

Minnesota Orchestra

Sir Donald Runnicles, conductor
Jacquelyn Stucker, soprano

Thursday, October 13, 2022, 11 am | Orchestra Hall
Friday, October 14, 2022, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall
Saturday, October 15, 2022, 8 pm | Orchestra Hall

With these concerts we offer our deepest gratitude to the more than 14,000 Guaranty Fund donors who help the Orchestra enrich, inspire and serve the community through outstanding musical experiences.

Please refer to a program insert to learn about the impact of generous donor support.

Carlos Simon	<i>An Elegy: A Cry from the Grave</i>	ca. 5'
Alban Berg	Seven Early Songs Nacht Schilflied Die Nachtigall Traumgekrönt Im Zimmer Liebesode Sommertage <i>Jacquelyn Stucker, soprano</i>	ca. 15'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 20'
Ralph Vaughan Williams	Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis	ca. 15'
Edward Elgar	<i>In the South</i> , Opus 50, Concert Overture (<i>Alassio</i>)	ca. 19'

thank you

Thanks to the **John S. Pillsbury Family** for their generous gift in support of the Guarantor's Week concerts.

Minnesota Orchestra concerts are broadcast live on Friday evenings on stations of [YourClassical Minnesota Public Radio](#), including KSJN 99.5 FM in the Twin Cities.



Sir Donald Runnicles, conductor

Sir Donald Runnicles is the general music director of the Deutsche Oper Berlin and music director of the Grand Teton Music Festival, as well as principal guest conductor of both the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and the Sydney Symphony Orchestra. He is also conductor emeritus of the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, having served as chief conductor from 2009 to 2016. His 2021-22 season was highlighted by performances of the complete Ring Cycle at the Deutsche Oper Berlin, *Elektra* at the Metropolitan Opera, and a concert version of *Hansel and Gretel* with the Atlanta Symphony. While he was music director of the San Francisco Opera he led the world premieres of

John Adams' *Doctor Atomic* and Conrad Susa's *Les Liaisons dangereuses*. His recording of Wagner arias with Jonas Kaufmann and the Orchestra of the Deutsche Oper Berlin won the 2013 Gramophone Award for Best Vocal Recording. A native of Edinburgh, Scotland, he was appointed OBE in 2004, and was made a Knight Bachelor in 2020. More: opus3artists.com, donaldrunnicles.org.



Jacquelyn Stucker, soprano

A hugely versatile artist, American soprano Jacquelyn Stucker masters a broad ranging repertoire of concert works, recital, opera and contemporary music. In the 2022-23 season, she

returns to her alma mater, the Royal Opera House for a role debut as Pamina in *The Magic Flute*, and to the Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia as Zerlina in *Don Giovanni*. On the concert platform, she makes her debut with the Oslo Philharmonic and conductor Klaus Mäkelä for Beethoven's *Missa Solemnis*. She performed at the Royal Opera House last season as well, as Karolka in *Jenůfa*, and made house debuts at the Festival d'Aix-en-Provence in the title role of *L'incoronazione di Poppea*, and at Palau de les Arts Reina Sofia as Dalinda in *Ariodante*. Last season she also performed with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, NDR Elbphilharmonie Orchester and Washington Concert Opera. Other recent highlights include her debut as Freia in *Das Rheingold* at Deutsche Oper Berlin; house and role debuts as Armida in *Rinaldo* at Glyndebourne; and a solo recital of U.K. premieres of music by John Harbison, Federico Favali and Mark Kilstofte. A graduate of the New England Conservatory with a doctorate in musical arts, she is an alumna of the Jette Parker Young Artist Programme at the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. More: intermusica.co.uk.

one-minute notes

Simon: *An Elegy: A Cry from the Grave*

Carlos Simon states that his *Elegy*, composed in 2015 and characterized by strong lyricism and lush harmonies, “is an artistic reflection dedicated to those who have been murdered wrongfully by an oppressive power; namely Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner and Michael Brown.”

Berg: *Seven Early Songs*

Late in his career, Berg orchestrated seven piano-and-voice songs from his teenage years—pleasant music that looks back to the Romanticism of Richard Strauss rather than the experimentalist style founded by Berg's teacher Schoenberg.

Vaughan Williams: *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*

Derived from a psalm setting created by Henry VIII's organist, Thomas Tallis, this work of both grandeur and intimacy calls for an unusual three-part ensemble—two string orchestras playing antiphonally, in addition to a solo quartet formed by the leaders of the string section.

Elgar: *In the South*

On his first trip to Italy, Elgar also enjoyed a blissful stroll in the tiny republic of Andorra. A pastoral scene on the old Roman Way—a shepherd near the ancient ruins of a chapel—inspired this concert overture, whose images contrast the shimmering beauty of the hilly countryside with vast battles once waged by Roman armies.



Carlos Simon

Born: 1986,
Washington, D.C.

An Elegy: A Cry from the Grave

Composed: 2015

This past July the Minnesota Orchestra opened its summer season with a short work by contemporary American composer Carlos Simon called *Fate Now Conquers*, which drew its inspiration from a Ludwig van Beethoven journal entry that itself was a quotation from the ancient Greek Homer. In contrast, the music by Simon that we hear tonight is very urgently rooted in the here-and-now.

In 2014, the fatal shooting of unarmed Black teenager Michael Brown by police in Ferguson, Missouri, weighed heavily on Simon's mind. When it became clear that the officer who killed Brown would not face a trial, the Atlanta-based composer responded in 2015 by composing *An Elegy: A Cry from the Grave*, originally for string quartet and subsequently reworked in versions for string orchestra and saxophone quartet.

words from the composer

Simon has offered the following comments on his *Elegy*:

“This piece is an artistic reflection dedicated to those who have been murdered wrongfully by an oppressive power; namely Trayvon Martin, Eric Garner and Michael Brown. The stimulus for composing the piece came as a result of prosecuting attorney Robert McCulloch announcing that a selected jury had decided not to indict police officer Darren Wilson after fatally shooting an unarmed teenager, Michael Brown, in Ferguson, Missouri. The evocative nature of the piece draws on strong lyricism and a lush harmonic charter. A melodic idea is played in all the voices of the ensemble at some point of the piece either whole or fragmented. The recurring ominous motif represents the cry of those struck down unjustly in this country. While the predominant essence of the piece is sorrowful and contemplative, there are moments of extreme hope represented by bright consonant harmonies.”

Simon and the Minnesota Orchestra

The Minnesota Orchestra's string section performed *An Elegy: A Cry from the Grave* once previously, and the circumstances were markedly different. The musicians played Simon's music

to an empty Orchestra Hall on May 28, 2021, with COVID-19 protocols not yet eased to allow in-person audiences. Instead, the performance was broadcast live via TV, radio and online streaming, reaching audiences during a weekend when many were reflecting on the one-year anniversary of the murder of George Floyd and the conviction of Derek Chauvin a month earlier.

A signature performance of the Minnesota Orchestra's 2022-23 season will be next May's premiere of a major work the Orchestra has commissioned from Simon; called *brea(d)th*, it will be scored for orchestra, choir and vocal soloists with libretto by Marc Bamuthi Joseph. The Orchestra approached Simon about composing a new work in the wake of George Floyd's murder, and the composer and librettist accepted the commission with the vision that its scope should expand to address broader themes of racial equity, community healing, reflection, intention and organized hope. In a recent profile by Vanessa Ague for *I Care If You Listen*, Simon stated that with *bread(t)h*, “We don't want to just talk about the moment and document that moment. We want to talk about the resolution and the antidote.” The composer and librettist are making several visits to Minneapolis to deepen the collaborative connections between the creators, the Orchestra and the community.

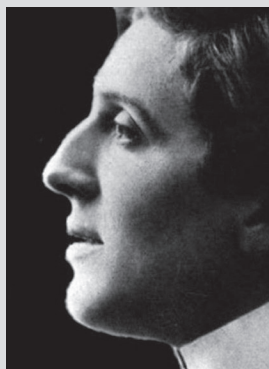
about the composer

Carlos Simon is one of the most in-demand classical composers working in the U.S. today. Last year brought two high honors: he began serving as composer in residence at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., and was named a recipient of the Sphinx Organization's most prestigious accolade, the Sphinx Medal of Excellence.

Aside from composing concert works in a variety of genres from large ensembles to chamber music and opera, Simon is an experienced and award-winning film composer, music director and keyboardist who has toured nationally and internationally. He is also an assistant professor of composition at Georgetown University. His newest album, *Requiem For The Enslaved*, was released in June 2022 on the Decca label, and his work *Let America Be America Again* (text by Langston Hughes) will be featured in an upcoming PBS documentary chronicling the inaugural Gabriela Lena Frank Academy of Music, a class he was part of in 2017. He holds a doctorate degree from the University of Michigan, where he studied with Michael Daugherty and Evan Chambers, as well as degrees from Georgia State University and Morehouse College; in addition, he was a Sundance/Time Warner Composer Fellow.

Instrumentation: string orchestra

Program note by Carl Schroeder.



Alban Berg

Born: February 9, 1885,
Vienna, Austria

Died: December 24, 1935,
Vienna, Austria

Seven Early Songs

Composed: 1905-08

Premiered: November 6, 1928

Having an older brother and a younger sister who were talented singers impelled Alban Berg to begin writing songs when he was still a boy, and he produced quite a few by his late teenage years, between 1900 and 1904. In the latter year, without a word to him, his brother showed some of those songs to Arnold Schoenberg. Just turned 30 but already the composer of the groundbreaking string sextet *Transfigured Night*, Schoenberg was especially respected as a teacher; he was sufficiently impressed to invite Berg to call on him, and he took him on as a pupil, without fee. Berg remained Schoenberg's pupil for six years, and was a close friend and colleague to the end of Berg's life. (Schoenberg outlived both of his preeminent pupils, Berg and Anton Webern.)

written for pleasure

When Berg first began to study with Schoenberg, the realm of song continued to be his focal point. In 1907 he was represented in a concert of music by Schoenberg's pupils by three of his newly composed songs: *The Nightingale*, *A Crown of Dreams* and *Lovers' Ode*. Two years earlier he had composed a setting of Johannes Schlaf's poem *Indoors*, and by 1908 he had composed three more which were to form the remainder of what became the Seven Early Songs: *Night*, *Song Amongst the Reeds* and *Summer Days*; these three were to wait two decades to be presented to the public.

In her 1979 biography of Berg, Karen Monson suggested that these seven songs were probably not submitted in Schoenberg's classes, but were more likely written during summers at the Berg family's summer residence in the Carinthian mountains, when the young composer was free from exercises in theory and counterpoint and from the instrumental exercises Schoenberg was giving in order to teach his students the rules of orchestration. These songs were written for pure pleasure. Just as they show where Berg started, they point in the direction he was to follow.

In composing these songs Berg showed he had absorbed the work of the great song composers of the preceding century, and reflected most strongly the profound influence of Richard Strauss. Monson pointed out that "Berg started from the most romantic side" of

Strauss, and that he attended more than a few performances of *Salome* in the months following the opera's 1905 Dresden premiere. The songs composed under such an influence, she observed, "are packed with Straussian expansiveness; in only two or three measures, the introductions of several of the songs seem to open doors on vast, mile-high vistas."

Strauss, whose father was an orchestral musician, was a born orchestrator. Schoenberg noted that when Berg first came to him as a pupil his preoccupation with songs had left him "incapable of writing an instrumental movement, of finding an instrumental theme," but that Schoenberg had recognized and "corrected the deficiency and...Berg had found his way to a very good style of orchestration."

repackaged for orchestra

The seven songs discussed here were originally composed with only piano accompaniment, and with no particular thought of their being related to one another. It was not until 1928 that Berg had the idea of orchestrating them and packaging them as a set. The premiere of his opera *Wozzeck* had been given in Berlin three years earlier, and by then Berg had behind him all of his works except *Lulu*, which he left unfinished, and the Violin Concerto, which became his valediction. In 1925, while preparing for the premiere of *Wozzeck*, as he was beginning work on *Lulu*, he apparently wanted to provide himself with an important premiere in order to hold the public's interest, and that is how he came to select seven of his early songs—three of which had been performed once or twice with piano accompaniment, and the other four not at all—and package them as a set in new orchestral settings. Hence the title, at this late stage of his career, Seven Early Songs.

The premiere, given in Vienna on November 6, 1928, was quite successful. Berg had chosen, in Monson's words, songs that would in no way offend listeners' ears and would recall the tradition from which he had grown. Berg's impressionable youth did not shame him, and he never denied the musical past that nourished him. If anything, the orchestration of these songs tie them even more closely to that past, accentuating their debts to Strauss and to Mahler, and separating them from the relative sparseness that would become a trademark of the "new school." It would be hard to imagine Schoenberg or even Webern having agreed to resurrect works such as these Seven Early Songs to represent them during their maturity. Berg not only brought the music out and set it before the public; he gave reason to believe that he reveled in the process.

the seven songs

The texts themselves should prepare the listener for the sort of music, but Monson is once again a helpful guide. The first song, *Night*, was for her "a door-opening metaphor" that may bring to mind the open of Bartók's *Duke Bluebeard's Castle*, while the

echoes of Strauss and Wagner in that song give way to Mahler's influence in the second one, *Song Amongst the Reeds*, "especially in the transparent orchestration and the sweetness of the treatment of [the] nostalgic text."

Monson continued: "Divided strings accompany the third song, *The Nightingale*, giving a great feeling of depth and proportion that looks back to Brahms, an impression strengthened by the traditional cadence and the song's straight A-B-A form, with the first verse of the poem repeated verbatim at the end.

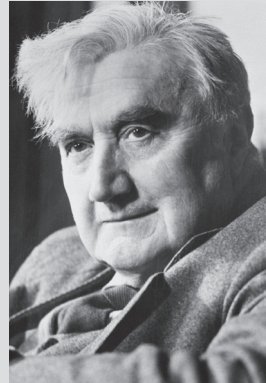
"*A Crown of Dreams*, the fourth song...plays on the words' nervousness. And the orchestra moves according to Strauss; a rising line in the lower strings under the words "you came sweetly and softly" predicts a parallel but even more magical moment in Berg's last work, the Violin Concerto.

"*Indoors*...[pays] special attention to woodwinds, forms, harp and percussion....There is a remarkable parallel here to *Der Rosenkavalier* in particular at the Strauss' music in general, especially to the composer's more domestic aspect.

"*Lovers' Ode*, the last of the seven songs in their probable order of composition, is the one that bows most deeply in the direction of Schoenberg, both in the music and in the choice of text....And the last of the songs, *Summer Days*, bows again in the comfortable direction of romanticism and heads for a rich, grand cadence, in which Berg was not afraid to let the cymbals ring out on the singer's last note."

Instrumentation: solo soprano with orchestra comprising 2 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, trumpet, 2 trombones, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, tamtam, triangle, harp, celesta and strings

Program note by **Richard Freed**.



Ralph Vaughan Williams

Born: October 12, 1872,
Down Ampney,
Gloucestershire, England
Died: August 26, 1958,
London, England

Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis

Premiered: September 6, 1910

To place the great English composer Ralph Vaughan Williams in music history, consider that he was born two years before Arnold Schoenberg and three years before Maurice Ravel, and wrote music like neither of them. From Vaughan Williams came what the eminent lexicographer Nicolas Slonimsky called a "gloriously self-consistent English style of composition," rooted in folksong and distinctly English materials, but expressed in a modern musical language.

Vaughan Williams was energized by his belief, humane and social, that music is foremost for the people. In a career spanning more than six decades as composer, teacher, conductor, writer and collector of folk music, he emerged as the commanding figure in the 20th-century revival of English music. He plumbed the wellspring of the native idiom, from the simplest tunes of the Gloucestershire folk to the brilliant music produced by luminaries of the Elizabethan Court. Of all his works, none is more representative of his musical point of view than the *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*, which dates from 1910.

origins in the Renaissance

The texture of Vaughan Williams' *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis* derives from the elaborate modal counterpoint of the Renaissance, when the harmonic fabric of music was produced by a masterful weaving of equal and independent lines. The result is the sumptuous multi-voiced texture that is the essence of 16th-century style.

The *Fantasia's* borrowed tune—austere, yet moving—stems from a psalm setting by the organist of Henry VIII's Chapel Royal: Thomas Tallis (1505–1585). Vaughan Williams came upon the theme in an English psalter compiled by the Archbishop of Canterbury in 1567; there its purpose was to demonstrate the nature of the third ecclesiastical mode, also known as the Phrygian mode. (Those with piano training may visualize this mode as an octave of white keys beginning on the pitch E.) Because the theme is not in a traditional major or minor key, it opens new harmonic possibilities which

Vaughan Williams exploits masterfully. In the borrowed material, he found both the grandeur and intimacy vital to his own expression.

As if to mirror the old practice of separating groups of performers and placing them in different parts of a church in order to alternate with each other and blend in various units, Vaughan Williams divides the large body of orchestral strings into three sections: a double orchestra consisting both of massed strings and a compact unit of nine players, and a solo quartet formed by the leaders. The interaction of Vaughan Williams' strings evokes the vast, resonant spaces of Gloucester Cathedral, where the composer conducted the London Symphony Orchestra in the first performance of the *Fantasia* on September 6, 1910, at the famous Three Choirs Festival.

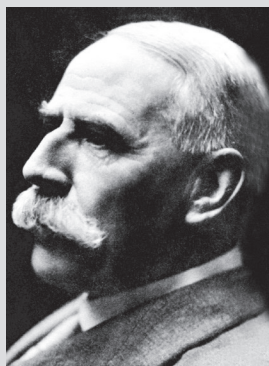
the music: a mighty sonic tapestry

The introduction is quiet: under a note sustained high in violins, pizzicato strings below hint at the Tallis tune. When the full statement at last is uttered, the subject is fleshed out in the Tudor composer's own nine-part harmonization; rich arpeggiations embellish its repetition. Now the string orchestras divide into antiphonal units: while the larger contingent—which contains the solo quartet—comments on one segment of the theme, a response is offered by the smaller group's swaying subject.

As the process of variation continues, a fresh idea derived from the Tallis source subsequently turns up in a solo viola. (The identical tune is associated with the celestial city in Vaughan Williams' dramatic work *The Pilgrim's Progress*.) All three groups deal with variants of the melody, building a mighty sonic tapestry at the peak of which the complete Tallis theme resonates in the full string ensemble. Such music is inseparable from its environment, whether a vaulted cathedral or an acoustically live concert hall.

Instrumentation: double string orchestra and string quartet

Program note by *Mary Ann Feldman*.



Edward Elgar

Born: June 2, 1857,
Broadheath, England
Died: February 23, 1934,
Worcester, England

In the South, Opus 50, Concert Overture (Alassio)

Premiered: March 16, 1904

alassio is the name of a small town on the Italian Riviera, just a few miles from France, where Edward Elgar and his wife Alice went in late 1903 to escape the damp chill of their

native England. It was Elgar's first visit to Italy, and he was duly impressed. Wandering one day through the nearby Vale of Andorra, he wrote, he saw "streams, flowers, hills; the distant snow mountains in one direction, and the blue Mediterranean in the other. [I was] by the side of the old Roman way. A peasant shepherd stood by an old ruin, and in a flash it all came to me—the conflict of armies on that very spot long ago, where I now stood—the contrast of the ruin and the shepherd—and then, all of a sudden, I came back to reality. In that time I had 'composed' the overture—the rest was merely writing it down." When Elgar actually set about composing the work, he supplemented his Italian visions with quotations copied into the score from Tennyson and Byron.

visions of ancient Italy

However perfectly the exultant opening theme expresses Elgar's newfound joy in this spot of land, he did not compose it on the spot—he had jotted it down some four years earlier. The second theme is a graceful, gently flowing melody initially heard in the clarinets in the minor mode. There is a further theme in the pastoral vein. In place of a development section, Elgar introduces two additional episodes. The first, inspired by thoughts of ancient Roman armies, is a grand, pompous idea in the heavy brass. The second Elgar described as a *canto popolare* (a folk song—though he composed it himself), heard against an accompaniment of shimmering strings, glockenspiel and harp, first in the solo viola, then in the solo horn. The themes of the opening section return in the recapitulation, and the music ends in a great orchestral *tour de force* in E-flat major, the key traditionally used for "heroic" music like Beethoven's *Eroica* Symphony and *Emperor* Concerto, and Strauss' *Ein Heldenleben*.

The first performance of *In the South* (or *Alassio*—the work goes by both names) was conducted by the composer on March 16, 1904, at an Elgar Festival in Covent Garden. It joins Berlioz's *Harold in Italy*, Mendelssohn's *Italian* Symphony, Strauss' *Aus Italien*, Wolf's *Italian Serenade* and Respighi's *Roman Trilogy* as a magnificent musical tribute to the glory of Italy and the country's natural beauties.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, triangle, glockenspiel, 2 harps and strings

Program note by *Robert Markow*.