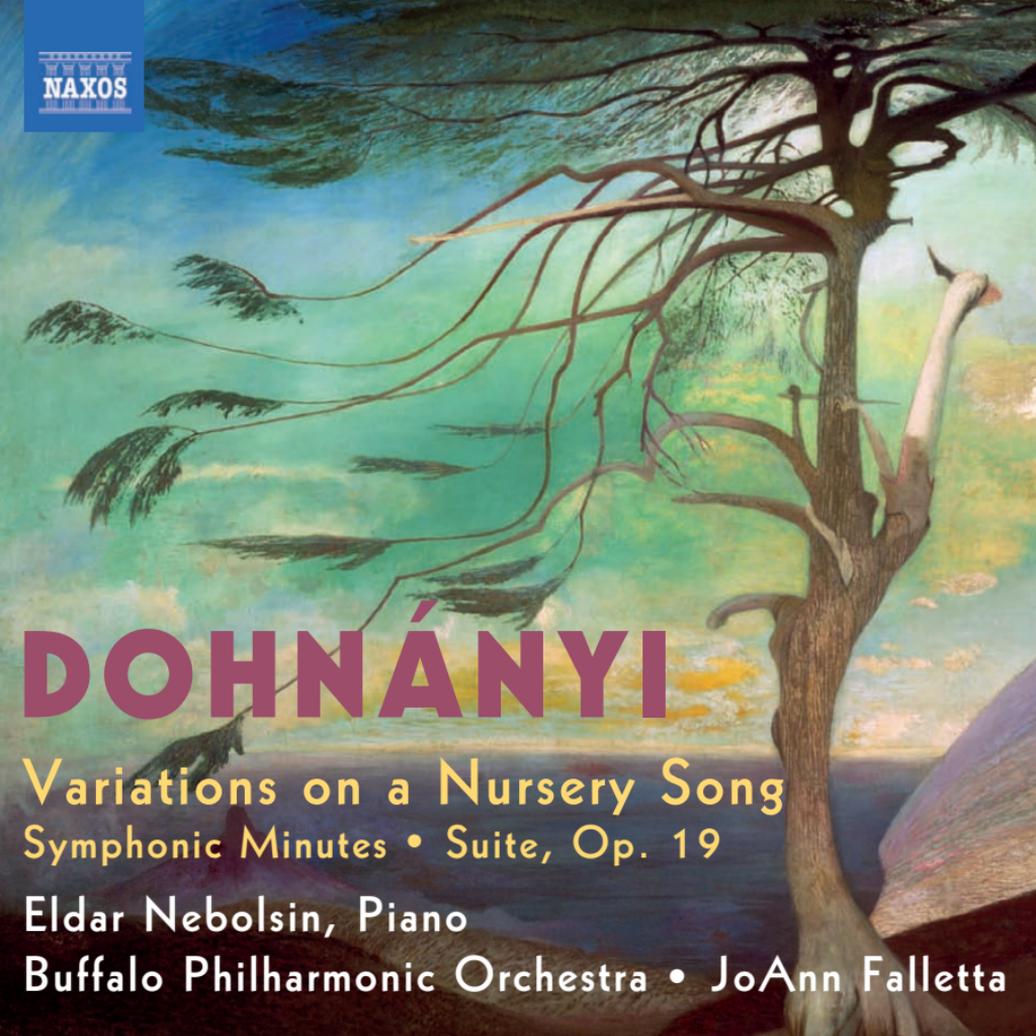


The NAXOS logo is located in the top left corner, featuring the word "NAXOS" in white capital letters on a blue rectangular background. Above the text are several horizontal lines of varying lengths, resembling a musical staff or a barcode.

NAXOS

The background of the cover is an artistic painting. It depicts a large, gnarled tree with many thin, bare branches that sweep across the sky. The sky is a mix of teal, green, and blue, suggesting a bright, overcast day. In the lower right, a stork is perched on a branch, its long neck extended upwards. The overall style is impressionistic and somewhat surreal.

# DOHNÁNYI

Variations on a Nursery Song  
Symphonic Minutes • Suite, Op. 19

Eldar Nebolsin, Piano

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra • JoAnn Falletta

Ernő  
**DOHNÁNYI**  
(1877-1960)

	<b>Symphonic Minutes, Op. 36</b>	<b>14:58</b>
1	I. Capriccio: Vivacissimo possibile	2:31
2	II. Rapsodia: Andante	3:50
3	III. Scherzo: Allegro vivace	1:40
4	IV. Tema con variazioni: Andante poco moto	4:28
5	V. Rondo: Presto	2:30
	<b>Variations on a Nursery Song, Op. 25</b>	<b>24:24</b>
6	Introduction: Maestoso –	4:01
7	Theme: Allegro –	1:00
8	Variation 1: Poco più mosso –	0:37
9	Variation 2: Risoluto –	0:34
10	Variation 3: L'istesso tempo –	1:32
11	Variation 4: Molto meno mosso (Allegretto moderato) –	1:05
12	Variation 5: Più mosso –	1:01
13	Variation 6: Ancora più mosso (Allegro) –	0:42
14	Variation 7: Walzer: Tempo giusto –	2:06
15	Variation 8: Alla marcia (Allegro moderato) –	1:25
16	Variation 9: Presto (Andante rubato) –	1:47
17	Variation 10: Passacaglia (Adagio non troppo) –	3:53
18	Variation 11: Choral: Maestoso –	1:30
19	Finale fugato: Allegro vivace	3:09
	<b>Suite in F sharp minor, Op. 19</b>	<b>31:18</b>
20	I. Andante con variazioni	1:53
21	Variation 1: Più animato	1:26
22	Variation 2: Animato (Molto più allegro)	1:27
23	Variation 3: Andante tranquillo	1:48
24	Variation 4: Allegro	1:12
25	Variation 5: Vivace	1:05
26	Variation 6: Adagio	3:32
27	II. Scherzo: Allegretto vivace	4:14
28	III. Romanza: Andante poco moto	5:58
29	IV. Rondo: Allegro vivace	7:43

## Ernő Dohnányi (1877-1960): Symphonic Minutes, Op. 36

### Variations on a Nursery Song, Op. 25 • Suite in F sharp minor, Op. 19

The work of the Hungarian composer Ernő Dohnányi has in recent years been unduly neglected, although at one time his *Variations on a Nursery Song* for piano and orchestra, at least, formed a regular element in concert programmes. In part this neglect was due to political circumstances and in part to changing musical fashions in which the overt nationalism of a younger generation of Hungarian composers was favoured, rather than the German late Romanticism that characterized Dohnányi's work. While Bartók and Kodály had recourse to Hungarian folk-music as a source of inspiration, often expressed, in the case of the former, with a certain astringency, Dohnányi belonged much more to the German tradition in which he had largely been trained.

Ernő Dohnányi was born in 1877 in Poszony (the modern Slovakian capital, Bratislava). His father, an amateur musician, taught in Poszony at the Catholic Gymnasium, where Bartók's widowed mother was to be employed and where Dohnányi and Bartók were both pupils. Four years the latter's senior, Dohnányi had organ lessons and instruction in music theory from Karl Forstner, organist at the Catholic cathedral, and began to enjoy early and precocious success. In 1894, rather than study in Vienna, as might have been expected, he chose instead to become a student at the Budapest Music Academy. There he was a piano pupil of István Thomán, a former pupil of Liszt and principal piano teacher at the Academy, where his composition teacher was the German composer Hans Koessler, a cousin of Max Reger and admirer of Brahms. Bartók was to study under the same teachers, but Dohnányi, while sharing Bartók's later prowess as a pianist, was more strongly influenced by the German school of composition.

In 1897 Dohnányi prepared for his début as a pianist in Berlin by brief study with Eugen d'Albert. He went on to give concerts in Germany and Austria, with an invitation to London from Hans Richter and a triumphant performance of Beethoven's *Fourth Piano*

*Concerto*. Thereafter he embarked on concert tours throughout Europe, in Russia and in the United States, establishing himself as a virtuoso to equal Liszt. In 1895 he had published his *Piano Quintet in C minor, Op. 1*, a work that Brahms declared he could not have done better himself; in 1896 he won the Royal Millennium Prize for his *Symphony in F major and Zrinyi*, and in 1899 his *Piano Concerto, Op. 5*, won the Bösendorfer Prize in Vienna. In 1905 he was invited by Joachim to join the staff of the Berlin Musikhochschule, where he taught until 1915, when, with the Great War now under way, he returned to Hungary, teaching at the Budapest Music Academy, giving encouragement to a younger generation of Hungarian composers, and doing much to reform systems of musical instruction in the country. In 1918 he became Principal Conductor of the Budapest Philharmonic Orchestra and President of the Philharmonic Society, holding the latter position until 1944. He was briefly director of the Hungarian National Music High School in the newly established republic after 1918, but was dismissed in favour of Hubay by the right-wing Horthy government that soon took power.

Dohnányi's career as a conductor and pianist continued in Hungary and abroad, particularly in the United States, where, from 1925 to 1927 he served as Principal Conductor of the New York State Symphony Orchestra. In 1928 he returned to Hungary to teach at the Royal Franz Liszt Music School, of which he was to become director from 1934 until his resignation, for political reasons, in 1944. In 1931 he was appointed Music Director of Hungarian Radio. After his resignation in 1944 Dohnányi moved to Austria, a step that brought later criticism from his opponents and affected his post-war concert career. While he had been strongly against the antisemitic policies introduced into Hungary through German intervention, he had no sympathy with the left-wing forces that were to come to power in Hungary after the war. In 1948 he moved to England and then to Argentina, and finally to the United

States, undertaking various teaching duties in the last two countries. He died in New York in 1960 during a recording session, at a time when his reputation was starting to recover from the political attacks that had been made on him in the aftermath of the war.

Dohnányi wrote his orchestral *Symphonic Minutes*, Op. 36, in 1933 and it was published two years later, with a dedication to the Budapest Philharmonic Society. It is scored for an orchestra that includes a colourful percussion section of triangle, snare drum, suspended cymbal, bass drum, glockenspiel and celesta. The first movement, *Capriccio*, explores orchestral virtuosity in music of masterly brilliance. The following *Rapsodia* starts with a rhapsodic figure from the cor anglais over sustained notes for the strings and bass clarinet. The music moves on to a climax, as dawn seems to break, with the tranquillity of the scene finally restored. The trombones set the mood of the *Scherzo*, with the strings offering brief moments of contrast. The cor anglais introduces the seventeenth-century theme of the fourth movement, followed by seven short variations, the last bringing back again the cor anglais with interjections from the celesta. The last movement is in virtually perpetual motion, increasing in speed as it nears its sparkling conclusion.

The *Variations on a Nursery Song* for piano and orchestra, written in 1914, aims both to amuse and, in its allusions, to provoke. Scored for a large orchestra, it opens with an imposingly Wagnerian and portentous *Introduction*, in which the horns presage the coming theme and trumpets hint at Mahler. The mountains in labour<sup>1</sup> produce the simple C major theme, *Ah, vous dirai-je, Maman*, familiar in English-speaking countries as *Twinkle, twinkle, little star*, which offers a distinct contrast when it is presented by the pianist, unadorned and lightly accompanied by plucked strings and linked to the virtuoso first variation by a bassoon. The second variation is introduced by the horns and the third offers a suaver mood. The fourth variation gives a version of the theme at first to two bassoons and double bassoon, succeeded by the piccolo and two flutes, while the piano comments on the proceedings. The sonorities of the fifth

variation suggest a musical clock, with the right hand of the pianist playing in a high register and a harp adding its own resonance. The following variation offers a piano part of great brilliance, ending in a glissando and leading to a waltz that breathes the spirit of Vienna and, at times, of Tchaikovsky. The eighth variation, in the style of a march, is introduced by bassoons, over the sound of drums, soon joined by other woodwind instruments. This leads to a ninth version of the material that brings a sorcerer's apprentice version of the theme from the bassoon in a sinister C minor, a variation that finds room for a xylophone and a contribution from the piccolo in skilfully handled scoring. The traditional variation form of the *Passacaglia* is treated with some freedom and the original key of C major is restored for the eleventh variation, a *Choral*, which strays from Brahms to Debussy. The work ends with a fugal finale to which the piano adds its own brilliance. A *fortissimo* chord is followed by the little theme, shared between the piano and, in the orchestra, a piccolo and a bassoon, but this soon gives way to a scintillating conclusion to a work that combines wit in its musical allusions and orchestral colour with demands for the pianistic virtuosity of a Rachmaninov that the composer was able to meet in his own performances.

Dohnányi wrote his *Suite in F sharp minor* in 1908 and 1909. The first movement, *Andante con variazioni*, has the theme initially entrusted to the woodwind, then taken up by the strings. The first variation, marked *Più animato*, opens with a syncopated figure against which clarinet and then flute weave their own arabesques. The second variation, *Animato (Molto più allegro)*, after the timpani call to attention, allows the four horns immediate prominence, followed by a third variation, marked *Andante tranquillo* and in F sharp major, with melodic interest centred first on the cellos. The minor key returns in the *Allegro* fourth variation, with its cor anglais melody over the semiquaver figuration of divided violins and accompanying wind instruments. The music swells to a climax, then diminishes before the *Vivace* fifth variation, with its opening version of the material given to the bassoons. The last variation, an

*Adagio*, turns again to the major key in music of Straussian intensity. The second movement, an A minor *Scherzo*, begins with flutes and clarinets over a repeated timpani accompaniment before the strings intervene. This is contrasted with the suaver central A major trio section, over the continuing bariolage of violas and cellos. The mood is broken by the timpani and the return of the *Scherzo*. The third movement, an F major *Romanza*, marked *Andante poco moto*, has its melody from the oboe, accompanied by plucked strings, before the melodic interest is transferred to a solo cello, and then, with a shift of key, to the cor anglais, with its oriental timbre. The original key returns and there is a final passage that calls for solo violin, solo viola and

solo cello. The *Rondo* brings all the brilliance and subtlety of orchestration and contrast that we now expect, with full use of a percussion section that includes triangle, cymbals, bass drum and castanets. As the movement draws to a close the theme of the opening *Andante* is heard again, before a triumphant A major conclusion.

**Keith Anderson**

<sup>1</sup> An allusion to *Montes parturient, nascetur ridiculus mus* / The mountains will be in labour and bring forth a ridiculous mouse (*Ars Poetica*, Horace)

## Eldar Nebolsin



Photo: Mikhail Vaneev/Waniewski

Born in Uzbekistan in 1974, Eldar Nebolsin was awarded the Sviatoslav Richter Prize in the 2005 1st edition of the International Piano Competition, Moscow. A former student of renowned Russian pianist Dmitri Bashkurov, he launched his international career with his triumph at the Eleventh Santander International Piano Competition in 1992. He has appeared with leading orchestras and distinguished conductors throughout Europe, in the United States and Canada, the Far East and Australia, and has also given recitals in major concert venues there. In addition to his solo piano career, he collaborates with some of the world's most renowned chamber musicians. Eldar Nebolsin's debut album of Rachmaninov's *Preludes Opp. 23 and 32* (Naxos 8.570327) was described by *Classictoday.com* as "close to stunning ... Nebolsin's is a truly exceptional excursion into the music of Rachmaninov", while his second album, featuring *Liszt Piano Concertos Nos. 1 and 2* and *Totentanz* with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Vasily Petrenko (Naxos 8.570517) received the following accolade from *American Record Guide*: "There is sheer pyrotechnic

display on offer here that rivals the best on my shelf... He commands a formidable dynamic range; yet he knows when to caress the keys... (he) may well be the Richter of his generation".

[www.eldarnebolsin.com](http://www.eldarnebolsin.com)

## Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra



Photo: Erid Bloch

The Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra was founded in 1935 and makes its home in Kleinhans Music Hall, a National Historic Landmark with an international reputation as one of the greatest concert halls in the United States. Through the decades the orchestra has grown in stature under a number of distinguished conductors including William Steinberg, Joseph Krips, Lukas Foss, Michael Tilson Thomas, Julius Rudel, Semyon Bychkov, and Maximiano Valdés. As Buffalo's cultural ambassador, the BPO has performed across the United States, Canada and Europe, including concerts at Lincoln Center, Kennedy Center, Boston's Symphony Hall, San Francisco's Davies Hall and 22 appearances in Carnegie Hall.

The orchestra's European tour included two sold-out performances in Vienna's Musikverein, and concerts in Milan, Geneva, Zurich and Frankfurt, among other venues. The BPO performs 120 concerts annually and is heard by millions on radio broadcasts across the United States and beyond on American Public Media's *Performance Today*.

## JoAnn Falletta



Photo: Mark Dellas

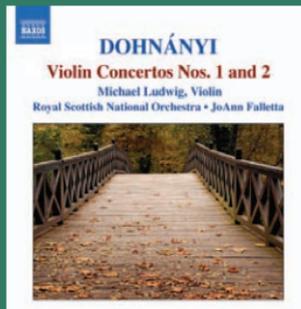
Recipient of the Seaver/National Endowment for the Arts Conductors Award, winner of the Stokowski Competition, and the Toscanini, Ditson and Bruno Walter conducting awards, JoAnn Falletta has also received ten awards from the American Society of Composers and Publishers (ASCAP) and serves on the U.S. National Council on the Arts. A champion of American music, she has presented over four hundred works by American composers including over eighty world premières. She currently serves as music director of both the Buffalo Philharmonic and the Virginia Symphony and guest conducts many of the world's great symphony orchestras, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Dallas Symphony, Rotterdam Philharmonic, London Symphony Orchestra, the Montreal Symphony Orchestra and the National Symphony. Her Naxos recordings include the double Grammy Award winning disc of works by John Corigliano (8.559331) and GRAMMY® nominated discs of works of Kenneth Fuchs, Franz Schubert, and Ottorino Respighi.

[www.joannfalletta.com](http://www.joannfalletta.com)

## Also available



8.557711



8.570833



8.572041



8.572051

Ernő Dohnányi had a long career as an important composer, pianist and teacher. Deeply indebted to the Germanic Romantic tradition, the works on this disc showcase his love of scintillating orchestral tone-colour – notably of brass, wind and percussion – and his fascination with Classical forms such as the variation. His *Variations on a Nursery Song* traverses several musical styles in a *tour de force* of good-humoured virtuosity, while the *Symphonic Minutes* and the *Suite in F sharp minor* cultivate a lush, romantic mood with characteristic dashes of suavity.

Ernő  
**DOHNÁNYI**

(1877-1960)

**Variations on a Nursery Song**

- 1-5** Symphonic Minutes,  
Op. 36 (1933) **14:58**
- 6-19** Variations on a Nursery Song,  
Op. 25 (1914)\* **24:24**
- 20-29** Suite in F sharp minor,  
Op. 19 (1908-09) **30:18**

**Eldar Nebolsin, Piano\***

**Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra • JoAnn Falletta**

This Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra recording is made possible  
by generous support from Michael and Roberta Joseph

A detailed track list can be found on page 2 of the booklet

Recorded at Kleinhans Music Hall, Buffalo, New York, USA, from 31st October  
to 2nd November, 2008 (tracks 1-5 and 20-29), and on 6th and 7th February, 2009 (tracks 6-19)  
Produced and engineered by Tim Handley • Publishers: Boosey & Hawkes Music Publishers, Inc.  
(tracks 1-5); Edwin F. Kalmus & Co, Inc. (tracks 6-29) • Booklet notes: Keith Anderson  
Cover: *The Solitary Cedar* by Tivadar Kosztká Csontváry (1853-1919)  
(Csontváry Museum, Pecs, Hungary / The Bridgeman Art Library)



8.572303

DDD

Playing Time  
**69:39**



© & © 2010  
Naxos Rights International Ltd.  
Booklet notes in English  
Made in Germany  
[www.naxos.com](http://www.naxos.com)