

NEW MUSIC BRITAIN

Thursday 14 September 2017

LSO SEASON CONCERT + SCULPTURE COURT LIVE RELAY
NEW MUSIC BRITAIN

Helen Grime Fanfare * (world premiere)
Thomas Adès *Asyla*
Harrison Birtwistle Violin Concerto
Interval – 25 minutes
Oliver Knussen Symphony No 3
Elgar Variations on an Original Theme, 'Enigma'

Sir Simon Rattle conductor
Christian Tetzlaff violin

* Commissioned for Sir Simon Rattle and the London Symphony Orchestra by the Barbican

Broadcast live on **BBC Radio 3**

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Concert ends approx 10.15pm

INTRODUCTION from Paul Griffiths

This rather extraordinary programme could be understood as a bunch of new works followed by a classic. However, one of the 'new' lot, Oliver Knussen's piece, is almost four decades old, and both that work and Thomas Adès' *Asyla* have gained classic status. In the 20 years since he conducted the first performance of *Asyla*, Sir Simon Rattle has taken it to the Los Angeles Philharmonic and Berlin Philharmonic, and played it with the latter in New York and the Far East. Tonight's performance will be his 26th (and the work's something like 150th). The Knussen symphony is another work he has promoted, touring it across Europe, the US and Japan with his Birmingham orchestra in the 1980s and 1990s. Birtwistle's Violin Concerto tells the same story its own way, for here is a living composer inviting us to consider his work as we would Beethoven's, or Tchaikovsky's, or Elgar's.

But, spearheading the concert, never heard before, Helen Grime's piece turns us perhaps towards the future, to a time when we do not have classics and new works but just great music. □

Helen Grime Fanfare 2017 / note by Paul Griffiths

This five-minute splash of colours and dash of energies was commissioned by the Barbican Centre for tonight's concert. Clearly something celebratory was needed – celebrating a beginning, and therefore celebrating the future more than the past. Helen Grime, by enlarging the notion of fanfare as acclamation and summons, has created a festive overture that brilliantly fits the bill while having also a seriousness of intent that is just as appropriate to the occasion.

Under the marking 'Bright, dance-like', the first fanfares are sounded by high woodwinds, rushing up (and later down) in scales, joined by clangs from tuned percussion – glockenspiel, xylophone and marimba – and supported by chords in the bass. This streaming music alternates with more evidently dance-like episodes featuring violins, harp and celeste. The quick, volatile duple metre of these episodes soon takes command of everything as the two kinds of material coalesce, but that command is just as soon joyously lost as jubilation and intensity increase with the arrival of a duet for E-flat and B-flat clarinets in octaves.

With a slight slackening of speed, though hardly of thrust, the brass come to the

fore, to herald, several times over, more racing to and fro from the upper woodwind, eventually incorporating the dance.

Suddenly the marking turns to 'Submerged, distant', and the focus shifts to cellos and basses with harp, celeste and bells. The cor anglais steps forward, joined in its second phrase by a bassoon, and out of memories the earlier music gradually reassembles itself, to achieve full splendour under the heading 'Bright, exuberant'. This is not, however, quite where we end. □

This fanfare is part of a longer commission, which will be premiered on 19 & 26 April

HELEN GRIME CURATES ...

Wednesday 20 September 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

works by **Purcell, George Benjamin, Oliver Knussen, Colin Matthews, Britten, Thomas Adès, Stravinsky and Helen Grime**

Jacqueline Shave director / violin
Britten Sinfonia
See page 14 for details

Helen Grime in Profile b 1981



Born in York in 1981, Grime was brought up in Aberdeenshire, where her mother and grandparents were music teachers. She studied at the Royal College of Music, with Julian Anderson and Edwin Roxburgh, and in 2008 at Tanglewood. By that time she was already making a reputation. *Virga* (2007), an LSO commission, proved her gift for lustrous textures, of lines engaging with each other in lively interplay and often worked from pregnant motifs that run through a composition. Commissions followed for the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group (*A Cold Spring*, 2009), the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra (*Everyone Sang*, 2010) and the

Claremont Trio of New York (*Three Whistler Miniatures*, 2011). Evocative titles, and (highly appropriate) references to visual art, by no means ended there. Among her more recent works are responses to Joseph Cornell's assemblages (*Aviary Sketches* for string trio, 2014) and Joan Eardley's paintings (*Two Eardley Pictures*, written for last year's BBC Proms). Other times the stimulus seems to come more from the instrumental line-up, as in her Oboe Quartet (2011) or the Double Concerto for clarinet and trumpet that, in 2015, concluded an association with the Hallé. She is currently working on a larger orchestral work for Simon Rattle and the LSO, to be performed in April next year. □

Thomas Adès *Asyla* 1997 / note and profile by Paul Griffiths

I
II
III **Ecstasio**
IV

syla are places of safety. We are all of us asylum-seekers. Asyla are also places of confinement. We may all of us, too, at times, feel ourselves to be living in a madhouse. Asyla are places of (last) resort – concert halls, as it may be. Asyla are forms, notably the symphony, where we feel at home, or where we once felt at home.

and clubs), of yet unsounded potentials in a large orchestra, and of his own creative strengths. Those strengths included a mastery of harmony and sound, and a gift for the pregnant idea, all allowing him to create symphonic music that appears to grow of itself, react to itself.

The first movement conjures a new world, of stairways of sound from piano and percussion (principally cowbells), through which a horn melody blows, provoking very Adèsian gleaming harmonic planes. It is not long before

Next comes a slow movement, whose descents upon descents are begun by keyed instruments and soon spread through the orchestra, led at first by bass oboe. There may be the sense of lament, or chant, echoing in some vast space – though a central section is more agitated and dynamic. There follows [the club scenes](#)▷: a shock, though not total, since there were intimations of its pounding rhythm almost from the start. Dance floors, too, can be asyla. As for the slow finale, we seem at first to be listening to a tuba deep under water, but soon flotsam from throughout the work is bobbing on the dolorous waves. □

▷ THE CLUB SCENE

Talking about how he composed the club scene to *The Independent*, Thomas Adès recalled:

'So I bought some techno music and listened to it, just quietly, to get the structure rather than blast my head off. I realised that, in techno, you have to repeat things 32 or 64 times. So I tried to orchestrate it one night in my living room, repeating all these figures over and over, on this massive score paper, 30 staves to a page. At 3am, I went to bed and, as I sat there, realised my heart had stopped beating. I thought, 'Christ, I'm having a heart attack'. I rang the hospital and then they sent an ambulance. My heart gradually started again, but very shallowly. The ambulance took me to the Royal Free, where I waited for two hours among other Saturday night casualties. And finally a doctor saw me and said, 'You hyperventilated'. I thought, 'Thank God. It's not my heart, it's just my brain.'

THOMAS ADÈS CURATES ...

Monday 18 September 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

works by Per Nørgård, Nicholas Maw, Judith Weir, Harrison Birtwistle, Niccolò Castiglioni, György Kurtág, Osvaldo Golijov, John Woolrich and Thomas Adès

Richard Baker conductor
Guildhall School Musicians
See page 14 for details

An extraordinary soundscape of fantasy and urgent reality, delicacy and excitement, bitter disillusionment and glowing hope.

First performed by the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra under Sir Simon Rattle in October 1997, Adès' *Asyla* quickly established itself as the first big orchestral work of a remarkable composer, and as an extraordinary soundscape of fantasy and urgent reality, delicacy and excitement, bitter disillusionment and glowing hope. Adès was only 26 at the time of composition, but already startlingly aware – aware of the musical world around him (in concert halls

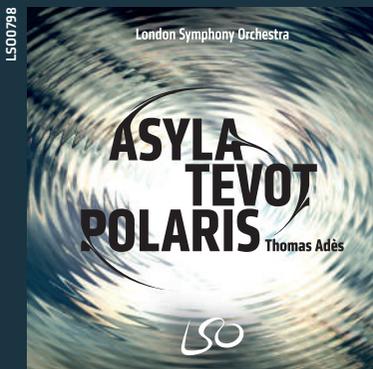
the heavy beat of a quite different sort of music is being heard – and there will be more such incursions. Meanwhile, the music unfolds at more than one speed simultaneously, the detail often darting, the larger movement going in swells, upward and downward. The music goes, also, in multiple directions at the same time, one filament of it reaching the furthest reaches of piccolos, piano and celeste before the last page is torn off.

Thomas Adès in Profile b 1971



orn in London in 1971, the son of an art historian and a translator-poet, Adès made an early start. An appearance in London, when he was 21 and fresh from studies at Cambridge with Alexander Goehr and Robin Holloway, brought him commissions from the London Sinfonietta (*Living Toys*) and the Endellion Quartet (*Arcadiana*). He was still only 24 when his first opera was produced, the louche-exact, documentary-fantastical *Powder Her Face*. A Ligetian skill in refreshing the most basic materials (a common chord in a surprising context, a falling interval in an extremely high register) and in referring very precisely to music of diverse types, classical and popular, was

enabling him to create music that fascinated and compelled. In 1997, he produced his first big symphonic piece, *Asyla*, for Simon Rattle and the City of Birmingham Symphony, extending his stylistic and expressive resources. His second opera, *The Tempest*, was introduced at Covent Garden in 2004. Then came further orchestral works, including a second symphonic score, *Tevot* (2007), also for Rattle, this time with the Berlin Philharmonic. Major works since have included a second quartet and a third opera, *The Exterminating Angel*, staged at Covent Garden earlier this year, following its Salzburg première. □



'Authoritative performances and sumptuous textures.'

The Guardian

Thomas Adès

Asyla | *Tevot* | *Polaris*
London Symphony Orchestra

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Harrison Birtwistle Violin Concerto 2009–10 / note and profile by Paul Griffiths

Christian Tetzlaff violin

Birtwistle as a young man played the clarinet, and in much of his earlier music he favoured that and other wind instruments, along with percussion; his huge opera *The Mask of Orpheus* has an orchestra entirely drawn from those families. Then gradually came a rapprochement with the strings, accelerating to the point where he could write a string quartet (*The Tree of Strings*, 2007), followed in 2009–10 by this concerto, which he composed for tonight's soloist to a commission from the Boston Symphony Orchestra. In conceiving the work he found he had a memory of playing the violin as a schoolboy; he knew how the thing worked, what it felt like.

A maze of zigzags.

As usual with Birtwistle, once the music gets going – and it gets going immediately, startlingly – it does not stop, but moves on forward to the end, 25 minutes later, creating a massive continuity that is also a maze of zigzags. There are no distinct sections, though there certainly are zones

of rapid articulation, of energy gathering towards an eruption, and of calm – usually the troubled calm of inward lament.

A 'discussion' between soloist and orchestra.

Birtwistle has described the work as a 'discussion' between soloist and orchestra, the orchestra coming up with its own soloists from time to time, especially in five crucial passages, increasingly long and involved, and also diverse in the kinds of relationship they imply, where the solo violin discourses in turn with flute, piccolo, cello, oboe and bassoon. These duets, and the larger dialogues going on around them, are not based on themes but proceed rather as statement and response, question and answer, thrust and counter-thrust, gesture and reaction. Moments of stark disagreement are rare, but strain and unease are never far away.

To open the discussion the soloist puts forward three topics: a rocketing rise, into the upper air where it is greeted (or is it silenced?) by glockenspiel, piccolo and harps with harmonics from the orchestral violins;

dry, muttering quick notes; and a looping melody that, from its short-long rhythmic patterns, has something of a Scottish feel. Much of the music grows out of these ideas. The orchestra, at first reluctant, moves into action when the violin has the first of its rare brief rests, shortly after its duet with a flute. At this point the woodwinds unleash clamant melody and the tuba has its own song, to which it will return at intervals through the piece. Other features presented during these first four minutes include mechanical repetition, often clangorous with percussion, and a frequently used means of tying soloist and orchestra together, when one takes up a note extended by the other.

Having presented these indications of its premises and processes, the concerto can move on its way, luminous where the solo part is concerned, against the often more lumbering orchestral contribution. During the last and closest duet, for the soloist with bassoon, beginning about two-thirds of the way in, the orchestral energy becomes more unified, and swerves forward again when the duet is over. Before long, though, the work regains its magnificent rolling gloom, to be cut off by the solo violin plucking a middle-register D, the note that has been at the centre of so many violin concertos. □

SIR HARRISON BIRTWISTLE CURATES ...

Saturday 23 September 7.30pm
Milton Court Concert Hall

Varèse Octandre
Machaut Messe de Nostre Dame
with Plainsong Tropes arranged for instruments by Harrison Birtwistle
Byrd Lamentations
Harrison Birtwistle Pulse Sampler
Harrison Birtwistle Moth Requiem

Martyn Brabbins conductor
BBC Singers

See page 16 for details

Harrison Birtwistle in Profile b 1934



Through the decades of postmodernism since 1970, Birtwistle's music has remained resolutely modern in its dissonance, its formal complexity and freedom, its continuing innovation and its positively mechanistic appurtenances of pulse and repetition. At the same time it evokes a prehistory of monuments and ritual acts. Born in Accrington in 1934, Birtwistle was a slow starter. Though he had played the clarinet and composed from boyhood, and though he found lively colleagues (notably Peter Maxwell Davies and Alexander Goehr) at the Royal Manchester College of Music, he was into his thirties before he produced his first works of characteristic trenchancy,

including *Tragoedia* (1965) for opposing wind and string chamber groups on the fulcrum of a harp. The heat went underground, subsumed in relative quiet and generative slowness, as he worked towards his opera *The Mask of Orpheus* (1973–86). While that was in progress he also wrote two big symphonic pieces (*The Triumph of Time* and *Earth Dances*) and much else, living partly in the Hebrides, partly in France. In 1996, the year he completed a formidable cycle of *Célan songs* (*Pulse Shadows*), he moved to rural Wiltshire. Subsequent works, characteristically combining intensity with melancholy, have included encounters with classical genres. □

Christian Tetzlaff violin



Lars Vogt, performances with the Tetzlaff Quartett and clarinetist Jörg Widmann.

He also appears with the Rundfunk-Sinfonieorchester Berlin, Konzerthaus-Orchester Berlin, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich, and Montreal, NHK, Finnish Radio symphony and Israel Philharmonic Orchestras. His regular collaboration with conductor Robin Ticciati takes them to Dubai with the Chamber Orchestra of Europe; Frankfurt, Hamburg and Essen with Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, as well as a return to Edinburgh with the Scottish Chamber Orchestra.

Equally at home in Classical, Romantic and contemporary repertoire, Christian Tetzlaff sets standards with his interpretations of the Violin Concertos of Beethoven, Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Berg and Ligeti, and is renowned for his innovative chamber music projects and performances of Bach's solo repertoire.

Highlights of the 2017/18 season include touring with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Vladimir Jurowski to the George Enescu Festival, Bucharest and Musikfest Bremen, and a return to Wigmore Hall as Artist-in-Residence. The season-long residency includes a duo recital with

His recordings have received numerous prizes and awards, including the Diapason d'Or, Edison, Midem Classical and ECHO Klassik awards (including 2017's Instrumentalist of the Year, Violin for Brahms: The Violin Sonatas on the Ondine label), as well as several Grammy nominations.

Born in Hamburg in 1966, Christian Tetzlaff has been Artist-in-Residence with the Berlin Philharmonic, with Sir Simon Rattle, Carnegie Hall, Wigmore Hall, Tonhalle-Orchester Zürich and hr-Sinfonieorchester. He plays a violin by German maker Peter Greiner.

Oliver Knussen Symphony No 3 1979 / note and profile by Paul Griffiths

- 1 **Andante misterioso – Fantastico**
- 2 **Allegro con fuoco**
- 3 **Molto tranquillo**

The nature of this luminous symphony can be quite quickly stated: it plays for 15 minutes divided at the halfway mark, the first part being made of contrasts leading up to a massive chord, the second of a steady unfolding from that crisis point. Knussen was an astonishingly skilled and creatively mature 21-year-old when he wrote the first part, between July 1973 and January 1974. The second part then took him some while to find, and was added in the summer of 1979, in time for a performance at the BBC Proms that year. So although the composition extended over more than six years, the composing of it was carried out in two relatively short stretches, totalling no more than nine months – and Knussen was still only 27 when it was done.

At the start, under the marking *Andante misterioso*, tremolo strings might suggest a watery surface ruffled by a breeze, and delicately disturbed also by splashes: almost immediately from a pair of clarinets, followed by muted trumpets, further woodwinds and horns. The preparatory spell is broken by the clarinets, all four of them now, as they wheel in accompanied

by a theatre of percussion: bass drums, tambourine, cymbals. Next to come forward are low bassoons, eventually joined by upper woodwind and then replaced by bumptious trombones. As these last move into a dance in short-long steps, almost the whole orchestra comes into action. This does not happen very often in a score that generally focuses (as we have heard already) on individual families, but it happens now to reinforce a gathering climax.

Right afterwards, at a faster tempo, the violins at last make themselves heard – and vociferously – in a smart three-note rise that launches them into a long melody. The three-note gesture is one of the symphony's basic motifs, and it is heard again when the violins resume after a breathing space filled by violas and cellos. This access of energy, arriving with the violins first time round, has the force of an allegro taking over from an introductory passage in a classical symphony. So it is in this one: there is a change of gear, a new beginning. Horns and clarinets, the latter in quick scales and arpeggios, maintain the dynamism another way, followed by a chiming ensemble of celeste, harp and guitar, plus percussion. From here the bassoons convey the music into a more fully scored sequence with flutes to the fore,

building to another climax. Bassoons again then offer a link to all these musical states in reverse order: flutes, chimers, horns and clarinets, and string melody, much altered and now in a denser texture, from which the music breaks back to its opening. The speed soon recovers and, urged on by trumpets, a short development careers towards its goal in a chord that engages the entire orchestra and all twelve notes.

This would be the moment to observe that Knussen's harmony, though free and complex, is lit by the lights of former times. The twelve-note chord has E at its bass, G-sharp next above and B at the top. That hardly makes for an E major sonority, but some sense of a distinct harmonic character does come across – and E is indeed the pole around which the symphony turns. It was, for instance, the starting point for the violins' lift at the start of the allegro.

Now, as the work moves into its second half, *Molto tranquillo*, coloured chords succeed one another in the strings, setting up the frame for a succession of variations, rather in the manner of a *passacaglia*. The second variation might evoke a sunlit forest, with waves of birdcalls from flutes and clarinets together alternating with oboes and cor anglais. Brass instruments have been silent so far

through this part of the work, but now horns enter to introduce the clarinets, which dominate the next variation. Horns and clarinets were coupled in the first part, one will remember, and other features of that earlier music resurface, not least in the clarinets, as this second part goes on. The tutti fourth variation has the brass section fully in operation, to take over in the fifth, with rising horn arpeggios heralding the mighty processional for woodwinds and horns that is the sixth variation. These towering harmonies are, in the seventh variation, reduced to two, oscillating slowly, then shaking. After this the symphony ends as it began.

At the foot of the score Knussen places a name, doing so hesitantly, in brackets and with a succession of dots: '(Ophelia ...)'. He reminds us that one of the offshoots from this piece was a set of *Ophelia Dances* for nine-piece ensemble. But here, in this symphony of water, wild melodies, outdoor sounds, a cortège, have we also been dreaming of that same doomed heroine? □

OLIVER KNUSSEN ...

... curates and conducts his own work alongside Stravinsky, Birtwistle and Patrick Brennan with the Birmingham Contemporary Music Group on 16 September – see page 13.

Oliver Knussen in Profile b 1952



The son of a former LSO Principal Bass player, Knussen was born in Glasgow in 1952, studied composition in London with John Lambert from 1963, and conducted the London Symphony Orchestra in his own First Symphony when he was 15. He then studied with Gunther Schuller at Tanglewood in the early 1970s, initiating strong connections, personal and musical, with the United States. Emerging as a conductor of striking gifts, he began an association with the Aldeburgh Festival in 1983 and later moved to the area. He has also worked regularly with leading orchestras and new music groups in this country and abroad.

His precocity as a composer, though, was deceptive. A startling cascade of pieces from his teens, including his Second Symphony with solo high soprano (1970–71), was followed by the protracted emergence of his Third Symphony (1973–79). During the next decade or so he was largely occupied with two operas after children's books by Maurice Sendak: *Where the Wild Things are* (1979–83) and *Higglety Pigglety Pop!* (1984–90). Since then his biggest works have been concertos for horn (1994) and violin (2002), as well as an orchestral song cycle, *Requiem – Songs for Sue* (2005–06), in memory of his first wife. □

Edward Elgar in Profile 1857–1934



Loaded with honours by a grateful Empire, including a knighthood in 1904, Elgar was, as a shopkeeper's son and a Catholic, always by establishment terms an outsider. His father's enterprise, in Worcester, was a music shop, which is where as a boy he taught himself to play several instruments and compose. By the age of 16 he was making a living locally as a musician, but wider success, as a composer, came only gradually, until he achieved a breakthrough with his 'Enigma' Variations (1898–99) and oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius* (1899–1900). His First Symphony (1907–08) was followed rapidly by his Violin Concerto for Fritz Kreisler and Second Symphony.

After his tone poem *Falstaff* (1913), his output of major works dwindled, perhaps on account of World War I, perhaps because he was burdened with theatre commissions. In 1918–19 came a return to productivity, but the works he then wrote – chamber pieces and, especially, his elegiac Cello Concerto – sound like farewells. His wife's death, in 1920, was the final blow. He retreated from London to Worcester, and though he was repeatedly drawn out to make recordings (he was the first composer to record a representative selection of his music), he virtually stopped composing. Elgar was Principal Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra from 1911–12, the Orchestra gave several premieres of his works conducted by the composer. □

Edward Elgar Variations on an Original Theme, 'Enigma' Op 36 1898–99 / note by Stephen Johnson

- I **CAE: L'istesso tempo**
- II **HDS-P: Allegro**
- III **RBT: Allegretto**
- IV **WMB: Allegro di molto**
- V **RPA: Moderato**
- VI **Ysobel: Andantino**
- VII **Troyte: Presto**
- VIII **WN: Allegretto**
- IX **Nimrod: Adagio**
- X **Dorabella: Intermezzo Allegretto**
- XI **GRS: Allegro di molto**
- XII **BGN: Andante**
- XIII *****: Romanza Moderato**
- XIV **Finale: Allegro**

See page 53 for Elgar's composer profile

One evening in October 1898, Edward Elgar lit himself a cigar and sat down at the piano.

It had been a wearying day, and his playing was aimless – just a kind of improvisatory doodling. Suddenly his wife Alice interrupted him:

'Edward, that's a good tune. I awoke from the dream: 'Eh! Tune, what tune?' And she said, 'Play it again, I like that tune.' I played and strummed, and played, and then she exclaimed: 'That's the tune.'

And that, according to Elgar, is how the theme he was to call 'Enigma' came into being. In another version of the story, Alice asks him what he'd been playing: 'Nothing', says Elgar, 'but something might be made of it'. That comment is of more than musical significance, because it seems that for Elgar that theme represented something important about himself. At first he was cagey about this:

'The Enigma I will not explain – its 'dark saying' must be left unguessed'.

But 13 years after the hugely successful premiere of the 'Enigma' Variations, he told the critic Ernest Newman that:

'It expressed, when written (in 1898) my sense of the loneliness of the artist ... and to me, it still embodies that sense'.

Loneliness, a sense of nothingness yet combined with great idealism and ambition – all that was true of Elgar. Since the 'Enigma' Variations first appeared there has been endless speculation as to whether some musical riddle is contained in the 'Enigma' theme: a cryptogram perhaps, or a scrambled reference to the well-known tune *Auld Lang Syne* has been suggested.

A musical journey through friendship ... vivid musical portraits of his closest friends.

However ingenious or entertaining the results, surely this misses the point. The variations may begin with 'nothing', the lonely, melancholic, self-doubting artists; but they progress to something very different: a depiction of the artist in the triumph – in the Finale, EDU ('Edu' was Alice's nickname for Elgar), we see the man who has indeed made something of himself. And it is a musical journey through friendship – the 13 vivid musical portraits of his closest friends that build up to

the Finale – which has enabled Elgar to reach that longed-for goal.

But there is another side to this story. In Elgar's own words:

'This work, commenced in a spirit of humour and continued in deep seriousness, contains sketches of the composer's friends. It may be understood that these personages comment or reflect on the original theme and each one attempts a solution of the Enigma, for so the theme is called'.

So, something of Elgar the 'Enigma' remains unresolved – even the warmest, most understanding friendship cannot completely relieve that 'sense of loneliness of the artist'.

After the 'Enigma' theme, the first variation depicts Elgar's wife: **CAE** – Caroline Alice Elgar – 'a prolongation of the theme with what I wished to be romantic and delicate additions', was Elgar's description. No II, **HDS-P** is Hew David Steuart-Powell, a chamber music partner of Elgar,

and clearly a light-fingered keyboardist. In III, **RBT** mimics Richard Baxter Townsend, eccentric tricyclist with a querulous, reedy voice. IV, **WMB** depicts Squire Baker of Hasfield Court, hurriedly presenting his house guests with the day's itinerary, then slamming the door as he leaves. V, **RPA** reveals two sides of Matthew Arnold's son Richard, serious in conversation, but with a 'funny little nervous laugh' on woodwind. 'Pensive, and for a moment, romantic' was Elgar's description of Isobel Fitton, the subject of No VI, **Ysobel** – a viola player, hence the starring role for this instrument. No VII, **Troyte**, depicts more music-making, though this time, it is the 'maladroit' efforts of the architect Arthur Troyte Griffith to play the piano. According to Elgar, No VIII, **WN** is 'really suggested by an 18th-century house': Sherridge, near Malvern, home of Winifred Norbury. But Winifred herself appears in 'a little suggestion of a characteristic laugh'.

Then comes the famous **Nimrod**, Variation IX. This is a portrait of one of Elgar's closest friends, A J Jaeger ('Jaeger' is the German word for 'hunter', and Nimrod is the hunter mentioned in the Biblical book of Genesis). Specifically this music records 'a long summer evening talk, when my friend discoursed eloquently on the slow movements of Beethoven ... It will be noticed that the opening bars are made to suggest the slow movement of the eighth sonata, the 'Pathétique'.

No X, **Dorabella**, was Elgar's nickname for **Dora Penny**. 'The movement suggests a dancelike lightness', Elgar wrote. It does – but it also reveals great tenderness: of all Elgar's friends Dora was one of the most helpfully responsive to Elgar's devastating mood-swings. **GRS** (G R Sinclair, organist of Hereford Cathedral), was the owner of the bulldog Dan, who fell into the River Wye, scrambled out and barked in triumph.

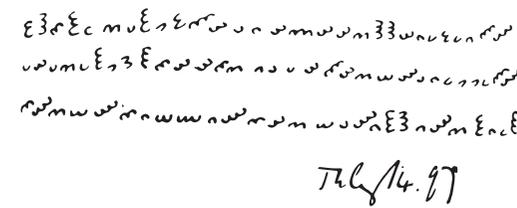
The end is a glad, confident apotheosis ... a foretaste of Elgar's next orchestral masterpiece, the First Symphony – a celebration of the present, and hope for the future.

'Set that to music', said Sinclair. The result was variation XI. The heartfelt cello melody of XII is a tribute to **BGN** – Basil G Nevinson, whose faith in Elgar sustained him in times of crisis and neglect. The subject of variation XIII, *******, is more mysterious. Elgar tells us that he intended it for the 'most angelic' Lady Mary Lygon, who was then on a long sea-voyage – hence the clarinet's quotation from Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, and the depiction of a low throbbing ship's engine. But according to Ernest Newman, there is also a memory of an earlier love lost and still yearned for – there is certainly a strange poignancy here.

▷ THE DORABELLA CYPHER

The Dorabella Cypher is an enciphered letter written by composer Edward Elgar to Dora Penny, which was accompanied by another dated 14 July 1897. Elgar adored puzzles and codes, and this cypher is considered one of the top ten trickiest puzzles in the world. Penny never deciphered it and though attempts to decrypt it have been numerous, many believe its true meaning remains unknown. The latest attempt to decipher it was in May

But it is Elgar the self-made Edwardian gentleman who strides out in the **Finale EDU** – the initials being the first three letters of his own name in the French 'Eduard' – 'bold and vigorous in general style'. Memories of earlier friends' variations are recalled, especially CAE and Nimrod. But the end is a glad, confident apotheosis, culminating in a foretaste of the first phrase of Elgar's next orchestral masterpiece, the First Symphony – a celebration of the present, and hope for the future. □



last year when a policeman from Cleveland happened upon the idea that the first part of the cypher offers an instruction on how to unlock the remainder of it – which he believes to be a previously unheard melody from Elgar's *Salut d'Amour*.

London Symphony Orchestra on stage 14 September

Leader

Roman Simovic

First Violins

Carmine Lauri
Lennox Mackenzie
Clare Duckworth
Nigel Broadbent
Gerald Gregory
Maxine Kwok-Adams
Laurent Quenelle
Harriet Rayfield
Sylvain Vasseur
William Melvin
Helena Smart
Eleanor Fagg
Hilary Jane Parker
Takane Funatsu

Second Violins

David Alberman
Thomas Norris
Sarah Quinn
Miya Väisänen
David Ballesteros
Matthew Gardner
Julian Gil Rodriguez
Naoko Keatley
Belinda McFarlane
Iwona Muszynska
Paul Robson
Louise Shackelton
Esther Kim
Aischa Guendisch

Violas

Alexander Zemtsov
Gillianne Haddow
Anna Bastow
Regina Beukes
Lander Echevarria
Julia O'Riordan
Robert Turner
Jonathan Welch
Carol Ella
Caroline O'Neill
Stephanie Edmundson
Philip Hall

Cellos

Rebecca Gilliver
Alastair Blayden
Jennifer Brown
Noel Bradshaw
Daniel Gardner
Hilary Jones
Amanda Truelove
Miwa Rosso
Morwenna del Mar
Victoria Harrild

Double Basses

Colin Paris
Patrick Laurence
Matthew Gibson
Thomas Goodman
Joe Melvin
Jani Pensola
Paul Sherman
Simo Väisänen

Flutes

Gareth Davies
Adam Walker
Patricia Moynihan

Piccolo

Sharon Williams

Oboes

Olivier Stankiewicz
Rosie Jenkins

Cor Anglais

Christine Pendrill

Bass Oboe

Adrian Rowlands

Clarinet

Andrew Marriner

E-flat Clarinet

Chi-Yu Mo

Bass Clarinet

Renaud Guy-Rousseau

Contrabass Clarinet

Alan Andrews

Bassoons

Rachel Gough
Daniel Jemison
Joost Bosdijk

Contra Bassoon

Dominic Morgan

Horns

Timothy Jones
Angela Barnes
Anna Euen
Jonathan Lipton
Andrew Budden

Trumpets

Philip Cobb
Gerald Ruddock
Niall Keatley
Robin Totterdell

Trombones

Dudley Bright
Peter Moore
James Maynard

Bass Trombone

Paul Milner

Tuba

Ross Knight

Timpani

Nigel Thomas

Percussion

Neil Percy
David Jackson
Sam Walton
Tom Edwards
Jeremy Cornes
Paul Stoneman

Harp

Bryn Lewis
Lucy Wakeford

Piano / Celeste

Elizabeth Burley
John Alley

Guitar / Mandolin

Forbes Henderson

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15 April

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(Barbican commission)
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NEW MUSIC

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The Panufnik Composers Scheme is generously supported by Lady Hamlyn and the Helen Hamlyn Trust
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