



The
**Rhondda
Symphony
Orchestra**

April 6th Ebrill
2019

7pm

Bethel Baptist
Church Centre
Heol Miskin
Pontyclun



Edward Elgar's

Enigma Variations



Gioachino Rossini - The Barber of Seville Overture

W.A. Mozart - Concerto for Flute, Harp & Orchestra

(Soloists - RSO Young Musician winners 2017 and 2018)



www.facebook.com/RhonddaSymphonyOrchestra



[@RhonddaSymph](https://twitter.com/RhonddaSymph)



RhonddaSymph@yahoo.co.uk



rhonddasymphonyorchestra.co.uk

Friends of the Rhondda Symphony Orchestra

Special thanks go to the Friends of the RSO whose contributions help to subsidise student members of the orchestra and to secure its future development. If you would like to find out more about how to become a Friend of the RSO, please talk to a member of the orchestra or visit our website.

Cyfeillion Cerddorfa Symffoni'r Rhondda

Dymunwn ddiolch o galon i Gyfeillion y Gerddorfa sydd gyda'u cyfraniadau, yn helpu i roi cymhorthdal i fyfyrwyr sy'n aelodau o'r Gerddorfa a sicrhau ei ddatblygiad i'r dyfodol. gwerthu o dan Gyfyngiad. Os hoffech ragor o wybodaeth ynglŷn â sut i ddod yn Gyfaill o'r Gerddorfa, ewch i gael sgwrs ag aelod o'r gerddorfa neu ewch i'n gwefan.

Friends of the RSO/ Cyfeillion Cerddorfa Symffoni'r Rhondda:

S Haydn Davies

R Griffiths

N Griffiths

M L James

J James

B John

D John

H Jones

N Murray



The Rhondda Symphony Orchestra

The Rhondda Symphony Orchestra was formed in Tonypany in 1968 by our now-President Jeff Lloyd and gave its first concert in 1970. We are therefore probably the oldest amateur orchestra in Wales and today we draw musicians from across South East Wales. We rehearse weekly at Y Pant School, Pontyclun, and perform three or four concerts each year, in venues across South Wales, with a broad repertoire from classical to jazz. RSO has a playing strength of about sixty, with our members ranging from their teens to their eighties; some are keen amateurs, some teach music and some are semi- or ex-professionals, but we all share the same passion - bringing live performance of the world's greatest music to our local communities.



Cerddorfa Symffoni'r Rhondda

Ffurfiwyd Cerddorfa Symffoni'r Rhondda yn Nhonypany yn 1968 gan ein Llywydd presennol, Jeff Lloyd a chyflwynodd ei chyngerdd cyntaf ym 1970. Felly, rydym yn fwy na thebyg y gerddorfa amatur hynaf yng Nghymru. Heddiw rydym yn denu cerddorion o ar hyd De ddwyrain Cymru. Rydym yn ymarfer yn wythnosol yn Ysgol y Pant, Pont-y-clun, ac yn perfformio tair neu bedair o gyngherddau'r flwyddyn, mewn lleoliadau ledled y de, gyda repertoire eang o'r clasurol i jazz. Mae tua 60 o aelodau gydag ystod oedran o bobl ifainc yn eu harddegau i aelodau yn eu hwythdegau. Mae rhai yn amaturiaid awyddus, rhai yn athrawon sy'n dysgu cerddoriaeth a rhai yn lled-neu gyn-weithwyr proffesiynol. Ond yr un yw'r angerdd - dod â pherfformiad byw o gerddoriaeth fwyaf y byd i'n cymunedau lleol.

Edward John - Musical Director



Edward John was born in Swansea and educated at Olchfa Comprehensive School and Cardiff University. He presently teaches brass with Rhondda Cynon Taf Music Service and works with trainee student music teachers at Cardiff Metropolitan University.

As a trumpet player, he was taught by Brian Buckley, and progressed through the West Glamorgan County Youth system, culminating in becoming a member of the National Youth Orchestra of Wales and the first ever principal cornet of the National Youth Brass Band of Wales. He was also a finalist in the TSB Welsh Young Musician of the Year. Edward has since played with all the major amateur orchestras in South Wales, as well as the BBC National Orchestra of Wales and the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra.

As a conductor, he has enjoyed a huge range of experiences over many years. He has directed the Glamorgan Chamber Orchestra and Neath Opera Group at Craig-y-Nos, as well as musicals for Newport Venture Players, Carmarthen Youth Opera and his own school. He has had the unique experience of conducting performances of Bernstein's West Side Story for all three of these companies. He has also conducted Swansea Philharmonic Choir in performances of Britten's War Requiem and Carl Orff's Carmina Burana.

Edward has played concerti with RSO in 2000 and 2016 and has been a member of the orchestra for many years before taking up the baton as the orchestra's conductor. Recent programmes have included Beethoven's 3rd and 5th Symphonies, Stravinsky's Firebird and Holst's The Planets.



Ganwyd Edward John yn Abertawe, cafodd ei addysg yn Ysgol Gyfun Olchfa a Phrifysgol Caerdydd. Mae wrthi'n dysgu offerynnau pres gyda Gwasanaeth Cerdd Rhondda Cynon Taf ac yn gweithio gydag athrawon y dyfodol ym Mhrifysgol Fetroplitan Caerdydd.

Brian Buckley oedd ei athro trwmiped, fe gynyddodd drwy system Ieuenctid Sir Forgannwg, a mynd yn aelod o Gerddorfa Ieuenctid Cenedlaethol Cymru, a phrif gornedwr Band Pres Ieuenctid Cenedlaethol Cymru. Roedd hefyd yn derfynwr yng nghystadleuaeth Cerddor Ifanc Cymreig y Flwyddyn TSB. Mae Edward wedi perfformio gyda holl brif gerddorfeydd amaturaid de Cymru, yn ogystal â Cherddorfa Genedlaethol Gymreig y BBC a Cherddorfa Ffilharmonig Lerpwl.

Fel arweinydd, mae wedi mwynhau llawer o brofiadau amrywiol dros nifer o flynyddoedd. Roedd yn gyfarwyddwr ar Gerddorfa Siambr Morgannwg a Grŵp Opera Nedd yng Nghraig-y-Nos, yn ogystal â sioeau cerdd gyda Chwaraewyr Menter Casnewydd, Opera Ieuenctid Caerfyrddin, a'i ysgol ei hun. Cafodd y profiad unigryw o arwain perfformiadau o West Side Story gan Bernstein i'r tri chwmni hwn. Mae hefyd wedi arwain Côr Ffilharmonig Abertawe wrth iddyn nhw berfformio Offeren Rhyfel Britten, a Carmina Burana gan Carl Orff.

Perfformiodd Edward concerti gyda ChSRh yn 2000 a 2016, ac mae wedi bod yn aelod o'r gerddorfa am sawl blwyddyn cyn derbyn y baton a mynd yn arweinydd. Mae rhaglenni diweddar wedi cynnwys 3ydd a 5ed Symffoni Beethoven, Firebird gan Stravinsky, a'r Planedau gan Holst.

Rebecca Sian Goss - Leader

Rebecca Sian Goss, began violin at aged 10 and made swift progress while having lessons with Wendy Jenkins and Mansel Hughes in West Glamorgan. At age 14 she started having lessons with Simon Weinmann of the BBC National Orchestra of Wales. Under his expert tuition Becci was accepted into the National Youth Orchestra of Wales as a 1st violinist and was awarded a music scholarship to study 'A' levels at Repton School in Derbyshire. Whilst at Repton School, Becci gained extensive solo, chamber and orchestral experience, leading the school orchestra, performing several concerti, also having a master class with Kenneth Sillito.



Becci then studied music at Goldsmiths' College, University of London. In her final year she was co-leader of the University of London Orchestra under the direction of Mark Shanahan, and Leader of the Goldsmiths' College Symphony Orchestra for the final concert under the baton of Edward Gregson

A few years later Becci completed her teacher training and has been a peripatetic upper strings teacher in Bridgend County since 1999 (except for a few years' living in America). She has regularly tutored in various County Youth Orchestras and Ensembles and whilst overseas, she volunteered at local schools assisting in their Strings Programmes.

Becci chose to put orchestral playing on hold whilst raising her two children, but has returned to it in more recent years. She became a member of RSO in 2015 and was honoured to be invited to lead the orchestra in 2016.



Dechreuodd Rebecca Sian Goss, chwarae'r feiolin pan yn 10 oed ac fe wnaeth ddysgu'n gyflym iawn wrth gael gwersi gyda Wendy Jenkins a Mansel Hughes yng Ngorllewin Morgannwg. Yn 14 oed dechreuodd gael gwersi gyda Simon Weinmann o Gerddorfa Genedlaethol Gymreig y BBC. O dan ei hyfforddiant arbenigol derbyniwyd Becci i Gerddorfa Ieuencid Cenedlaethol Cymru fel y feiolinydd 1af a derbyniodd ysgoloriaeth cerddoriaeth i astudio pynciau lefel uwch yn Ysgol Repton yn Swydd Derby.

Tra yn Ysgol Repton, cafodd Becci brofiad helaeth fel unawdydd, profiad o chwarae mewn siambr a cherddorfa. Cafodd gyfle i arwain cerddorfa'r ysgol, perfformio sawl concerto, a hefyd cael dosbarth meistr gyda Kenneth Sillito.

Aeth Becci i astudio cerddoriaeth yng Ngholeg Goldsmiths, Prifysgol Llundain. Yn ei flwyddyn olaf roedd yn gyd-flaenwr Cerddorfa Prifysgol Llundain o dan arweiniad Mark Shanahan, ac Blaenwr Cerddorfa Symffoni Coleg Goldsmith ar gyfer y cyngerdd olaf dan arweiniad Edward Gregson.

Ychydig o flynyddoedd yn ddiweddarach cwblhaodd Becci ei hyfforddiant athrawon ac mae bellach yn athro peripatetig llinynnau yn Sir Penybont-ar-Ogwr ers 1999 (heblaw am rai blynyddoedd lle'r roedd yn byw yn America). Mae'n tiwtora yn rheolaidd mewn cerddorfeydd ieuencid sirol ac ensembles amrywiol a tra roedd dramor, gwirfoddolodd mewn ysgolion lleol gan eu cynorthwyo gyda'u rhaglenni llinynnau.

Dewisodd Becci gael hoe fach o'r chwarae cerddorfaol er mwyn codi ei dau blentyn, ond mae wedi dychwelyd i'r chwarae yn y blynyddoedd diwethaf. Daeth yn aelod o Gerddorfa Symffoni'r Rhondda yn 2015 a chafodd y fraint o gael ei gwahodd i fod yn flaenwr y gerddorfa yn 2016.



Aisha Palmer - Harp

Aisha currently attends Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni where she is studying A Level Music, Maths, Biology and Chemistry. She also attends the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama Junior department taking Guitar, Harp and Piano. Aisha has been awarded and accepted for a scholarship at the Royal Academy of Music in London where she intends to pursue her musical career.

Aisha has won a number of competitions including the RSO Young Musician of the Valleys', after which she became a dedicated member of the Rhondda Symphony Orchestra. Aisha has also been awarded the Overall Festival Winner for the South Glamorgan Festival and won both the Eisteddfod Urdd and Eisteddfod Genedlaethol.

In 2018, Aisha performed for Prince Harry and Megan Markle when they attended Cardiff Castle just after their engagement. She has also been engaged to play the harp by the London Opera Production to take part in developing young children with disabilities and learning difficulties. Aisha enjoys supporting her local area and regularly performs music to raise funds for a number of charities.



Mae Aisha Palmer ar hyn o bryd yn mynychu Ysgol Gyfun Cwm Rhymni lle mae hi'n astudio lefel Uwch yn y pynciau canlynol - Cerddoriaeth, Mathemateg, Bioleg a Chemeg. Mae hi hefyd yn mynychu adran Iau'r Coleg Brenhinol Cerdd a Drama. Yno mae'n astudio'r gitâr, y delyn a'r piano. Mae Aisha wedi derbyn ysgoloriaeth ar gyfer yr Academi Gerdd Frenhinol yn Llundain ac mae'n bwriadu dilyn ei gyrfa gerddorol yno.

Mae Aisha wedi ennill nifer o gystadlaethau gan gynnwys Cystadleuaeth RSO Cerddor Ifanc y Cymoedd ac yn dilyn hynny daeth yn aelod ymroddgar o'r Gerddorfa. Mae hefyd wedi ennill gwobrau yn Eisteddfod yr Urdd a'r Eisteddfod Genedlaethol ac yng Ngŷl Dde Morgannwg fe'i dyfarnwyd yn enillydd cyffredinol yr ŷl.

Yn 2018, perfformiodd Aisha o flaen y Tywysog Harry a Megan Markle pan oeddynt yng Nghastell Caerdydd ychydig ar ôl eu dyweddïad. Bydd hefyd yn cymryd rhan yn chwarae'r delyn mewn cynhyrchiad gyda London Opera er mwyn helpu i ddatblygu plant ifanc ag anabledau ac anawsterau dysgu. Mae Aisha yn mwynhau cefnogi ei hardal leol ac yn perfformio cerddoriaeth yn rheolaidd i godi arian ar gyfer nifer o elusennau.



Isabelle Harris - Flute



Isabelle began playing the flute at age 7. She was educated in Cardinal Newman Catholic Comprehensive, and now studies under Sarah Newbold at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama. Isabelle fell in love with music after joining RCT Youth Orchestra at age 9. Since then, she has played in many orchestras across South Wales, including the Four Counties Youth Orchestra and Rhondda Symphony Orchestra, and is currently a member of the National Youth Wind Orchestra of Wales.

Isabelle has also participated in many competitions, such as the Jeffery Francis Foundation, Urdd Eisteddfod and the John Tree Award, placing as a finalist in all.



Dechreuodd Isabelle ganu'r fflwt yn 7 oed. Cafodd ei haddysgu yn Ysgol Gyfun y Cardinal Newman Eglwys Gatholig Rhufain, ac mae nawr yn astudio o dan Sarah Newbold yn y Coleg Brenhinol Cerdd a Drama Cymru. Syrthiodd mewn cariad gyda cherddoriaeth ar ôl ymuno â Cherdorfa Ieuenticid RhCT pan yn 9 oed. Ers hynny, mae wedi chwarae mewn nifer o gerddorfeydd ledled de Cymru, gan gynnwys Cerddorfa Ieuenticid y Pedair Sir a Cerddorfa Symffoni'r Rhondda, ac ar hyn o bryd mae'n aelod o Gerddorfa Chwyth Genedlaethol Ieuenticid Cymru.

Mae'r Isabelle hefyd wedi cymryd rhan mewn nifer o gystadlaethau, fel Sefydliad Francis Jeffery, Eisteddfod yr Urdd a Gwobr John Tree, ac fe'i gosodwyd yn y rownd derfynol ym mhob un.



The
SO Musicians



First Violin

Elizabeth Bryan
Jill Francis
Becci Goss *
Noreen Harris
Nick James
Ruth Jones
Rhianwen Lewis
Abigail Linforth
Sophie McKellar
Elaine Noden
Richard Pegg

Second Violin

Jodie Absalom
Rhian Croad
Niamh Fish
Nicole Gravenor
Nia Honeybun
Wendy Jones *
Gaye Lloyd
Derek Mascall
Sheila Nurse
Joanna Rees
Jane Roberts
Mair Roberts
Julia Silezin
Katie Vincent
Kate Wilde
Joshua Young

Viola

Oliver Bown
Catherine Bright
Lewis James
Andrew May
Claire Popp
Gareth Tudor *

Cello

Will Davies
Paul Dugdale
Bethan Ford
Georgia Goss
Eloise Gynn
Bethany Harries
Elen James
Justin Silezin
Cerys Swain
Bronwen Thomas
Jemma Wells *
Mark Wells

Double Bass

Katey Day
Paula Gardiner
Ursula Harrison *
Jeff Ryan

Flute

Jim Evans
Isabelle Harris
Viv John *
Bethan Rees

Oboe

Sian Crossan
Elin Howard *
Melanie Wilson

Clarinet

Chris Beadsworth
Emma Buck
Faye Jones
Clare Sandford *

Bassoon

Karen Lewis
Karyn Phelps *
Latasha Wade

French Horn

Charlotte Leeke
Edwin Mead
Colin Preece
Carolyn Thistlewood *
Dai Williams

Trumpets

Alex Duncan
Dylan John

Trombone

Chris Kipling *
Richard Thurston

Bass Trombone

Joseph Edwards

Tuba/ Tiwba

Bryn Kipling

Timpani & Percussion

Samantha Herman
Joshua Pegg
Gill Ridout *
Ewan Thomas

Harp

Aisha Palmer

Denotes section principal *

Overture to *The Barber of Seville* - Rossini

The Barber of Seville (in Italian *Il barbiere di Siviglia*) is an opera in four acts by Italian composer Gioachino Rossini. Despite a disastrous opening night – the music teacher tripped over and had a prolonged nosebleed and an unexpected cat wandered on stage – it has gone on to be ‘perhaps the greatest of all comic operas’. Indeed, Rossini himself stayed at home for the second night, until he was awoken by the sound of applause and cheering and his opera has delighted audiences ever since.

Based on a play called *Le Barbier de Séville* by French playwright Pierre Beaumarchais, this is the first of three plays about a character called Figaro. His second play, *Le Mariage de Figaro*, was the inspiration for another opera – *The Marriage of Figaro* by Mozart. Rossini’s *The Barber of Seville*, therefore, is considered a prequel to the story of Mozart’s opera, although it was composed 30 years later.

The story follows the escapades of a barber, Figaro, as he assists Count Almaviva in prising the beautiful Rosina away from her lecherous guardian, Dr Bartolo.

Owing to its transposed origins, the overture contains no material from the opera *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*. It is, however, most successful in its function, that of providing a feeling of deliciously nervous anticipation for the action to follow. Its wealth of vivacious and varied themes and its feeling of impetuous momentum render it one of the best opera overtures penned by anyone. Two brash chords herald the beginning, followed by a scampering yet hesitating figure which figures through most of the introduction; a contrasting central section is a sunny lyrical tune which could easily have been an aria. The intro seemingly drifts to somnolence until the opening chords jolt the music back to reality. A slightly grotesque Neapolitan dance takes centre stage and is followed by a more jovial theme tossed between woodwinds and horns. Then begins one of Rossini’s best crescendi, its headlong propulsion almost breakneck. A dramatic and sonorous chord progression in the coda suggests the overture’s more serious origins, leading to the heartily assertive major key close of one of opera’s most popular and best-wrought overtures.

Concerto for Flute and Harp – Mozart

The Concerto for Flute, Harp, and Orchestra in C major, K. 299/297c, is a concerto by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart for flute, harp, and orchestra. It is one of only two true double concertos that he wrote (the other being his Piano Concerto No. 10; though his *Sinfonia Concertante* for Violin, Viola, and Orchestra could just as well be considered a “double concerto”), as well as the only piece of music by Mozart for the harp. The piece is one of the most popular such concertos in the repertoire, as well as often being found on recordings dedicated to either one of its featured instruments.

In the classical period, the harp was still in development, and was not considered a standard orchestral instrument. It was regarded more as a plucked piano. Therefore, harp and flute was considered an extremely unusual combination. Currently, there is much more repertoire for a flute and harp duo, especially without orchestra. Much of this repertoire was written by composers in the nineteenth century. Mozart’s opinion of the harp, however, was perhaps dubious at best, for he never wrote another piece that employed it.

The piece is essentially in the form of a *Sinfonia Concertante*, which was extremely popular in Paris at the time. Today, the concerto is often played by chamber ensembles, because it is technically and elegantly challenging for both the solo instruments it calls for. It is also often played by orchestras to display the talents of their own flutists and harpists. Tonight, of course, it is performed by the two most recent winners of the Young Musician of the Valleys competition, both of whom are members of the orchestra.

The harp part appears to be more like an adaptation of a piano piece than an original harp part; this is especially evident in the patterns of five and ten notes throughout all three movements which would not fall under the fingers as easily for a harpist, as the fifth fingers are typically not used, though they were considered part of early harp technique. There are no full, rich glissandi, and although there is counterpoint in the harp part, it does not typically include lush chords. Mozart did not include any cadenzas of his own, as is normal for his compositions. Alfred Ein-

stein claims that Mozart's cadenzas for this work were lost. A few popular cadenzas are often performed, such as those by Carl Reinecke, but many flutists and harpists have chosen to write their own. André Previn has also written cadenzas for this piece. The original manuscript of the Concerto for Flute and Harp still exists; it has been housed since 1948 in the Jagiellonian University Library in Kraków.

The soloists in the piece will sometimes play with the orchestra, and at other times perform as a duo while the orchestra is resting. The flute and harp alternate having the melody and accompanying lines. In some passages, they also create counterpoint with just each other. Mozart concertos are standard in how they move harmonically, as well as that they adhere to the three-movement form of fast–slow–fast.



Variations on an Original Theme (Enigma) – Elgar

Edward Elgar composed his Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 36, popularly known as the Enigma Variations, between October 1898 and February 1899. It is an orchestral work comprising fourteen variations on an original theme.

Elgar dedicated the work “to my friends pictured within”, each variation being a musical sketch of one of his circle of close acquaintances (see musical cryptogram). Those portrayed include Elgar's wife Alice, his friend and publisher Augustus J. Jaeger and Elgar himself. In a programme note for a performance in 1911 Elgar wrote:

This work, commenced in a spirit of humour & continued in deep seriousness, contains sketches of the composer's friends. It may be understood that these personages comment or reflect on the original theme & each one attempts a solution of the Enigma, for so the theme is called. The sketches are not ‘portraits’ but each variation contains a distinct idea founded on some particular personality or perhaps on some incident known only to two people. This is the basis of the composition, but the work may be listened to as a ‘piece of music’ apart from any extraneous consideration.

In naming his theme “Enigma” Elgar posed a challenge which has generated much speculation but has never been conclusively answered. The Enigma is widely believed to involve a hidden melody.

After its 1899 London premiere the Variations achieved immediate popularity and established Elgar's international reputation. The work has been recorded over 60 times.

The theme is followed by 14 variations. The variations spring from the theme's melodic, harmonic and rhythmic elements, and the extended fourteenth variation forms a grand finale.

Elgar dedicated the piece to “my friends pictured within” and in the score each variation is prefaced the initials, name or nickname of the friend depicted. As was common with painted portraits of the time, Elgar's musical portraits depict their subjects at two levels. Each movement conveys a general impression of its subject's personality. In addition, many of them contain a musical reference to a specific characteristic or event, such as a laugh, a habit of speech or a memorable conversation. The sections of the work are as follows.

Theme (Enigma: Andante)

The unusual melodic contours of the G minor opening theme convey a sense of searching introspection:



Elgar's personal identification with the theme is evidenced by his use of its opening phrase (which matches the rhythm and inflection of his name) as a signature in letters to friends.

The theme leads into Variation I without a pause.

Variation I (*L'istesso tempo*) “C.A.E.”

Caroline Alice Elgar, Elgar’s wife. The variation repeats a four-note melodic fragment which Elgar reportedly whistled when arriving home to his wife. After Alice’s death, Elgar wrote, “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. will understand this reference to one whose life was a romantic and delicate inspiration.

Variation II (*Allegro*) “H.D.S-P.”

Hew David Steuart-Powell. Elgar wrote, “Hew David Steuart-Powell was a well-known amateur pianist and a great player of chamber music. He regularly played with B.G.N. (variation xii) and Elgar for many years. 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 (*Allegretto*) “R.B.T.”

Richard Baxter Townshend, Oxford don and author of the Tenderfoot series of books; brother-in-law of the W.M.B. depicted in Variation IV. This variation references R.B.T.’s presentation of an old man in some amateur theatricals – the low voice flying off occasionally into “soprano” timbre.

Variation IV (*Allegro di molto*) “W.M.B.”

William Meath Baker, squire of Hasfield, Gloucestershire and benefactor of several public buildings in Fenton, Stoke-on-Trent, brother-in-law of R.B.T. depicted in Variation III, and (step) uncle of Dora Penny in Variation X. He “expressed himself somewhat energetically”. This is the shortest of the variations.

Variation V (*Moderato*) “R.P.A.”

Richard Penrose Arnold, the son of the poet Matthew Arnold, and an amateur pianist. This variation leads into the next without pause.

Variation VI (*Andantino*) “Ysobel”

Isabel Fitton, a viola pupil of Elgar. Elgar explained, “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 (*Presto*) “Troyte”

Arthur Troyte Griffith, a Malvern architect and one of Elgar’s firmest friends. The variation, with a time signature of 1 1, good-naturedly mimics his enthusiastic incompetence on the piano. It may also refer to an occasion when Griffith and Elgar were out walking and got caught in a thunderstorm. The pair took refuge in the house of Winifred and Florence Norbury (Sherridge, Leigh Sinton, near Malvern), to which the next variation refers.

Variation VIII (*Allegretto*) “W.N.”

Winifred Norbury, one of the secretaries of the Worcester Philharmonic Society. “Really suggested by an eighteenth-century house. The gracious personalities of the ladies are sedately shown. W.N. was more connected with the 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.”

This variation is linked to the next by a single note held by the first violins.

Variation IX (*Adagio*) “Nimrod”

Augustus J. Jaeger was employed as music editor by the London publisher Novello & Co. He was a close friend of Elgar’s, giving him useful advice but also severe criticism, something Elgar greatly appreciated. Elgar later related how Jaeger had encouraged him as an artist and had stimulated him to continue composing despite setbacks. The name of the variation refers to

Nimrod, an Old Testament patriarch described as “a mighty hunter before the Lord” – Jäger being German for hunter.

In 1904 Elgar told Dora Penny (“Dorabella”) that this variation is not really a portrait, but “the story of something that happened”. Once, when Elgar had been very depressed and was about to give it all up and write no more music, Jaeger had visited him and encouraged him to continue composing. He referred to Ludwig van Beethoven, who had a lot of worries, but wrote more and more beautiful music. “And that is what you must do”, Jaeger said, and he sang the theme of the second movement of Beethoven’s Piano Sonata No. 8 Pathétique. Elgar disclosed to Dora that the opening bars of “Nimrod” were made to suggest that theme. “Can’t you hear it at the beginning? Only a hint, not a quotation.”

This variation has become popular in its own right and is sometimes used at British funerals, memorial services, and other solemn occasions. It is always played at the Cenotaph, Whitehall in London at the National Service of Remembrance.

Variation X (Intermezzo: Allegretto) “Dorabella”

Dora Penny, a friend whose stutter is gently parodied by the woodwinds. Dora, later Mrs. Richard Powell, was the daughter of the Revd (later Canon) Alfred Penny. Her stepmother was the sister of William Meath Baker, the subject of Variation IV. She was the recipient of another of Elgar’s enigmas, the so-called Dorabella Cipher. She described the “Friends Pictured Within” and “The Enigma” in two chapters of her book Edward Elgar, Memories of a Variation. This variation features a melody for solo viola.

Variation XI (Allegro di molto) “G.R.S.”

George Robertson Sinclair, the energetic organist of Hereford Cathedral. In the words of Elgar: “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 upstream to find a landing place (bars 2 and 3); and his rejoicing bark on landing (second half of bar 5). G.R.S. said, ‘Set that to music’. I did; here it is.”

Variation XII (Andante) “B.G.N.”

Basil George Nevinson, an accomplished amateur cellist who played chamber music with Elgar. The variation is introduced and concluded by a solo cello. This variation leads into the next without pause.

Variation XIII (Romanza: Moderato) “ * * * ”

Lady Mary Lygon of Madresfield Court near Malvern, a sponsor of a local music festival. “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.”



Elgar may have withheld Lady Mary’s initials because of superstition surrounding the number 13, or he may have felt uneasy about publicly associating the name of a prominent local figure with music that had taken on a powerful emotional intensity. There is credible evidence to support the view that the variation’s atmosphere of brooding melancholy and its subtitle “Romanza” are tokens of a covert tribute to another woman, the name most frequently mentioned in this connection being that of Helen Weaver, who had broken off her engagement to Elgar in 1884 before sailing out of his life forever aboard a ship bound for New Zealand.

Variation XIV (Finale: Allegro) “E.D.U.”

Elgar himself, nicknamed Edu by his wife, from the German Eduard. The themes from two variations are echoed: “Nimrod” and “C.A.E.”, referring to Jaeger and Elgar’s wife Alice, “two great influences on the life and art of the composer”, as Elgar wrote in 1927. Elgar called these references “entirely fitting to the intention of the piece”.



For Your Diary! / Ar gyfer eich dyddiador!

THE RHONDDA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PRESENTS

STAR WARS

COPELAND - GERSHWIN - JOHN WILLIAMS
A NIGHT OF AMERICAN MUSIC /
NOSON O GERDDORIAETH AMERICANAIDD

JULY 6TH 2019 / 6 GORFFENNAF 2019

ALL SAINTS CHURCH, PORTHCRAWL

www.facebook.com/RhonddaSymphonyOrchestra
#RhonddaSymph

rhonddasymp@yahoo.co.uk
rhonddasympphonyorchestra.co.uk

THE RHONDDA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
PRESENTS

Scheherazade

RHAPSODY ON A THEME
OF PAGANINI
SOLOIST / UNAWDYDD
ROB MARSHALL

DECEMBER 7 RHAGFYR
2019
BBC HODDINOTT HALL, CARDIFF

www.facebook.com/RhonddaSymphonyOrchestra
#RhonddaSymph

RhonddaSymph@yahoo.co.uk
rhonddasympphonyorchestra.co.uk

We hope to see you there! / Rydym yn gobeithio eich gweld chi yno!