

MINNESOTA ORCHESTRA

Thomas Søndergård, conductor
Augustin Hadelich, violin

Friday, January 5, 2024, 8PM
Saturday, January 6, 2024, 2PM

Orchestra Hall

William Walton	<i>Scapino, A Comedy Overture</i>	CA. 8'
Benjamin Britten	Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 15 Moderato con moto Vivace Passacaglia: Andante lento (un poco meno mosso) <i>Augustin Hadelich, violin</i>	CA. 32'
I N T E R M I S S I O N		CA. 20'
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor	<i>Idyll, Opus 44</i>	CA. 8'
Edward Elgar	Variations on an Original Theme, Opus 36, <i>Enigma</i> Enigma: Andante Variations I. (C.A.E.): L'istesso tempo II. (H.D.S.- P.): Allegro III. (R.B.T.): Allegretto IV. (W.M.B.): Allegro di molto V. (R.P.A.): Moderato VI. (Ysobel): Andantino VII. (Troyte): Presto VIII. (W.N.): Allegretto IX. (Nimrod): Moderato X. (Dorabella): Intermezzo (Allegretto) XI. (G.R.S.): Allegro di molto XII. (B.G.N.): Andante XIII. (**): Romanza (Moderato) XIV. (E.D.U.): Finale (Allegro)	CA. 29'

PRE- AND POST-CONCERT

Concert Preview with Nicholas Landrum

Friday, January 5, 7:15pm, Target Atrium | Saturday, January 6, 1:15pm, Target Atrium

Conversation with Thomas Søndergård and Melissa Ousley

Saturday, January 6, post-concert, Auditorium

THANK YOU

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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.



THOMAS SØNDERGÅRD,
CONDUCTOR

Profile appears on page 8.



AUGUSTIN HADELICH,
VIOLIN

Augustin Hadelich is widely considered as one of the greatest violinists of our time. Known for his phenomenal technique and insightful interpretations, he has performed with all the major American orchestras as well as the Berlin Philharmonic, Vienna Philharmonic, Concertgebouw Orchestra, Bavarian Radio Symphony and London Philharmonic, among many other eminent ensembles. He debuted with the Minnesota Orchestra in 2015 and appeared here most recently in March 2022, performing Beethoven’s Violin Concerto. In the 2023-24 season, he is the artist in residence at the Konzerthaus Berlin and performs with more than two dozen major orchestras in North America, Europe and Asia, including the Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Orchestre National de France, NHK Symphony Orchestra, Taiwan Philharmonic and Seoul Philharmonic. He also performs recitals in the U.S., Canada, Germany, Italy and Japan. Hadelich received a 2016 Grammy Award for Best Classical Instrumental Solo in 2016 for his recording of Dutilleux’s Violin Concerto with the Seattle Symphony, and he is featured on three additional Grammy-nominated albums. A Warner Classics Artist, he most recently released a Spain-themed album titled *Recuerdos*. Hadelich rose to fame when he won the Gold Medal at the 2006 International Violin Competition of Indianapolis. More: kdschmid.de, augustinhadelich.com.



Scan the QR code on your mobile device or visit minnesotaorchestra.org/hadelichqa to read an interview with today’s soloist, Augustin Hadelich.

ONE-MINUTE NOTES

Walton: *Scapino*

William Walton’s *Scapino* evokes the spirit of a roguish commedia dell’arte character. Contributing to an atmosphere of comedy are long melodic lines juxtaposed with short interjections.

Britten: Violin Concerto

In Benjamin Britten’s musical statement of anguish over the Spanish Civil War, Spanish rhythms and dance figures interweave with a long lyrical melody for solo violin, leading to a cadenza and a set of passionate variations on a Spanish theme.

Coleridge-Taylor: *Idyll*

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor’s *Idyll* is an airy and dreamlike musical landscape, highlighting the sweet-singing capabilities of the woodwinds and horns and the lyrical beauty of the string section.

Elgar: *Enigma Variations*

Thirteen of Edward Elgar’s closest friends, as well as the composer himself, are depicted in this musical portrait gallery. A highlight is the poignant *Nimrod*, which starts quietly and builds to a sonorous emotional climax.



WILLIAM WALTON

B: March 29, 1902
Oldham, Lancashire,
England

D: March 8, 1983
Ischia, Italy

Scapino, A Comedy Overture

PREMIERED: April 3, 1941

— This week’s program of works by British-born composers begins with a work rooted not in the U.K., but in a different country’s tradition—the commedia dell’arte, a theatrical form that flourished in Italy in the 17th and 18th centuries. This form was the origin of characters such as Harlequin and Colombine, among many others. Although the form declined, many of its stock figures live on in music, where they have inspired such classical works as Schumann’s *Carnaval*, Stravinsky’s *Petrushka* and *Pulcinella*, Schoenberg’s *Pierrot Lunaire*, Rachmaninoff’s *Polichinelle* and Milhaud’s *Scaramouche*, to name just a few.

A WILY CHARACTER

In Walton’s *Scapino* work we meet the titular character, a crafty servant always alert to cutting a good deal, whether for himself or for his master. The young Englishman William Walton chose Scapino as a subject when, to celebrate its 50th anniversary in 1941, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra extended commissions to a number of composers, including Walton.

When Oxford University Press published *Scapino*, Walton requested that the score’s cover be adorned with a 1622 etching of Scapino by Jacques Callot, showing a figure with flowing clothing, sword worn at a jaunty angle, a feathered hat and a van Dyke beard beneath his piercing eyes. In the score Walton noted that “Scapino is one of the less familiar characters of the commedia dell’arte, the hero of Molière’s *Les Fourberies de Scapin*, who may figure in the complicated ancestry of Figaro. We owe him the word ‘escapade,’ which is descriptive of the character’s stock-in-trade.”

By the time Walton began work on the score in 1940, he was already in the British army, and he worked on the piece as his military duties allowed. *Scapino* was, in fact, one of Walton’s few concert works composed during the war; most of his time went to film scores, such as Laurence Olivier’s *Henry V*. His description of *Scapino* as “A Comedy Overture” is exactly right: this is not a musical portrait of that wily figure, but an evocation of his spirit. Tempos tend to be very fast, and the sonority is high, bright and glittering, often full of the sound of brass and xylophone.

The overture is in a straightforward three-part structure. It gets off to a sizzling start (Walton’s marking is *Molto vivace*), and violas quickly introduce a gliding, sinuous tune that is soon picked up by the violins and other instruments—this will be the musical backbone of *Scapino*. The more lyric central episode, introduced by solo cello (on a variant of the overture’s main theme), offers a moment of relative repose before the opening tempo returns and *Scapino* races to its high-energy conclusion.

Frederick Stock and the Chicago Symphony Orchestra gave the first performance of *Scapino* on April 3, 1941. Because of the war and his military duties Walton could not attend, and he did not hear the piece until some time later. He revised the score in 1950, and it is the revised version that is always heard today.

Instrumentation: 3 flutes (1 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes, English horn, 3 clarinets (1 doubling bass clarinet), 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, bass drum, cymbals, castanets, Chinese temple blocks, tambourine, triangle, xylophone, glockenspiel, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.



BENJAMIN BRITTEN

B: November 22, 1913
Lowestoft, England

D: December 4, 1976
Aldeburgh, England

Concerto for Violin and Orchestra, Opus 15

PREMIERED: March 28, 1940

— Benjamin Britten came to the United States in 1939, when all was not well in the world, nor in Britten’s nascent career. “A discouraged young composer—muddled, fed-up, and looking for work, longing to be used”—that is how he described himself later. It was in St. Jovite, Quebec, that he finished his Violin Concerto in the summer of 1939, just before war engulfed Europe.

MUSICAL AND POLITICAL EVOLUTION

In his 20s, Britten began to attract attention with works such as the Variations on a Theme of Frank Bridge, written in 1937 for the Boyd Neel Orchestra to take to the last Salzburg Festival before Germany’s annexation of Austria, and the Piano Concerto, in which he was soloist at the 1938 BBC Proms festival in London. Critics at home, however, were generally hostile to anyone outside the English

pastoral tradition. The foreign influences on Britten’s music—notably Mahler and Shostakovich—did not help his position. Neither did his brilliance: “Too clever by half,” was the consensus. His loyalty to left-wing causes and his ties to such writers as W.H. Auden and Christopher Isherwood also made him a suspect figure.

Britten’s discouragement was political as well as musical. The appeasement policies vis-à-vis Hitler and Mussolini of successive Tory governments enraged and depressed him. When Auden and Isherwood moved to the United States in January 1939, Britten made arrangements to follow. He took two unfinished scores, the song cycle *Les Illuminations* (with text by Arthur Rimbaud) and the Violin Concerto. His companion on the journey—and for life, as it turned out—was the tenor Peter Pears, whom he had met three years before when they had given a benefit recital for the Republican side in the Spanish Civil War.

That tragic conflict has a bearing on the Violin Concerto. Britten’s sympathies were with Spain’s Republicans, who were defeated with Fascist aid in March 1939. He had friends among the British volunteers who went to Spain to fight on the Republican side, and on a tour with the Spanish violinist Antonio Brosa, he himself witnessed some of the slaughter. It was to Brosa that Britten entrusted the editing and the first performance of the Violin Concerto, which was given with the New York Philharmonic under John Barbirolli on March 28, 1940 (we hear it today in Britten’s revisions of 1950 and 1958). Brosa attested that the first music in the concerto—a quiet five-note timpani figure with cymbal punctuation—is in a specifically Spanish rhythm. Alban Berg’s great Violin Concerto, broadcast by the BBC in 1936, had provided a model for violin-concerto-as-requiem, and so Britten’s grippingly eloquent work also became a *concerto funebre*, a “war requiem” closely related to his *Sinfonia da Requiem* that followed it in 1940.

THE MUSIC: DRAMA SURROUNDING A SCHERZO MODERATO CON MOTO. Britten begins with his Spanish figure for drums and cymbal. Its third statement releases a series of sighs in the orchestra, and, while the Spanish figure continues, more elaborately scored, the solo violin enters with a long paragraph of lyric melody. A striking feature of that melody is the way it sways back and forth between major and minor. This conflict will be an issue throughout. After the orchestral winds extend and vary this melody, the violin, backed by timpani, introduces another Spanish dance rhythm. This passage opens up into a march which you had best enjoy now, for it will not return. After a brief and agitated development, the violin plays rhapsodic figurations against a background of slow chords for just a few strings, with woodwinds recalling fragments of the march and muffled drums dropping in a reminder of the Spanish dance rhythms.

Britten has saved the harp for this moment of homecoming, and for some time the mysterious blur of its low glissandos marks the beginning of each of its measures. The recapitulation also marks the arrival of the concerto’s true harmonic home, D, which at this moment is a luminous D major. The melody, *espressivo* but *pianissimo*, is sung by the orchestral violins and violas, while the solo violin, basses, bass drum and harp fiercely add the Spanish figure that began the movement. Continuing the reversal of roles, the solo violin extends the melody. Slowly, with one or the other Spanish rhythms inescapably present, this impassioned elegy sinks into silence.

VIVACE. Out of this silence the sardonic scherzo springs into life. Slashing percussive chords *con tutta forza* against swirling figures and trills in the orchestra, the soloist at first turns accompanist. But all this is preparation and upbeat, and the theme proper, a melody that describes a large curve up and down across two octaves, is finally introduced by the soloist. Contrast arrives in the form of a violin tune, and then comes what in the matter of sheer color is the most amazing music in the concerto: while muted strings play tremolando, the scherzo theme is transformed into a solo for the tuba with two piccolos dancing a giddy round in the stratosphere. Eventually the orchestra proposes a return to the violin tune. But the wheels spin frantically in place, and when the orchestra stops, the soloist continues its crazed whirling. This the beginning of a cadenza, which is also the bridge to the finale.

PASSACAGLIA: ANDANTE LENTO (UN POCO MENO MOSSO). We now arrive at the passacaglia theme of the finale. This is the first of Britten’s many passacaglias—a set of variations over a reiterated bass—a form he would use tellingly throughout his life. Its use calls to mind another of Britten’s passionate and formative musical loves, the great 17th-century predecessor, Henry Purcell.

It is for this moment that Britten has saved the trombones, who quietly cut across the end of the cadenza with the passacaglia theme. This is a scale ascending and descending in alternating whole- and half-steps, that pattern symbolizing another aspect of the major-minor ambivalence. Britten begins with a series of overlapped statements of this scale. Then come nine variations, several of which also encompass more than one statement of the theme: (1) “speaking” violin figurations over tremolando strings; (2) the theme in the winds with more elaborate violin commentary; (3) orchestra alone with oboe solo; (4) a rhythmically free violin melody over a clear 3/4 accompaniment; (5) the violin inverts the theme, then picks up the decorative scales begun by the woodwinds; (6) a march; (7) a pedal E, the theme in the bassoon, with swift, featherweight violin figurations; and (8) grand, for orchestra alone.

The final variation is the keening lament toward which the whole concerto has tended. Over solemn orchestral chords the violin sings out its anguish. At the close, Britten achieves extraordinary intensity by having the violin climb to great altitudes, but on the lowest string. The orchestra, very softly, comes to rest on an empty D chord, one without either the F-sharp or the F-natural that would fit either major or minor. It is on just those two notes that the violin sobs its final trill.

Instrumentation: solo violin with orchestra comprising 3 flutes (2 doubling piccolo), 2 oboes (1 doubling English horn), 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, snare drum, tenor drum, bass drum, cymbals, suspended cymbals, triangle, glockenspiel, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY THE LATE MICHAEL STEINBERG, USED WITH PERMISSION.



SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

B: August 15, 1875
London, England

D: September 1, 1912
London, England

Idyll, Opus 44
PREMIERED: 1901

English composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor lived an all-too-brief life, passing away from pneumonia at 37—an age at which many great composers are only beginning to achieve renown. Despite this, he left a remarkable legacy and a compositional output that included more than 80 works. The most famous of these was an expansive cantata he composed at age 23, *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast*, which quickly attained great popularity in his home country and abroad. Among his many international successes were three tours of the U.S., one of which included a visit to the White House at the request of President Theodore Roosevelt. He was mentored by Edward Elgar and studied alongside composers such as Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst at the Royal College of Music.

A COMPLICATED BEGINNING

Coleridge-Taylor’s *Idyll* began its life as the second movement of his First Symphony, which he composed while still a student at Stanford University. He originally titled the movement *Lament*, but after many revisions spanning several years, it reappeared as *Idyll* and received its first performance at the 1901 Three Rivers Choir Festival in Gloucester. At that time, the piece received wildly mixed

reviews; some critics praised Coleridge-Taylor for *Idyll*’s beauty, while other critics pined for a more complex work.

It was because of this lukewarm reception that the work was not fully published at the time. To keep expenses low, it was not unusual for new compositions to reach the engravers and printers and only see a full score or select parts made available. This process made Coleridge-Taylor’s music almost inaccessible for any orchestra seeking to perform it unless they rented the parts in manuscript form. A fully engraved set of score and parts for *Idyll* only became available widely in 2021.

COLERIDGE-TAYLOR’S MUSIC IN MINNESOTA

In April 1905, Emil Oberhoffer, the first music director of what was then known as the Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, introduced Coleridge-Taylor’s music to Minnesota, programming an excerpt from *Hiawatha’s Wedding Feast*. Following his lead, Henri Verbrugghen, the ensemble’s second music director, continued to program Coleridge-Taylor’s music on a variety of programs through 1930. Then, unfortunately, more than six decades passed without another performance of his music by the Minnesota Orchestra. Since 1992, the Orchestra has added 13 additional compositions by Coleridge-Taylor to its repertoire.

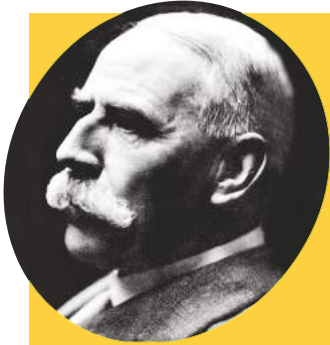
Idyll was first performed by the Minnesota Orchestra on October 7, 2022, in a public concert that was born out of the Orchestra’s Listening Project. One year prior to the performance, the Orchestra’s musicians and staff began a new initiative with the goal of deepening their own knowledge of great orchestral works by historically underrepresented composers whose music is less likely to have been recorded professionally. Through careful research, they selected works to be performed and recorded, making the recordings available free of charge for listeners and orchestras around the world. Through the ongoing Listening Project, the Orchestra strives to encourage future performances of this music by ensembles worldwide.

A BEAUTIFUL PICTURE

Idyll is airy and picturesque, highlighting the sweet-singing capabilities of the woodwinds and horns and the lyrical beauty of the string section. The word *idyll* comes from the Greek *eidyllion*, which means “little picture,” and it most commonly refers to a poem or story of a simple, beautiful or peaceful place, often in a rural setting. From start to finish, this piece is exactly that: a blissful little escape into a dreamlike musical landscape.

Instrumentation: 2 flutes, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 2 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, harp and strings

PROGRAM NOTE BY EMMA PLEHAL.



EDWARD ELGAR

B: June 2, 1857
Broadheath, England
D: February 23, 1934
Worcester, England

Variations on an Original Theme, Opus 36, *Enigma*
PREMIERED: June 19, 1899

— One evening in 1898, Edward Elgar was improvising for his wife at the piano and just for fun tried varying a theme to suggest the personalities of different friends. Suddenly a musical project occurred to him, and what had begun “in a spirit of humor...continued in deep seriousness.” The result was an orchestral theme and 14 variations, each a portrait of a friend or family member.

The subjects were soon identified, but mystery surrounded the theme itself, a six-bar melody full of rises and falls that make it an ideal candidate for variation. Elgar himself fed that mystery, naming the theme “Enigma” and stating that “its ‘dark saying’ must be left unguessed.” Hans Richter conducted the first performance in London on June 19, 1899, and the *Enigma* Variations quickly established Elgar’s reputation.

PORTRAITS OF FRIENDS—PLUS A SELF-PORTRAIT

Elgar’s music is a charming depiction of his social circle in late-Victorian England, which had affinities for garden parties, bicycle visits and long steamer trips abroad.

THEME: ENIGMA. Strings alone announce the noble, wistful theme, which Elgar marks *molto espressivo*. The music leads directly into the first variation.

I. C.A.E. This is a gentle portrait of the composer’s wife, Caroline Alice Elgar, musically similar to the first statement of the theme.

II. H.D.S.-P. Hew David Steuart-Powell was a piano teacher; this variation, marked *Allegro*, echoes his practicing staccato runs.

III. R.B.T. Elgar described Richard Baxter Townshend as “an amiable eccentric.”

IV. W.M.B. The variation for William Meath Baker, a bluff and peremptory country squire, thunders past in barely 30 seconds.

V. R.P.A. Elgar described Richard Penrose Arnold, as a “gentleman of the old school” and represents him with a noble violin line and flights of fancy from the woodwinds.

VI. YSOBEL. Isabel Fitton, a viola player, is gently depicted via an exercise in string-crossing for violists—showcasing the basic and essential technique of moving the bow from one string to another.

VII. TROYTE. Arthur Troyte Griffith was an argumentative architect. His *Presto* variation features *brillante* runs from the violins and ends with the sound of a slamming door.

VIII. W.N. Winnifred Norbury, a dignified older acquaintance of the Elgars, is heard in a “trilly laugh,” but some believe the music actually depicts her family home.

IX. NIMROD. August Jaeger was one of Elgar’s closest friends and supporters; “Jaeger” (*Jäger*) is German for hunter, and Nimrod was the mighty hunter in the Biblical book of Genesis. This noble slow movement is sometimes performed separately as a memorial. Strings alone announce the theme, which grows to a triumphant climax and subsides to end quietly.

X. DORABELLA. Dora Penny was a friend whose slight stammer is represented in the music as a brief hesitation at the start of each woodwind phrase. Elgar renamed her Dorabella for this variation, after the character in Mozart’s *Così fan tutte*.

XI. G.R.S. The variation for George Robertson Sinclair, the organist at the Hereford Cathedral, features the sound of his bulldog Dan in the growling lower instruments, and the tinkling sound of his bicycle bell in the triangle.

XII. B.G.N. Basil Nevinson was a cellist, and noble solos for that instrument open and close this cantabile variation.

XIII. (*) ROMANZA.** Lady Mary Lygon was on a steamship to Australia when Elgar wrote this music, and he remembered her with a variation that suggests the sound of the ship’s vibrating engines as side drum sticks roll softly on the timpani. Over this low rumble, Elgar quotes Mendelssohn’s *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* Overture, putting quotation marks around the excerpt in his score.

XIV. E.D.U. “Edu” was his wife’s nickname for the composer, and this musical self-portrait, by turns powerful, striving and gentle, was “written at a time when friends were dubious and generally discouraged as to the composer’s musical future.” Along the way we hear the whistle Elgar used to announce his arrival at home; he also weaves in a reminiscence of his wife’s variations before the music drives to a triumphant close.

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

PROGRAM NOTE BY ERIC BROMBERGER.