THE FREDERICKSBURG SYMPHONY

"BRIDGING A GREAT COMMUNITY WITH GREAT MUSIC"

-Valentine's Concert-



"WHAT I DID FOR LOVE"

Sponsored by Tricia & Thom Smelter

DR. KEVIN P. BARTRAM, MUSIC DIRECTOR

THOMAS PANDOLFI, PIANO

Friday, February 14, 2025
Monroe Auditorium 7:30 p.m.

FREDERICKSBURGSYMPHONY.ORG

Message from the Music Director



Happy Valentine's Day! The title of tonight's program comes from the hit song in Marvin Hamlisch's "A Chorus Line" whereby Cassie contemplates the impending end of her dancing career. "Kiss today good-bye, the sweetness and the sorrow. Wish me luck, the same to you. But I can't regret what I did for love."

In this program, the FSO will explore love's many facets: romantic love (Intermezzo), deep friendship (Enigma), physical attraction (Thais), and career accomplishment (What I Did for Love). However, just as most musical masterworks cater to multiple shades or levels of nuance, no single work in the concert strictly follows an emotional guiderail. Human emotion contains depths that are rarely fully plumbed and works such as *Enigma Variations* and *Rhapsody in Blue* take us on a journey that is at once exhilarating, exhausting, and meaningful.

I am motivated to program these works because they offer a glimpse into the composer's soul and mind, a time capsule into the heart. Just as we enjoy visiting museums, attending the theater, or reading great literature, these compositions teach us not only about the writer but also about ourselves and our capacity to feel. They illuminate our own search for happiness and fulfillment.

We are thrilled to perform the Gershwin tonight with notable American pianist Thomas Pandolfi. He specializes in the complex jazz/classical Gershwin mix which matches tonight's theme. Gershwin's talent for melody writing is demonstrated to the highest degree here, but let's not forget how accomplished a pianist Gershwin was. This is a work of the highest order, brimming with technical superiority and artistic expression. We're fortunate to have an artist of Mr. Pandolfi's quality with us tonight to bring it to life.

Thanks to Tricia and Thom Smelter for sponsoring tonight's concert. Their support from the FSO's inception has been invaluable. Thanks to Dr. Marci Catlett for hosting the FSO at James Monroe. Thanks to our FSO staff and volunteers for assisting with lighting, sound, ticketing, seating, and lobby. And finally, thanks to YOU for supporting your hometown symphony. Your generous donations make this all possible.

On behalf of the staff and musicians of the FSO and our Board of Directors, Happy Valentine's Day!

Kevin P. Bartram

Dr. Kevin P. Bartram, Music Director
Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra

PROGRAM

A Marvin Hamlisch Celebration ..... Hamlisch, arr. Tyzik

Intermezzo Sinfonico from "Cavalleria Rusticana" ..... Pietro Mascagni

Meditation from "Thais" ..... Jules Massenet
Robyn Bauer, violin

Rhapsody in Blue ..... George Gershwin
Thomas Pandolfi, piano

INTERMISSION

Canon in D Major, P. 37 ..... Johann Pachelbel

Enigma Variations, op. 36 ..... Edward Elgar
Theme (*Andante*)
Variation I (*L'istesso tempo*) "C.A.E."
Variation II (*Allegro*) "H.D.S.-P."
Variation III (*Allegretto*) "R.B.T."
Variation IV (*Allegro di molto*) "W.M.B."
Variation V (*Moderato*) "R.P.A."
Variation VI (*Andantino*) "Ysobel"
Variation VII (*Presto*) "Troyte"
Variation VIII (*Allegretto*) "W.N."
Variation IX (*Adagio*) "Nimrod"
Variation X (*Intermezzo: Allegretto*) "Dorabella"
Variation XI (*Allegro di molto*) "G.R.S."
Variation XII (*Andante*) "B.G.N."
Variation XIII (*Romanza: Moderato*) « **** »
Variation XIV (*Finale: Allegro*) "E.D.U."

FSO PERSONNEL

VIOLIN I
Robyn Bauer
Concertmaster
-The Sheldon Lampert Concertmaster Chair-
Rachel Pitts
Assoc. Concertmaster
Spencer Conroy
Luz Recinos
Fiona Studebaker
Charles Stout
Peter Wong
Kathy Buchanan

VIOLIN II
John-Rine Zabanal *-Principal*
Zachary Casebolt - *Ass't Principal*
Chris Dixon
Carly Steenstra
Anna Sammel
Michael Sienkowski
Michele Kucic
Tia Iverson

VIOLA
Sandy Goldie *-Principal*
Marta Perrine *-Ass't Principal*
Laura O'Konski
Benjamin Pereyra
Rob Leong
Kaylee Payne
Anita Williams
Jilleen Read

CELLO
Katherine Colburn *-Principal*
Christine Abeel *-Ass't Principal*
Anna Scully
Jacob Dean
Christine Hartigan
Debra Anker
Cameron Toler
Andreas Gould

BASS
Raymond Irving *-Principal*
Zachary W. Smith - *Ass't Principal*
Bryan Haderlie
Joey Lane

FLUTE
Marla Snyder *-Principal*
Deborah Clare

PICCOLO
Ali Dettmer

OBOE
Mary McClain *-Principal*
Laurel Siberts

ENGLISH HORN
Laurel Kuxhaus

CLARINET
Tony Moran *-Principal*
-The Mary Wynn Richmond McDaniel Principal Clarinet Chair-
Nicholas Belby

BASSOON
Walter Wynn *-Principal*
Jarrett Rodriguez*-Assoc. Principal*
Karen O'Donoghue

TRUMPET
Pat Neidich *-Principal*
-The Tessa and William Pou Principal Trumpet Chair-
Zachary Smith
Mike Huffman

HORN
Damien Bollino *-Co-Principal*
-The Mary Jane and Ron Branscome Principal Horn Chair-
Ryan Scott *-Ass't Principal*
Christopher Short
Elisabeth Deavers

TROMBONE
Eddie Steenstra *-Principal*
Douglas Haas

BASS TROMBONE
Austin Fairley

TUBA
Gary Carper
-The Susan and Al Roth Chair-

PERCUSSION
Kaitlin Gimm
Rainier Homoroc
Andrew Sheloski
David Vita

TIMPANI
Nora McIntire *-Principal*

HARP
Anastasia Pike

PIANO
James Pitts

HARPSICHORD/ORGAN
Amy Shirk

Love is in the air at the Fredericksburg Symphony Orchestra!

- To Patricia Frazer - my wife for 60 years. You are always on my mind. You are always in my heart. Yesterday, today, tomorrow - and forever. *Richard*
- To Terry - To my Valentine and sweet husband of 56 years. May God bless us with many more adventures together. Love you beyond measure, *Wanda*
- To Tommy - Darling, Tommy, What I did for love…I learned to like country music, drove a pickup, got my own tractor, embraced WV, learned to sing "Rocky Top", became a clergy wife…it is true love!! *Alice*
- To Kelli - A wonderful wife and a very special lady! Happy Valentine's Day! Love, *Bill*
- To Mary Anne - Be my valentine and I promise to do the dishes. *Keith*
- To Dr. DWM- Answering service: Paging Dr. DWM! Paging Dr. DWM! You are only on call for me now! Love, your Retirement Partner, *Dr. Mom*
- To Dolores - You bring enthusiasm and excitement to all you do. You light up the room with your presence, and light up my life with your love! *Jim*
- To Mary Jane - Thank you for Fifty wonderful years of marriage. Love Always, *Ron*
- To Tricia - Thank you for all you do. Love ya, *Thom*
- To JM - Roses Are Red, Violets are Blue, Let's make a new tile, That says "I love you." *RM*
- To Ron - Much love to my handsome husband of 50 years. Happy Valentine's Day, Ron. Much love, *Mary Jane*
- To Cindy - Happy Valentine's Day to my late wife and best friend, Cindy Burns. I miss you terribly. *Gordon*
- To Jill - To my Valentine, Jill - Our harmony may not always be perfect, but my heart beats for you! Love, *Shawn*
- To Mike and Liz Fogarty - Happy Valentine's Day to our sweet friends Mike & Liz! Love, *Ron & Mary Jane*
- To Sandy - Sandy, my Valentine of forty-one years—you deserve a prize, For repeating things when I forgot you told me. You've seen me at best, and at worst, Yet somehow, my dear, you haven't dispersed! You're gorgeous, you're patient, you're truly divine— And best of all… you're still mine! Love, *Bruce*
- To the Pickle Belles - Thanks for four+ years of (old) girl power, exercise, laughter and friendship on the courts at Pratt Park! *Miss Paddle*
- To Carol - All my love, forever! *John*
- To Linda - Still love you sooo much after 52 great years! *Norm*
- To my Humans - How dare you leave me home alone for something called a symphony. All nights that end in "Y" are supposed to be lazy nights where I lay next to you and take up most of the sofa. Oh and by the way, you left my dry food bowl only 9/10 of the way full and I may starve tonight because of this. Also, why did you leave this music on? You know I prefer Metallica. You three are in trouble so come home right now, ASAP! *Dash the Cat*
- To Miles - Even from the age of 12, you have been the steady support of my life's ups and downs–I treasure your unending love and laughter. *Kakie*
- To Dimitar - From high school sweethearts to parents-to-be—our last Valentine's Day before baby arrives! Every chapter with you is a dream come true. Can't wait for this next adventure together. Love you 4E4A. *Sophia*
- To Ellen - My Dear Mrs. H-M: Warmest wishes for a most Happy Valentine's Day, our first as husband and wife. With much love, "Mr. M." *Fred*
- To Alan - Alan, my world is a better place with you in it! Love, *Kay*
- To Judy - My life would not have been half as interesting without you in it. I treasure all of our memories from the day I met you to the day we said, "I do." From our children's first breath to seeing them grow into young adults. From sailing around the Caribbean, to dancing in Hawaii, and soon our trip to Italy, you have made my life an adventure. I thank God everyday you are my beautiful wife. Happy Valentines Day. *Stuart*
- To Nancy - 15 wonderful years and yet they feel like they've flown by in no time at all. To many more years of laughter, love, and music. I love you with all my heart. *Drew*
- To Mommy and Mason - I am so incredibly lucky to have you two as my valentines every year. I am so grateful for the life we built and I cherish everyday we get to be together as a family. You two are my favorite people and there is no limit to how much I love you. P.S. Despite what the cat said, he approved of this date. *Daddy*
- To Leslie - We had so much in common, but what could be more endearing than sharing a Brain Hemorrhage Shooter at Murphy's Grand Irish Pub on St Patrick's Day, 1987. No doubt we were meant to spend the next 37 years, and counting, together. All my love is forever with you. *William*
- To Mom/Grandmommy - Thank you for your love and support. We know how lucky we are to get to spend so much time with you. We love you. *H,J, and W*

Thomas Pandolfi



American pianist Thomas Pandolfi is an exciting virtuoso who, with each passing season, is becoming more and more sought after by audiences worldwide, and showered with superlatives by critics for his passionate artistry and amazing technique. His performances of Tchaikovsky, Rachmaninov, Chopin, Liszt and Gershwin have captured the hearts of listeners across the globe, and made him a popular and much beloved concerto soloist.

Upcoming performances during the 2024-25 season feature engagements with The Chesapeake Orchestra, Lakeview Orchestra, Monticello Chamber Orchestra, The Florence Symphony, The Fredericksburg Symphony, and The Symphony of Oak Park and River Forest, as well as a nationwide recital tour across 17 States. The 2023-24 season included guest soloist appearances with Symphonicity, Naptown Philharmonic, Washington Metropolitan Philharmonic, Kennedy Center Opera House Orchestra, and The Gettysburg Chamber Orchestra.

Thomas' international concerts have carried him across the globe to China and Europe; he enjoyed a successful summer of masterclasses and concerts in China, and will return there again later this season. An enthusiastic champion of new music, Thomas' most recent recording was recently released on Seafront Records featuring Polo Piatti's stunning Bohemian Concerto with Maestro John Andrews and The National Symphony Orchestra of London.

Mary Jane O'Neill Proudly Presents:

NEW! Lolli-Pops! etc.



"A Salute to Mother Earth"

Sat. March 15, 3:00-4:00pm

Monroe Auditorium



We're excited to launch our new children's concert series, Lolli-Pops! These one-hour concerts are a great introduction to the symphony. Free for children 18 and under, this is an opportunity to bring the entire family and hear great music.

Join us in the lobby at 2pm for our new FSO Learning Center!

Visit our website for the complete program and to get your tickets.

Note: Because this concert is free to children and has general seating, Lolli-Pops is not included in Season Ticket purchases.



A Marvin Hamlisch Celebration

Marvin Hamlisch (1944-2012)

Marvin Hamlisch was an American composer and one of only four people ever to win a Pulitzer Prize and an Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and Tony Award.

Hamlisch (born June 2, 1944) was born in New York to Jewish parents of Austrian descent. A child prodigy on the piano, Hamlisch was accepted into what is now the Juilliard School Pre-College Division when he was only seven years old. Over the course of the next few years he worked as a rehearsal pianist with Barbra Streisand and as a party player for Sam Spiegel. In 1963, Hamlisch enrolled at Queens College and graduated with a Bachelor of Arts in 1967.

At the age of 21, Hamlisch scored his first true hit when the song "Sunshine, Lollipops, and Rainbows" reached number 13 on the Billboard Hot 100 in the summer of 1965. In 1968, he composed his first film score for the movie *The Swimmer* starring Burt Lancaster and Janet Landgard.

Real success for Hamlisch came in the 1970's. In 1973, he adapted ragtime music for the movie *The Sting*, whose theme song hit #1 on the Billboard Adult Contemporary Chart and #3 on the Hot 100. In 1974, he won two Academy Awards and four Grammy Awards for his musical score to the romantic drama *The Way We Were*. In 1975, he composed the score for the Broadway musical "A Chorus Line," winning both a Tony Award and a Pulitzer Prize. In 1977, he co-wrote the lead song for the James Bond classic *The Spy Who Loved Me* for which he was nominated for an Oscar.

Through the 1980's and 1990's, he continued to compose new musical scores and also worked with Barbra Streisand on her 1994 concert tour of the US and England as well as her television special, "Barbra Streisand: The Concert," for which he won two Emmy Awards.

In total, Hamlisch won three Academy Awards, two Golden Globes, four Emmy Awards, four Grammy Awards, a Pulitzer Prize, and a Tony Award. He was inducted into the Long Island Music Hall of Fame in 2008 and was awarded a Lifetime Achievement Award at the World Soundtrack Awards in 2009. His musical scores appeared in 45 movies and films, including such classics as *A Streetcar Named Desire*, *Sophie's Choice*, and *The Informant*.

Over the course of his long and distinguished career, Hamlisch served as principal pops conductor for orchestras in Pittsburgh, Milwaukee, Dallas, Pasadena, Seattle, and San Diego.

On August 6, 2012, at the age of 68, Hamlisch passed away following a brief illness. Marking his passing, Streisand released a statement praising Hamlisch, stating that "his brilliantly quick mind, his generosity and delicious sense of humor that made him a delight to be around." In honor of Hamlisch's work in the arts, Manhattan's forty Broadway theatres all dimmed their lights for one minute.

-Found online at jewishvirtuallibrary.org/marvin-hamlisch

Note: In 2004, Hamlisch performed in Fredericksburg with the UMW Philharmonic under the direction of Maestro Bartram, marking the first of Bartram's "Celebrity" concerts in Fredericksburg.

Cavalleria Rusticana

Pietro Mascagni (1863-1945)

Cavalleria Rusticana (Rustic Chivalry) is an opera in one act by Italian composer Pietro Mascagni. It was premiered on 17 May, 1890, at the Teatro Costanzi in Rome, Italy. The libretto, written by Giovanni Targioni-Tozzetti and Guido Menasci, was based on the short story of the same title by novelist Giovanni Verga. Mascagni submitted *Cavalleria Rusticana* as an entry in a contest for the best unpublished one-act opera, sponsored by the music publisher Casa Sonzogno. It won first prize, and it was considered a great success at its first performance; however, none of Mascagni's 14 subsequent operas met with great success. Due to its brevity, *Cavalleria Rusticana* is often paired with another one-act opera, most often Leoncavallo's *Pagliacci*.

In the opera, two sweethearts, Lola and Turiddu, are separated by Turiddu's military service. In his absence, Lola marries a local man (Alfio). When Turiddu returns he is angry and begins an affair with a local girl to arouse Lola's jealousies. Despite their relationships to others, Lola and Turiddu resume their love. When Alfio discovers this, he challenges Turiddu to a duel, and Turiddu is killed. *The Intermezzo* is the best-known melody from the opera.

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Méditation from Thaïs

Jules Massenet (1842-1912)

Although it is often performed as a concert work, the achingly beautiful strains of the *Meditation* originate in the opera house as an intermezzo in Massenet's masterpiece, *Thaïs*. Although still performed to this day, it does not have a secure position in the operatic repertoire in the way that his *Manon* and *Werther* do. The title role in the opera was composed for the young Californian soprano Sybil Sanderson, who was known both for her vocal prowess and physical beauty. Massenet was enchanted by her, having already made significant changes to his hit *Manon* and written the opera *Esclarmonde* for her when he began composing *Thaïs*. The story follows the life of the famed Alexandrian courtesan Thaïs and the monk Athanaël who has come to convince her to renounce her sinful life. She is driven into hysterics by the monk's words, seeing emptiness in her life and the approach of old age, until she collapses.

The famous *Meditation* that follows her collapse musically depicts her conversion to a life of piety. The opera ends tragically, as Athanaël, having successfully converted her and returned to his monastery, is tormented by what he realizes is love for the former courtesan. He returns to Alexandria to find her dead and confesses his love and physical desire for her to the unhearing ears of her corpse. Religious conversion aside, the *Meditation* is a superbly beautiful melody crafted with extreme delicacy. It is no wonder that it has found a place in the repertoire independent of the opera and, though originally for solo violin and orchestra, has been arranged for almost every instrument imaginable.

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Rhapsody in Blue

George Gershwin (1898-1937)

Rhapsody in Blue occupies a special place in American music: it introduced jazz to classical concert audiences and simultaneously made an instant star of its composer. From its instantly recognizable opening whine in the clarinet through its brilliant finale, Rhapsody in Blue epitomizes the Gershwin sound and instantly transformed the 25-year-old songwriter from Tin Pan Alley into a composer of "serious" music.

The story of how *Rhapsody in Blue* came about is as captivating as the music itself. On January 4, 1924, Ira Gershwin showed George a news report in the *New York Tribune* about a concert put together by jazz bandleader Paul Whiteman that would endeavor to trace the history of jazz (Whiteman gave this concert a rather grandiose title, "An Experiment in Modern Music.") The report concluded with a brief announcement: "George Gershwin is at work on a jazz concerto." This was certainly news to Gershwin, who was then in rehearsals for a Broadway show, *Sweet Little Devil*. Gershwin contacted Whiteman to refute the *Tribune* article, but Whiteman eventually talked Gershwin into taking the job. Whiteman also sweetened the deal by offering to have Ferde Grofé orchestrate Gershwin's music for orchestra. Gershwin completed *Rhapsody in Blue* in three weeks.

Gershwin's phenomenal talent as a pianist wowed the audience as much as the novelty of jazz stylings in a "classical" piece of music. The original opening clarinet solo, written by Gershwin, got its trademark jazzy glissando from Whiteman's clarinetist Ross Gorman. This opening unleashes a floodgate of colorful ideas, which blend seamlessly into one another. The pulsing syncopated rhythms and showy music later give way to a warm, expansive melody Sergei Rachmaninoff could have written.

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Canon in D Major

Johann Pachelbel (1653-1706)

Pachelbel's Canon, musical work for three violins and ground bass (basso continuo) by German composer Johann Pachelbel, admired for its serene yet joyful character. It is Pachelbel's best-known composition and one of the most widely performed pieces of Baroque music. Although it was composed about 1680–90, the piece was not published until the early 20th century.

Pachelbel's Canon uses a musical form—the canon—that is similar to that of the French folk song "Frère Jacques" though more complicated in design. The piece begins with one melody in the ground bass—typically performed by a cello and a harpsichord or organ. That melody is then repeated in different registers and instrumental parts while other melodies are added, usually in the upper registers. In an intricate canon such as Pachelbel's, the basic melody gradually grows and evolves, becoming more and more elaborate each time it returns. The work's accompanying gigue, a lively Baroque dance, was created in the same key and intended to be played immediately after the canon, but it is largely forgotten today.

Pachelbel's Canon was relatively obscure until the late 20th century, when it experienced a surge in

popularity. It was included in numerous television and film sound tracks—notably that of the 1980 film *Ordinary People*—and became a standard in general collections of classical music. It also became a common feature of wedding celebrations, especially in the United States. The band Trans-Siberian Orchestra transformed it into a Christmas song. By the 21st century *Pachelbel's Canon* had been transcribed for a full array of instruments, both acoustic and electronic, and it was rarely heard performed by the instruments for which it was originally written.

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Enigma Variations, op. 36
Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

More than a decade after the *Enigma Variations* were composed, Elgar reflectively stated in 1911 that the variations started "in a spirit of humour, and continued in deep seriousness." The story goes that after a long, grueling day of teaching, Elgar returned home and sat at his piano and began improvising a melody. His wife Alice was struck by the tune and as the evening continued he began improvising variations to go with the melody. In his exhaustion and playfulness with Alice he began including characteristics of several of his friends and colleagues in the variations. He sent what he had written to his publisher August Jaeger, himself an inspiration for one of the variations, with the following note: "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—you are Nimrod. 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 … if they were asses enough to compose."

To whom each variation refers, and why, is clearly outlined in Elgar's words; the "enigma" however, is a mystery for the ages. Elgar succeeded at the very definition of the word, made most clear by this note that accompanied the work to its first annotator: "The Variations should stand simply as a piece of music. 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 larger theme "goes," but it is not played … So the principal theme never appears, even as in some late dramas … the chief character is never on the stage." Enigmatic indeed.

There is some debate as to the origin of the theme and whether or not the "enigma" is in relation to the theme, and if the theme is borrowed from a previous work. Since Elgar entitles his work, *Variations on an Original Theme* and his story states that the melody developed out of an evening of fatigued improv, that would seem to be the answer. But some have argued that the puzzle of the "enigma" lies within the theme itself. Some conjectured origins of the theme include "Auld Lang Syne," "God Save the Queen," "Rule, Britannia!," a portion of Mozart's "Prague" Symphony, and even "Pop Goes the Weasel." In 1953 the *Saturday Evening Review* held a contest to identify the enigmatic theme. The results were interesting and varied, but again, nothing compelling enough for scholars to confirm. There is a camp that believes the "enigma" lies in

a second theme which must be pieced together from the original theme and its variations; this has yet to be convincingly proven. Still others speculate as to whether the "enigma" has to do with a grander and larger scoped idea throughout the work. Some suggest friendship as the "unplayed" theme; others suggest it is the composer's feelings of loneliness and isolation; and there is a contingent that believes the work's mystery could unlock a heretofore undiscovered literary reference.

Elgar's *Enigma Variations* premiered on June 19, 1899 at St. James's Hall in London with the esteemed Hans Richter conducting. After its premiere Elgar was almost immediately hailed as the greatest English composer to date and his music gained worldwide recognition. The year after *Enigma's* premiere, Elgar was awarded an honorary doctorate by 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. Perhaps on a suggestion of Richter or August Jaeger (see Variation IX), Elgar reworked the last variation by adding 100 measures and an organ part. This revised version premiered at the Worcester Three Choirs Festival in September of 1899 with the composer conducting.

Elgar dedicated his *Enigma Variations* "to my friends pictured within," and begins with the theme, followed by fourteen variations. The theme is broken into two parts; the first, a reflective theme in g minor which features the interval of the seventh, a particular favorite of Elgar's; and the second, in G Major providing a more hopeful and uplifting sensibility.

Variation I (L'istesso tempo) "C.A.E."

Caroline Alice Elgar, the composer's wife. 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 D. Steuart-Powell. Steuart-Powell played piano in Elgar's trio. Elgar mimics the pianist's trademark way in which he warmed-up on the piano.

Variation III (Allegretto) "R.B.T."

Richard Baxter Townshend, the popular author of *A Tenderfoot in Colorado*. Elgar imitates his tendency to raise the pitch of his voice when excited.

Variation IV (Allegro di molto) "W.M.B."

William Meath Baker. Baker was a country squire with a gruff disposition and a propensity for making hasty exits, often slamming the door when doing so. Elgar says that he would "forcibly read out the arrangements for the day" to his guests.

Variation V (Moderato) "R.P.A."

Richard P. Arnold, son of the poet Matthew Arnold. He was a young philosopher who according to Elgar, "His serious conversation was continually broken up by whimsical and witty remarks."

Variation VI (Andantino) "Ysobel"

Isabel Fitton, a friend of Elgar who tried to learn the viola under the composer's tutelage. It seems likely she was not a very good student and ended her lessons stating, "I value our friendship much too much." The

viola is the featured instrument of this variation and contains many string crossings, an homage to Isabel's struggle with this particular aspect of playing a stringed instrument.

Variation VII (Presto) "Troyte"

Arthur Troyte Griffith, another of Elgar's less than successful students. According to Elgar, the variation depicts Troyte's "maladroit essays to play the pianoforte; later the strong rhythm suggests the attempts of the instructor (E.E.) to make something like order out of chaos, and the final despairing 'slam' records that the effort proved to be in vain."

Variation VIII (Allegretto) "W.N."

Winifred Norbury. This variation is less about Miss Norbury and more about her charming house that Elgar enjoyed so much. It was the site of many musical performances and musician gatherings.

Variation IX (Adagio) "Nimrod"

August Jaeger, Elgar's publisher and close friend. "Jaeger" is German for "hunter," and Nimrod is one of the Old Testament's fiercest hunters. According to Dora Penny (see Variation X), Elgar confided in her that this variation is not about Jaeger as much as a conversation with him. One day Elgar was very frustrated and considered giving up composing. Jaeger stepped in and compared Elgar's struggles to those of Beethoven. He asked the composer how he thought Beethoven must have felt, having to compose while going deaf. Jaeger then told Elgar that as Beethoven's hearing got worse, his music became more beautiful, and encouraged Elgar to take that lesson to heart. Jaeger then sang the slow movement to Beethoven's "Pathetique" Sonata for his depressed friend. Elgar told Dora Penny that the opening of "Nimrod" suggests the "Pathetique." He said, "Can't you hear it at the beginning? Only a hint, not a quotation."

"Nimrod" is the most famous of the variations and is often programmed without the rest of the work. It is most notably used in England for events such as funerals and memorial services, and is always played on Remembrance Sunday, a ceremony acknowledging the sacrifices of British servicemen and women in both World Wars and subsequent conflicts. In the United States, it has often been used for 9/11 tributes.

Variation X (Intermezzo) "Dorabella"

Dora Penny. Ms. Penny was a young and vivacious friend of the Elgars who had a slight stutter that Elgar depicts in this variation. Dora was William Meath Baker's (Variation IV) sister's stepdaughter and Richard Baxter Townshend's (Variation III) sister-in-law.

Variation XI (Allegro di molto) "G.R.S."

Dr. G.R. Sinclair. Dr. Sinclair was the organist at Hereford Cathedral who owned a dog for which the variation is based. Elgar writes, "The first few bars were suggested by his great bulldog Dan (a well-known character) falling down a steep bank into the River Wye; his paddling up stream to find a landing place; and rejoicing bark on landing."

Variation XII (Andante) "B.G.N."

Basil G. Nevinson, the cellist in Elgar's trio. This variation features the cello section in honor of Nevinson, Elgar's "serious and devoted friend."

Variation XIII (Romanza: Moderato) "*"**

Lady Mary Lygon. Elgar could not secure permission to use the initials "L.M.L" for this variation so

instead he used three asterisks in their place. His good friend Lady Lygon was in the midst of a sea voyage to Australia when the variations were being prepared for publication so she was unavailable to give her permission. To evoke the mood of her journey, Elgar quotes Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* in the clarinet solo.

Another theory is that this variation is actually about Helen Weaver, a woman to whom Elgar was engaged for more than a year. She left him, also by boat, in 1885. This theory does not explain the use of three, rather than two, asterisks to represent the dedicatee's initials, however. Although, it is plausible that Elgar wrote about Helen Weaver but was able to disguise this effortlessly by the voyage of his friend Lady Mary Lygon.

Variation XIV (Finale: Allegro) "E.D.U."

This stands for Edu or Edoo, Alice Elgar's nickname for her husband. This variation is a portrait of Elgar himself. He brings together the themes from Variations I and IX (Alice Elgar and August Jaeger) to represent his two greatest supporters. He writes, "Written at a time when friends were dubious and generally discouraging as to the composer's musical future, this variation is merely intended to show what E.D.U. intended to do. References are made to two great influences upon the life of the composer: C.A.E. and Nimrod. The whole work is summed up in the triumphant broad presentation of the theme in the major."

Sir Edward Elgar did such a masterful job of hiding the "enigma" part of his variations that it is still to this day unknown. Theories abound, but no one has been able to definitively or concretely state with complete certainty what the "enigma" is to which Elgar referred. In the early years after its composition, Elgar seemed to enjoy the endless speculation on the "enigma;" he began to grow weary of this however, and in his later years would merely refer to the work as "my Variations."

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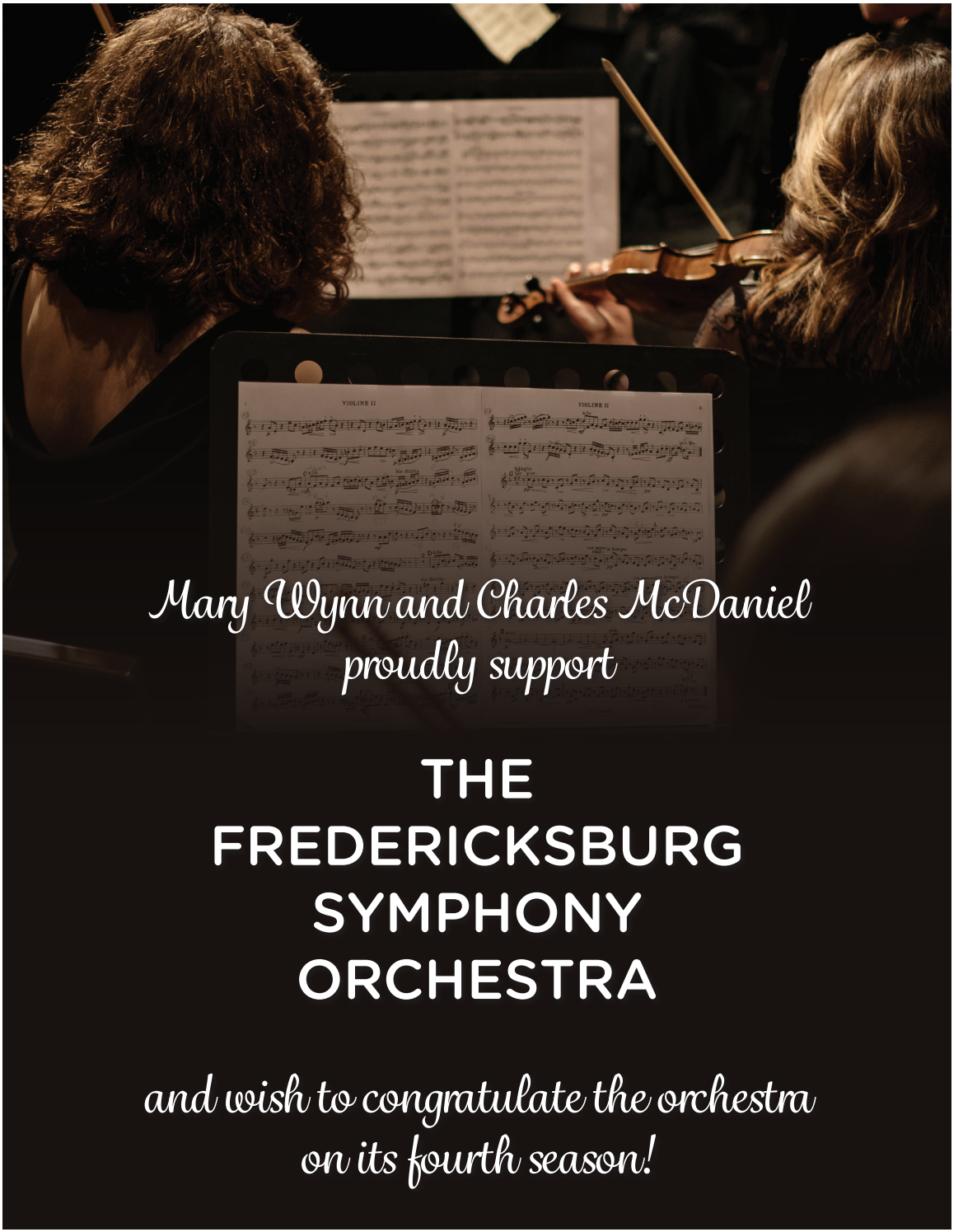
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