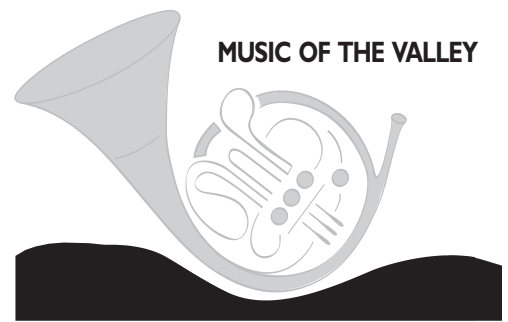


Livermore-Amador Symphony

Arthur P. Barnes, Music Director

March 27, 2010, 8 p.m.

Bankhead Theater, Livermore



Overture to *The School for Scandal*
Opus 5

Samuel Barber
(1910–1981)

Enigma Variations
Opus 36

Edward Elgar
(1857–1934)

Enigma

Variations:

- | | | |
|-----------------|---------------|---------------------------|
| I. (C.A.E.) | VI. (Ysobel) | X. (Dorabella) Intermezzo |
| II. (H.D.S.-P.) | VII. (Troyte) | XI. (G.R.S.) |
| III. (R.B.T.) | VIII. (W.N.) | XII. (B.G.N.) |
| IV. (W.M.B.) | IX. (Nimrod) | XIII. (* * *) |
| V. (R.P.A.) | | XIV. (E.D.U.) Finale |

Mitchell Sardou Klein, conductor

————— INTERMISSION —————

Romances for Violin and Orchestra
No. 2 in F Major, Opus 50
No. 1 in G Major, Opus 40

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

Kristina Anderson, violin solo

Francesca da Rimini: Symphonic Fantasy after Dante
Opus 32

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky
(1840–1893)

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Overture to *The School for Scandal* Opus 5

Samuel Barber
(1910–1981)

Although he was not a child prodigy on the scale of a Mozart or a Mendelssohn, Samuel Barber demonstrated musical gifts at a very early age. He was born in Westchester, Pennsylvania, in 1910, and after beginning piano lessons at age 6, he began composing about a year later. Not long after, possibly when he was 9, he was sure enough about his calling to announce it in a note to his mother: “Dear Mother: I have written to tell you my worrying secret. Now don’t cry when you read it because it is neither yours nor my fault. I suppose I will have to tell it now, without any nonsense. To begin with I was not meant to be an athlete. I was meant to be a composer, and will be I’m sure. I’ll ask you one more thing.—Don’t ask me to try to forget this unpleasant thing and go play football.—Please—Sometimes I’ve been worrying about this so much that it makes me mad (not very).”

So, with his path planned, Barber continued his musical education, ultimately attending the prestigious Curtis Institute. He wrote the overture to *The School for Scandal* when he was only 21, as a graduation thesis while at Curtis. It was the young composer’s first major public work.

Based on Richard Brinsley Sheridan’s 1777 satire, *The School for Scandal* is a comedic masterpiece that pokes fun at the social conventions of the time and the pretensions of the elite. The author appropriately names two of the play’s leading characters Lady Sneerwell and Sir Benjamin Backbite.

Barber sets the scene with an opening flourish that leads to the main theme, a wide-ranging melody begun by the violins, which unfolds and gains momentum. The fragments soon join into a more sustained melody. The solo oboe introduces a romantic second subject over harmonies in the strings, after which the clarinet closes the exposition. The strings immediately oblige, leading into a busy development section involving both subjects and culminating in the reprise by the English horn of the earlier oboe melody. The piece finishes with a bubbly coda conveying the effervescence appropriate to an entertaining comedy of manners.

Enigma Variations Opus 36

Edward Elgar
(1857–1934)

One of the preeminent musical figures of his time, Edward William Elgar bridged the 19th and 20th centuries as the finest English composer since the days of Handel and Purcell.

Elgar’s father owned a music shop and was a church organist who taught his son piano, organ, and violin; apart from this instruction, Elgar was basically a self-taught musician. At the age of 16, the composer became a freelance musician, and for the remainder of his life, he never took a permanent job. He conducted locally, performed, taught, and composed, scraping by until his marriage to Caroline Alice Roberts, a published novelist of some wealth, in 1889.

By that time, Elgar had achieved only limited recognition. He and his wife moved to London, where he fared scarcely better in advancing his career. The couple eventually retreated to Worcester, Elgar suffering from bitter self-doubt and depression. Alice stood by him the entire time, her unfailing confidence restoring his spirits. He was further buoyed by the success of his “Imperial March,” Opus 32, which finally earned him a publisher and a vital friendship with August Jaeger, his editor and confidant. It was soon after that he would compose his masterpiece, *Variations on an Original Theme*, otherwise known as the *Enigma Variations*.

Elgar himself recalled how the work came to be conceived on the evening of October 21, 1898:

After a long day’s fiddle teaching in Malvern, I came home very tired. Dinner being over, my dear wife said to me, “Edward,

you look like a good cigar;” and having lighted it, I sat down at the piano. In a little while, soothed and feeling rested, I began to play, and suddenly my wife interrupted by saying, “Edward, that’s a good tune.” I awoke from the dream: “Eh! tune, what tune!” and she said, “Play it again, I like that tune.” I played and strummed, and played, and then she exclaimed, “That’s the tune.” And that tune is the theme of the Variations.

The structure Elgar chose is 13 variations, each being a musical sketch of Elgar’s “friends pictured within,” as the dedication eventually ran, and the final 14th variation representing the composer himself.

Elgar also alluded to the famous “Enigma” moniker:

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. ...

Much conjecture has been made in an effort to try to solve the enigma without a concrete solution’s ever being agreed upon. What is clear is that the name “Enigma” applies only to the theme itself and not to the whole work. Writing in 1911, Elgar revealed that this work, commenced in a spirit of humor and 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 and each one attempts a solution of the enigma. 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.

What can be agreed upon, though, is that this music is incredibly well crafted and each sketch is imbued with its own wondrous character. The movements are as follows:

Enigma (the theme): Elgar himself pointed out that the rhythm of the theme’s first bar—two short notes followed by two long ones—is immediately reversed and that “references to this grouping are almost continuous.”

C. A. E. (Caroline Alice Elgar): the composer’s wife, who here receives a loving tribute.

H. D. S.-P. (Hew David Stuart-Powell): an amateur pianist who often played piano trios with Elgar and Basil Nevison. His characteristic warm-up routines are gently parodied in a manner Elgar described as “chromatic beyond H. D. S.-P.’s liking.”

R. B. T. (Richard Baxter Townshend): a writer and amateur actor whose theatrical presentations of an old man amused Elgar, “the low voice flying off occasionally into ‘soprano’ timbre.”

W. M. B. (William Meath Baker): a country squire with an abrupt manner and a tendency to bang doors behind him when leaving a room.

R. P. A. (Richard P. Arnold): a music lover and pianist (son of the poet Matthew Arnold) whose playing had, according to Elgar, a way of “evading difficulties but suggesting in a mysterious way the real feeling. His serious conversation was continually broken up by whimsical and witty remarks.”

Ysobel (Isabel Fitton): an amateur viola player from Malvern. This variation contains one of Elgar’s private jokes, the leading viola melody involving a tricky little exercise in crossing from the fourth to the second string without accidentally catching the third.

Troyte (Arthur Troyte Griffith): a Malvern architect and close friend of the Elgars. This energetic, rhythmically disrupted variation recounts Elgar’s desperate, and ultimately abortive, attempt to teach him to play the piano.

W. N. (Winifred Norbury): this variation is more a portrait of a graceful 18th-century house than the lady who inhabited it. Her

characteristic laugh is, however, suggested in the central section.

Nimrod (August Jaeger): in the Book of Genesis, Nimrod is “the mighty hunter”; the name Jaeger means *hunter* in German. Jaeger was Elgar’s closest musical friend, the man who edited his music and whose judgment he trusted more than anyone else’s. Their shared love of Beethoven is enshrined in this profound adagio, the most popular and cherished of all the variations.

Dorabella (Dora Penny): Elgar’s nickname for her was taken from Mozart’s *Così fan Tutte*, and his flirtatious relationship with this attractive young woman is reflected in this whimsical variation, whose gently halting rhythm alludes to her slight stutter.

G. R. S. (George Robertson Sinclair): organist of Hereford Cathedral. Sinclair had a bulldog called Dan, of whom Elgar was immensely fond, often writing a musical “Mood of Dan” in the visitors’ book at Sinclair’s home. The opening bars recall Dan’s falling into the river Wye, swimming upstream, and scrambling to the bank with a triumphant bark.

B. G. N. (Basil G. Nevinson): a fine amateur cellist whom Elgar described as “a serious and devoted friend.”

*** (Romanza) The identity of the friend concealed behind the three asterisks remains the subject of speculation (another enigma?). Some think she was Lady Mary Lygon, a society lady who was on a voyage to Australia at around the time the variations were composed. Others identify her as Helen Jessie Weaver, Elgar’s first love, to whom he was engaged as a young man. She later emigrated to New Zealand, where she died. In either case, the quotation from Mendelssohn’s “Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage” above the quiet throb of a ship’s engines (heard in the timpani) is poetically apropos.

Finale: E. D. U. (“Edoo” was Alice’s pet name for her husband): a dashing self-portrait—accompanied in the middle section by a reference to C. A. E. herself, drawing the musical threads together in a symphonic finale with panache and amazing depth of compositional skill and creativity.

Romances for Violin and Orchestra No. 2 in F Major, Opus 50 No. 1 in G Major, Opus 40

Ludwig van Beethoven
(1770–1827)

Beethoven’s reputation as a pianist often obscures the fact that he was also a very capable violinist. Although not an accomplished master, he possessed a great love for and understanding of the instrument, evident in his ample output for violin: 10 violin sonatas; the violin concerto; and numerous quintets, quartets, and other chamber works.

Many classical music lovers may not know that Beethoven had begun and then abandoned a violin concerto in the early 1790s (different from the one we know very well, the great D major concerto, composed in 1806). All that remains of this earlier work in C major is one movement. Some speculation and academic research have suggested that one or both of Beethoven’s two romances for violin and orchestra might have been intended as middle movements for this incomplete concerto. What is less certain is when he wrote these two lovely works. The Romance in G major was published in 1803 by Hoffmeister & Kühnel in Leipzig; the date of its first performance is not known. Despite the lower opus number, it was composed at least five years after the Romance in F, Opus 50, which was published in 1805.

The Romance in F is set in a very leisurely *adagio cantabile* tempo that allows the soloist a great deal of expressive freedom to inflect the almost vocal line with emotional nuances of rhythm and articulation. A lovely melody grows from the opening, written in a florid yet still singable style. A bit of an orchestral outburst is answered by a flourish of embellishment in the solo line, and the following

restatement of the opening theme shows itself again as if delivering a second verse. A trumpetlike fanfare ushers in a minor-mode second section accompanied by a hint of agitation in the orchestra, but shortly we arrive firmly back at another statement of the opening theme. After a sweet, brief flurry of scales from the soloist, the piece ends quietly.

The Romance in G, the lesser known of the two romances, is set in a two-episode rondo form typical of Beethoven’s later rondo movements. The rondo theme is in two parts, each performed first by the soloist and then repeated by the orchestra. Beethoven weaves wonderful transitions into a new key area and ends with the return of the G-major rondo theme, again played by the soloist, but with accompaniment by the orchestra. Beethoven forgoes the repetition of each of the two parts of the rondo and ends the work with a brief coda featuring a lengthy trill in the solo violin.

Francesca da Rimini: Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky Symphonic Fantasy after Dante, Opus 32 (1840–1893)

Tchaikovsky composed this symphonic poem in less than three weeks during his visit to Bayreuth in the autumn of 1876, where he was scheduled to cover the world premiere of Wagner’s *Ring* cycle as a critic for the Russian press.

Tchaikovsky presents a symphonic interpretation of the tragic tale of Francesca da Rimini, a beauty who was immortalized in Dante’s *Divine Comedy*. The epic poem is divided into three sections: Inferno, Purgatorio, and Paradiso. In the fifth canto of Inferno, Dante the narrator meets the shade of Francesca da Rimini, who relates how she was forced into a hateful marriage with a deformed warlord but fell in love instead with his handsome brother, Paolo. As they read the romance of Lancelot and Guinevere together, it inflamed their desire. Francesca’s husband, catching them making love, murdered both. Their punishment: being hurled relentlessly about in a hurricane of souls in the Second Circle of Hell, reserved for those who gave in to sensual pleasure. The lovers are separated from each other, never to touch again, tormented most of all by the ineradicable memory of the joys and pleasures of the embraces they once shared.

In the *andante lugubre* introduction, Tchaikovsky depicts Dante’s descent into hell. The music accelerates and gives way to a furious, anxiously syncopated *allegro* as Dante witnesses the spinning tempest of souls. Developed from motives heard in the introduction, the tempestuous music frames a calm but melancholy inner panel, the lengthiest section of the piece.

The latter, an *andante cantabile*, is introduced by a plaintive clarinet solo and presents Francesca’s point of view. Tchaikovsky paints Francesca with one of his most spacious melodies. The English horn, accompanied by harp, sounds a second theme in the Francesca section. Inevitably, though, we are drawn, along with Dante, to cross back through the terrifying tempest. A tautly condensed recapitulation of the storm music leads to an electrifying coda and the image of the poet fainting in sympathy.

In writing “Francesca da Rimini,” Tchaikovsky expressed a poignant identification with the heroine and her tragic fate, a sympathy that was also dramatically evoked in his ballet *Swan Lake* and the *Romeo and Juliet* fantasy-overture.

This symphonic poem, perhaps more than any other of Tchaikovsky’s works, shows the possible influence of Liszt, both musically and in terms of subject matter. Liszt frequently chose subjects of a Gothic, diabolical nature: for example, the sonata *Après une lecture de Dante* (1856) and the Dante Symphony (1857). Tchaikovsky’s use of swirling chromaticism in the depiction of the flames of hell also resembles Liszt’s.

Program notes compiled by Jeff Pelletier
Program booklet edited by Eva Langfeldt

GUEST CONDUCTOR

Mitchell Sardou Klein

Mitchell Sardou Klein is music director of the Peninsula Symphony and a frequent guest conductor of orchestras throughout the United States and abroad. He has brought the Peninsula Symphony to statewide prominence as one of a handful of ensembles to achieve the highest-possible rating by the California Arts Council for three consecutive years, garnering praise for its "extraordinary performance level." Mr. Klein's extensive guest conducting career includes appearances with the New Polish Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Richmond Symphony, Amarillo Symphony, Eastern Philharmonic, Lexington Philharmonic, South Bend Symphony, San Jose Symphony, and Flagstaff Festival Symphony. He led over a hundred concerts as associate conductor of the Kansas City Philharmonic, where he was also principal pops conductor and principal conductor at Starlight Theater, which was the Philharmonic's summer home. He also served as music director of the Santa Cruz Symphony.

Mr. Klein is winner of the Bravo Award for his contribution to the Bay Area's cultural life and the Julie Billiard Award from the College of Notre Dame for Outstanding Community Service. He received an award for best television performance program for the PBS documentary "Making Music," which featured him and the Peninsula Symphony. He has appeared frequently on national and international broadcasts through the Voice of America, National Public Radio, the WFMT Fine Arts Network, and PBS.

Since 1984 Mr. Klein has been director of the Irving M. Klein International String Competition. Held in San Francisco each June, the competition has become one of the most prominent in the world, featuring prizes over \$10,000, attracting applicants from more than 20 nations each year, and launching numerous major international concert careers.

NEXT CONCERT
MAY 15, 2010
Strings, Tuba, and Mahler

VIOLIN SOLOIST

Kristina Anderson

Kristina Anderson began her violin studies at the Peabody Conservatory of Music in Baltimore, Maryland, with Berl Senofsky. She continued her study with Jascha Brodsky at the New School of Music in Philadelphia and studied orchestral music with the concertmaster of the Pittsburgh Symphony, Fritz Siegel. She spent summers performing at the Tanglewood Festival in Lenox, Massachusetts, and taking master class from Aaron Rosand at the Académie d'Eté in Nice, France. Ms. Anderson began her orchestral career in the first violin section of the New Orleans Philharmonic. She subsequently became concertmaster of the Colorado Springs and Charlotte symphonies. She has also appeared as guest concertmaster of the Oakland East Bay Symphony, Oakland Ballet Orchestra, and Pocket Opera in San Francisco. Ms. Anderson has performed internationally as a tenured member of the New York City Opera National Company Orchestra and has performed as violin soloist with the Santa Cruz and Diablo symphonies as well as our own Livermore-Amador Symphony.

Ms. Anderson has been concertmaster of the Santa Cruz Symphony for 11 seasons, concertmaster of the West Bay Opera Orchestra in Palo Alto for 19 seasons, and concertmaster of the Diablo Symphony for 12 seasons. She took her position as concertmaster of the Livermore-Amador Symphony at the beginning of the 2008-09 season.

Active in music education, Ms. Anderson coaches the Santa Cruz Youth Symphony violins and is a coach at the Youth Music Monterey summer camp. She gives music presentations in the Santa Cruz County Schools and at community clubs such as the Scotts Valley Rotary Club near her home. Ms. Anderson also enjoys private teaching in her studio in Ben Lomond, where she resides with her husband, Steven, who is a professional trumpet player and teacher.

2010-2011
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