02 2:16 Prologue
03 4:10 Rats Away!
04 6:35 Messalina
05 6:28 Dance of Death
06 7:58 Epilogue and Funeral March

32:08 **EDWARD ELGAR 1857 – 1934**
Variations on an Original Theme, 'Enigma', for orchestra Op.36 (1898 – 1899)
07 1:27 1a Theme
08 1:53 1b CAE
09 0:47 HDS-P
10 1:28 RBT
11 0:32 WMB
12 2:03 RPA
13 1:28 Ysobel
14 0:58 Troyte
15 2:01 WN
16 4:13 Nimrod
17 2:43 Dorabella
18 0:59 GRS
19 2:44 BGN
20 3:06 ***
21 5:39 EDU
75:18

HEATHER HARPER *soprano*
BERNARD HAITINK *conductor*
LONDON PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA
David Nolan *leader*