

APRIL 2023



# Tempo

A SYMPHONY FRIENDS NEWSLETTER

## POSTCARDS FROM THE ISLES

CSO and Maestro William Intriligator invite you to close our season-long, world tour and the 2022/23 season on April 15th at 7:30pm with *Postcards from the Isles*. This spectacular concert features English and Irish composers including Vaughan Williams, Stanford and Elgar's incredible *Enigma Variations*. CSO's principal horn, Ben Shafer and dancers from En Avant Dance Studio will also be featured.

The evening will open with *The Wasps Overture* by English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams. The overture was written as part of a suite of incidental music to accompany the ancient Greek play, *The Wasps*, by Aristophanes in which the townspeople gossip like wasps. Maestro Intriligator describes the opening as, "the humorous sound of buzzing wasps leading into a beautiful musical overture with themes that sound like they could be English folk songs". As an added treat with this piece, we are thrilled to welcome En Avant Dance Studio as they showcase their talents alongside this unique piece of music. Maestro Intriligator says, "We love partnering with the En Avant Dance Studio; they bring a youthful energy to our stage, and I can't wait to see the original choreography they have come up with for this piece." We hope you also enjoy reading the winning creative responses from our 3rd-4th grade Music in Words writing contest, inspired by this piece.

Next, CSO's own Principal French horn, Ben Shafer, will be featured on Ruth Gipps' Horn Concerto, op. 58. It is a beautiful piece with great melodies, beautiful orchestration, and showcases many different qualities of the French horn. Maestro Intriligator says, "It's rare that we perform a piece featuring French horn, so that makes this extra special. It is also special because we really enjoy including female composers and featuring our CSO members as soloists."

After intermission, the orchestra will perform Charles Stanford's *Irish Rhapsody* No. 1. This piece was selected by Mayor Patrick Collins and his wife Judy, an honor they won at CSO's Symphony Gala auction. Collins wanted their music selection to reflect their Irish heritage, so this is the perfect piece. Special thanks to Patrick and Judy for their generosity to the CSO!

The final piece on this concert is Edward Elgar's *Variations on an Original Theme*, or more commonly known as *Enigma Variations*. Composed in 1899, this fantastic showpiece for the orchestra features 14 short variations. Maestro Intriligator breaks down the deeper meaning of Elgar's piece by explaining, "This is a very personal piece, despite being for a large orchestra. Through a series of short variations, Elgar musically depicts his wife and close friends. The enigma is not the identity of these friends, but some other cryptic over-arching theme or motif that scholars have been trying to decipher for over a century. There are many theories, but no one will probably ever know for sure what the enigma is." What is not mysterious, is why audiences adore this piece. It has great melodies, variety, and beautiful orchestration, including the use of an organ in the finale.

Enhance your experience with a free "Lunch and Learn" discussion on April 14th from 12-1:00 p.m. at the Laramie County Library, which will also be livestreamed on the CSO Facebook page. "Classic Conversations" will take place on April 15th, at 6:30 p.m. at the Civic Center for ticketed patrons, prior to the concert.

Thank you to our  
Concert  
Sponsor



## AT-A-GLANCE

### LUNCH N' LEARN

Fri., Apr. 14th 12-1:00 PM  
Laramie County Library  
Cottonwood Room

Join Maestro Intriligator & Ben Shafer for a lunchtime lecture at the Laramie County Public Library & learn about the upcoming concert. The conversation will also be livestreamed on our Facebook page!

### CLASSIC CONVERSATIONS

Sat., Apr. 15th 6:30 PM  
Cheyenne Civic Center

If you can't make it to the Lunch n' Learn, come early to the concert!

### Musical Storytime & Instrument Petting Zoo

*Stella Luna for Violin, Viola, Bassoon & Narrator*  
Cheyenne Botanic Gardens-  
Paul Smith Children's Village  
Sat., May 6th 11:00 AM

Storytelling by Jenny Wacker and CSO Musicians. Special thanks to our sponsor Delta Kappa Gamma, Upsilon Chapter.

### Bourbons for Beethoven

Cheyenne Country Club  
Sat., May 20th 2:00 PM

Join the Symphony Friends at the Cheyenne Country Club as they raise funds in support of the Cheyenne Symphony Orchestra. Call CSO at 307-778-8561 for more information.

## SEASON SPONSORS



## THE WASPS OVERTURE BY RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS FEAT. EN AVANT DANCE STUDIO



“THE ART OF MUSIC ABOVE ALL THE OTHER ARTS IS THE EXPRESSION OF THE SOUL OF A NATION.” - VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

*Postcards from the Isles* ends CSO's season long world tour with a stop in England and Ireland. First up on the program is the *The Wasps Overture* by Ralph Vaughan Williams, written in 1908. The overture, which is 10 minutes long, opens with buzzing clearly intended to sound like a swarm of wasps. The remaining nine minutes of the overture reflect English folk music and the influence of Maurice Ravel, under whom Vaughan Williams studied the year before he wrote the overture.

CSO is excited to collaborate with En Avant Dance Studio for this performance. Their original choreography will enhance the story telling of the music. Plus, this work inspired our Music in Words writing contest for third and fourth graders. CSO audiences will enjoy reading the creating writing inspired by the piece.

Ralph Vaughan Williams, (1872–1958) is considered the founder of the nationalist movement in early 20th century English music. He studied at Trinity College, Cambridge, and in London at the Royal College of Music. After artillery service in World War I, he became professor of composition at the Royal College of Music. His works include operas, ballets, chamber music, secular and religious vocal pieces, and orchestral compositions including nine symphonies, written over sixty years. Strongly influenced by Tudor music and English folk-songs, his output marked a decisive break in British music from its German-dominated style of the 19th century. The *Wasps* was written as incidental music for a Cambridge University production of the Greek playwright Aristophanes' satire skewering the Athenian judiciary. The play is a comedy that focuses on the corruption of Athenian lawyers and politicians. In the play, the actions of the protagonists are compared to wasps.

After Vaughan Williams's death, *The Times of London* described his legacy as follows:

“Historically, his achievement was to cut the bonds that from the times of Handel and Mendelssohn had bound England hand and foot to the Continent. He found in the Elizabethans and folk-songs the elements of a native English language that need no longer be spoken with a German accent, and from it he forged his own idiom. The emancipation he achieved thereby was so complete that the composers of succeeding generations like Walton and Britten had no longer need of the conscious nationalism which was Vaughan Williams's own artistic creed. There is now an English music which can make its distinctive contribution to the comity of nations.”

## IRISH RHAPSODY: FOR MAYOR PATRICK AND MRS. JUDY COLLINS

Mayor Patrick and Mrs. Judy Collins won the chance to select a piece for CSO to perform as a Gala auction item. They selected Stanford's *Irish Rhapsody* No. 1 in celebration of their heritage, which fits perfectly into the theme for this concert.

Charles Stanford wrote six pieces that carried the title of *Irish Rhapsody*. The Symphony will perform *Irish Rhapsody* No. 1, the best known of the series. He described the piece, which was premiered in 1902, as being “founded on an episode in the battles of the Finns and the loves of Cuchullin and Emer,” Irish folktales that inspired the poetry of W.B. Yeats. It features two famous Irish melodies: the battlesong “Leatherbags Donnell” for its vigorous opening section and “Emer's Farewell to Cuchullin” (better known as “Londonderry Air” or “O Danny Boy”), which is in the middle of the composition. As a side note, *Irish Rhapsody* No. 1 was much more popular than the others, which irked Stanford so much that he expressed extreme annoyance whenever he heard it was to be played.

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852–1924) was an Anglo-Irish composer, teacher, and conductor of the late Romantic era. He was a prolific composer and was especially known for his orchestral works, which include seven symphonies, numerous choral pieces, 10 operas, and many songs. His music reflects the late 19th-century Romantic style, into which he introduced elements of Irish folk song.

Born to a well-off and highly musical family in Dublin, Stanford studied at Trinity College, Dublin, and Queen's College, Cambridge, and in Leipzig and Berlin. He was a professor of composition at the Royal College of Music in London and professor of music at Cambridge. As a teacher, Stanford was skeptical about modernism, and based his instruction chiefly on classical principles expressed in the music of Brahms. Among his pupils were rising composers whose fame went on to surpass his own, such as Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. As a conductor, Stanford held posts with the Bach Choir and the Leeds Triennial Music Festival. He was knighted by Edward VII in 1901.



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## CSO TO FEATURE PRINCIPAL HORN, BEN SHAFER IN RUTH GIPPS' HORN CONCERTO, OP. 58



Shafer earned his undergraduate degree in music from the University of North Carolina Charlotte and a master's degree in horn performance from the University of Colorado Boulder. He was a finalist in the 2019 Honors Concerto Competition and performed principal horn in Schumann's *Konzertstück* as a finalist in the 2020 competition. He has played principal horn in and participated in many summer festivals, including the Philadelphia International Music Festival, the Stellenbosch International Chamber Music Festival, and most recently the Aspen Music Festival. In addition to principal horn of CSO, Shafer often substitutes in regional orchestras and maintains an active teaching schedule. His goal is "to make a difference in music by inspiring others through his playing and teaching." In addition to his work schedule, the well-rounded Ben hikes, is a yoga aficionado, outdoor enthusiast, and master chef.

Ruth Gipps' Horn Concerto complements Maestro Intriligator's imaginative programming. Gipps' composing mentor was Ralph Vaughan Williams, which is a fun tie-in to the first piece of this concert. There is an additional connection to the program because she was remembered by Cellist Julian Lloyd Webber for bringing "infectious enthusiasm" to Elgar's *Enigma Variations* which she conducted at the Royal Conservatory of Music. The incredibly virtuosic horn solo will be performed by CSO's own principal horn, Ben Shafer.

The Horn Concerto, which was written for Gipps' son, Lance Baker, was premiered by Baker in 1969 with Gipps conducting the London Repertoire Orchestra. The concerto is considered to be very difficult for the horn, not only for its technical complexities, but also because of the huge range and the stamina required to perform the work.

Ruth Gipps (1921-1999) was an English composer, oboist, pianist, conductor, and educator. She composed music in a wide range of genres, including five symphonies, seven concertos, and numerous chamber and choral works. She founded the London Repertoire Orchestra and the Chanticleer Orchestra. She also served as chairwoman of the Composers' Guild of Great Britain. Gipps was born to musical parents. She was a child prodigy, winning performance competitions in which she was considerably younger than the other competitors. After she performed her first composition at the age of 8, in one of the many music festivals she entered, the work was bought by a publishing house. Gipps reflected that she had always found it "difficult to understand young people who don't know what they want to be when they grow up". For Gipps, from a young age, it was music.

She studied at the Royal College of Music and Durham University, where she became the youngest British woman to receive a doctorate in music. She was an accomplished all-round musician, as a soloist on both oboe and piano, as well as a prolific composer. When she was 33, a shoulder injury ended her performance career, and she decided to focus her energy on conducting and composition.

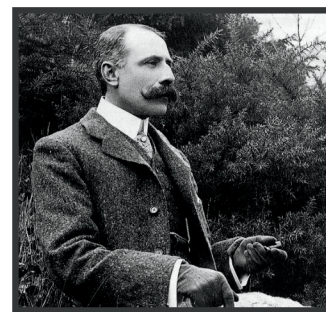
She experienced discrimination in the male-dominated music world (and particularly composition) by professors and judges as well as the world of music criticism. An example is that despite being a leading candidate for the permanent post of conductor of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, she was rejected because the appointment of a woman conductor was considered "indecent." Consequently, she developed a tough personality that many found off-putting, and a fierce determination to prove herself through her work. More than one critic described her as pugnacious. This toughness carried over into her personal life. She was a sports car enthusiast who drove her MG and Morgan with the top down in all kinds of English weather.



## ELGAR'S BELOVED *ENIGMA VARIATIONS*

**“THERE IS MUSIC IN THE AIR, MUSIC ALL AROUND US, THE WORLD IS FULL OF IT AND YOU SIMPLY TAKE AS MUCH AS YOU REQUIRE.” - SIR EDWARD ELGAR**

When one is asked to identify a composition by Edward Elgar, the immediate answer is *Pomp and Circumstance* which has been played at countless graduations. However, Elgar wrote a lot of other music. The CSO will perform his popular *Variations on an Original Theme* (“Enigma”), which was composed in 1899.



The *Enigma Variations* consists of the original theme and 14 short variations. While there are many theories about the meaning of “enigma”, it is widely thought that the mystery is that persons in the variations are not identified.

Elgar’s description of the *Variations* is instructive: “I have sketched a set of Variations on an original theme: the Variations have amused me because I’ve labeled ‘em with the nicknames of my particular friends. 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 quality idea & the result is amusing to those behind the scenes and won’t affect the hearer who “nose nuffin.” what think you?”

The composition was met with great critical acclaim. *The Musical Times* review was ecstatic, hailing it as “effortless originality ...combined with thorough savoir faire.” Another critic proclaimed the *Enigma Variations* “without parallel in the world of music – the announcement of a new creative presence on the world stage has never been made more brilliantly or completely.” And yet another argued that the greatest enigma was that such a magnificent work sprang from a composer who, until age 42, had yet to produce a masterpiece.

After its premiere, Elgar was hailed as the greatest English composer to date and his music gained worldwide recognition. The year after *Enigma*’s premiere, he was awarded an honorary doctorate from Cambridge University, and was subsequently knighted in 1904. Elgar’s *Variations* were his first major success and his first (and some would argue only) truly successful full-scale orchestral work.

Edward Elgar (1857-1933) was born a small English village. His father was a violinist, church organist, and owner of a music shop. He observed that “A stream of music flowed through our house and the shop. I was all the time bathing in it.” Elgar began taking piano and violin lessons by age eight, and his father, who tuned the pianos at many grand houses in Worcestershire, would sometimes take him along, giving him the chance to display his skill to important local figures. He became proficient on the violin, cello, bass, piano, bassoon, and trombone. Elgar received little formal training in composition, but he began composing when still a child; all his life he drew on his early sketchbooks for themes and inspiration. The habit of assembling his compositions, even large-scale ones, from scraps of themes jotted down randomly remained throughout his life.

Although Elgar is often regarded as a typically English composer, most of his musical influences were not from England but from continental Europe. He felt himself to be an outsider, not only musically, but socially. In musical circles dominated by academics, he was a self-taught composer; in Protestant Britain, his Roman Catholicism was regarded with suspicion in some quarters; and in the class-conscious society of Victorian and Edwardian Britain, he was acutely sensitive about his humble origins even after he achieved recognition. He struggled to achieve success until his forties, when after a series of moderately successful works his *Enigma Variations* became immediately popular in Britain and overseas.

In addition to being knighted, he received several other honors in Britain. Between 1902 and 1914, Elgar was at the height of popularity and he made four visits to the US, including one conducting tour. He earned considerable fees from the performance of his music and received an honorary doctorate from Yale. Elgar was the first composer to realize the potential of the gramophone. Between 1914 and 1925, he conducted a series of acoustic recordings of his works.



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