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EDUARDO MARTURET CONDUCTOR
THE OFFICIAL SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA OF THE CITY OF MIAMI



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GLIMPSES OF A LIVING CULTURE

KNIGHT CONCERT HALL

January 14th | 6:00 PM



Eduardo Marturet
Conductor

Sharon Isbin
Solo Guitar



**GLIMPSES OF A LIVING CULTURE
KNIGHT CONCERT HALL
JANUARY 14TH - 6:00 PM**

PROGRAM

I

Felix Mendelssohn
Overture Calm Sea & Prosperous Voyage

Karen LeFrak
Miami Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra
a MISO 2024 Commission (World Premiere)
I. Bailamos
II. Romántico
III. Festivo

SHARON ISBIN - SOLO GUITAR

(INTERMISSION)

II

? - *Mystery Piece*

Edward Elgar - **Enigma**
Variations on an original theme
(to my friends pictured within)

Theme

- I. (C.A.E.) Alice Elgar**
- II. (H.D.S-P.) Hew David Steuart-Powell**
- III. (R.B.T.) Richard Baxter Townshend**
- IV. (W.M.B) William Meath Baker**
- V. (R.P.A.) Richard Penrose Arnold**
- VI. (Ysobel.) Isabel Fitton**
- VII. (Troyte.) Arthur Troyte Griffith**
- VIII. (W.N.) Winifred Norbury**
- IX. (Nimrod.) August Johannes Jaeger**
- X. (Dorabella.) "Intermezzo" Dora Penny**
- XI. (G.R.S.) George Robertson Sinclair**
- XII. (B.G.N.) Basil G. Nevinson**
- XIII. (***) "Romanza" Lady Mary Lygon**
- XIV. (E.D.U.) "Finale" Edward Elgar**

EDUARDO MARTURET - CONDUCTOR

EDUARDO MARTURET



Eduardo Marturet enjoys an active career on three continents; he is the Music Director and Conductor of The Miami Symphony Orchestra and continues to guest conduct actively in Europe. He has made more than 60 CDs that range from the Brahms complete symphonic cycle to surveys of Latin America's greatest orchestral composers.

European orchestras with which he has had an active guest conducting relationship include Berliner Symphoniker, European Community Chamber Orchestra, Staatsphilharmonie Rheinland-Pfalz, RAI Symphony Orchestra, Danish Radio Symphony, Royal Flemish Philharmonique, Nordwestdeutsche Philharmonie, Gelders Orkest, Bohemian Chamber Philharmonic, Budapest Radio Symphony, Brabant Orkest, and Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra in Amsterdam. In 2001, he led the Berliner Symphoniker on a 12-concert tour, sponsored by Deutsche Bank, of major South American cities including Caracas, Sao Paulo, Cordoba, Montevideo, Buenos Aires, Mexico City and Monterrey. A documentary of the tour was broadcast through the region by DirecTV.

Born in Caracas, Marturet studied in Cambridge, England where he became firmly rooted in the European tradition, obtaining a degree in Piano, Percussion, Composition and Conducting which he studied with Brian Thomas, Franco Ferrara and John Carewe.

In 1979, he returned to Venezuela with a permanent position with the Orquesta Filarmónica de Caracas as Associate Conductor and later as Artistic Director to the Orquesta Sinfónica Venezuela, where he served in that position until 1995. Presently, he maintains close contact with the Venezuelan National Youth Orchestra movement, giving advice and support in aid of poor children.

With the opening of the Teresa Carreño Theatre in Caracas in 1984, Marturet became its first Music Director. After three years of bringing challenging and original productions to the stage, he resigned from the Theatre to dedicate himself entirely to an international career, conducting in Italy, Greece, France, Spain, England, Denmark, Holland, Korea, Norway, Sweden, Germany, Czechoslovakia, Belgium, Canada and the United States.

He made his Asian debut with the Seoul Philharmonic in 2003, a year when he also opened the Chorin Summer Festival in Berlin and made his debut with the Buenos Aires Philharmonic in Argentina and the Florida Philharmonic in Miami. In 2006, Maestro Marturet received a Latin Grammy nomination in the category of Best Classical Album, for conducting the Berliner Symphoniker in "Encantamento."

Since 2006 he has been the Music Director and Conductor of the Miami Symphony Orchestra, during his 18 year tenure Maestro Marturet has taken MISO into the world-class professional symphony of Miami developing a unique classical-crossover repertoire in alliance with great producers such as Emilio Estefan, Rudy Perez and Burt Bacharach.

In October 2012, he was named one of the "100 most influential latinos in Miami". The ceremony was performed by Fusionarte Association, Pan-American Foundation and Televisa publishing. This same year, in March, the flag of the United States was flown over the U.S. Capitol in honor of Eduardo Marturet, who received the Medal of Merit of the U.S. Congress in recognition for his outstanding and invaluable service to the community.

In 2014, Maestro Eduardo Marturet was selected as a Steinway Artist, a distinguished list of musicians that includes classical pianists like Lang Lang, jazz stars like Diana Krall, pop icons like Billy Joel, and "immortals" like Irving Berlin, Cole Porter, Sergei Rachmaninoff, and Arthur Rubinstein. In 2018, The Miami Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Maestro Marturet, paid homage to the memory of Zaha Hadid, ARCHITECT – ARTIST – THINKER (b. 1950 in Baghdad, Iraq; d. 2016 in Miami, USA) with the premiere of his composition @Zaha's Place, a meditation on sound and space.

In 2019, was inducted into the Genius 100 Visions Group, "an active and engaged community of 100 exceptionally imaginative and impactful human beings. Genius 100 brings accomplished and compassionate minds together to re-imagine the future – and to implement creative initiatives to improve it.

The organization is inspired by Albert Einstein's words: "A new type of thinking is essential if mankind is to survive and move toward higher levels," and it includes world renown luminaries like US Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg, architect Frank Gehry, and conductor Zubin Mehta, all great visionaries [who] raise the bar on what is achievable within their fields. Collectively, in collaboration, they can make the impossible possible.

That same year, he conducted the recording session of the Miami Symphony Orchestra's soundtrack television series from Telemundo "La Reina del Sur" Season Two who won a 2020 International Emmy for Non-English Language US Primetime Program. The creation of the soundtrack for the series second season was the result of the partnership between himself, and Marcos Santana, President of Telemundo Global Studios, who was also Show-runner and Executive Producer of the series. Marturet was part of a historic event that took place on Sunday, Mar. 14, Einstein's birthday, when Astronaut Dr. Soichi Noguchi (JAXA, Japan Exploration Agency) was inducted as a Genius 100 Visionary. During this historic event, Planet 9, an opus Maestro Marturet composed exclusively to be performed in space, was performed for this occasion. Marturet and many other Genius 100 Visionaries took part in this once-in-a-lifetime experience. More recently, on July 4th, 2022, Mayor Francis Suárez from the City of Miami proclaimed MISO as the official symphony orchestra of the city of Miami. Marturet received the proclamation in a multitudinarian event, with more than 10,000 people present at the Peacock Park in Coconut Grove.

In addition to the 30 albums made with the Berliner Symphoniker, there are also those made with the Radio Budapest Symphony Orchestra, Brabant Orkest, the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Chamber Orchestra, the Bohemian Chamber Philharmonic, Stavanger Symphony, the Czech Chamber Philharmonic and the Miami Symphony Orchestra.

Eduardo Marturet has been a Steinway artist since 2014.

THE MIAMI SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA 2023-2024 SEASON

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Soon, more information at www.themiso.org

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Strategic Alliances is a program comprised of artists and organizations close involved with The Miami Symphony Orchestra (MISO). With primary interests in establishing strong artistic and institutional relationships with MISO, the artists and organizations forming the Strategic Alliances share an artistic vision to support MISO's potential for enormous growth. The synergy created between the alliances and the Miami Symphony Orchestra is limitless.

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- 1) Tarcisio Barreto – Principal, Anna D'Addona
- 2) Luisa Duarte, Wendy Ocando
- 3) Maried Quintana, Maria C. Armas
- 4) Silvina Parra, Yasmaly Marquez
- 5) Roraima Omana

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- 1) Joen Vásquez – Guest Principal, Mariana Fermin- Acting Associate Principal
- 2) Jesus Carnero, Jose Guibert
- 3) Fabiana Alvarez, Siobhan Cronin
- 4) Manuel Frias, Adrian Gonzalez

Cellos

- 1) Evgenia Mott – Associate Principal, Carlos Carreño
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- 3) Valentina Hernandez, Carolina Jhonson

Basses

- 1) Luis Gomez-Imbert - Principal, Paola Garcia - Associate Principal
- 2) Jose Francisco Montes, Zacherie Small



DANIEL ANDAI

Hailed as an "Exemplary Leader" by the New York Times for leading members of New York Philharmonic and Manhattan School of Music in Carnegie Hall, violinist Daniel Andai has shared his versatile artistry as a soloist, recitalist, chamber musician, concertmaster, conductor and recording artist in major concert venues in over 50 countries. He is a prizewinner of numerous competitions and soloed with orchestras around the world.

Daniel Andai is concertmaster and frequent soloist of the Miami Symphony Orchestra (MISO) since 2010, where he also made special appearances for Genius 100 visionaries performing on a Holocaust surviving violin as part of the Violins of Hope collection, as well as JAXA Astronaut Soichi Noguchi's private induction to the Genius 100 Visionary roster, courtesy of NASA, while he orbited Earth aboard the International Space Station. He was concertmaster and frequent soloist of the Philharmonic Orchestra of the Americas in New York with whom he recorded multiple Billboard rated SONY Classical CD's, and appeared as guest concertmaster with orchestras in Mexico, Brazil, Switzerland, and France, section violinist of New York Philharmonic and Miyazaki Festival Orchestra (Japan), and worked closely with members of major string quartets, symphony, opera, and ballet orchestras from around the world.

As an educator, he brings a multifaceted style of teaching, suited for students of all ages and skill.

Dr. Daniel Andai is Dean of the Music Division at New World School of the Arts (Miami, Florida) where he is the Chief Academic Officer, responsible for operating a music partnership between Miami Dade College, University of Florida, and Miami Dade County Public Schools. He is Artistic Director of Killington Music Festival (Killington, Vermont), Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of Alhambra Orchestra in Miami. Previously, he served as violin professor and Marialice Shivers Endowed Chair in Fine Arts at University of Texas in Edinburg and served on faculties at Miami-Dade College and New World School of the Arts, in addition to over 30 summer music festivals. During this time, he worked with some of the world's greatest classical and pop artists.

He has served on boards and advisory boards, been invited to serve as a panelist for Jeb and Columba Bush's Arts4Life organization and has performed for numerous world dignitaries, including Hilary Clinton, Donald Trump, Lech Walesa, Al Gore, Benjamin Netanyahu, among others. He has performed with countless recognized artists in the pop and classical fields.

Daniel Andai is an alumnus of University of Miami (DMA), Manhattan School of Music (PS & MM), Lynn University (BM), New World School of the Arts (HS), Miami Dade College and Killington Music Festival.



SHARON ISBIN

Acclaimed for her extraordinary lyricism, technique and versatility, multiple Grammy Award winner Sharon Isbin was named the 2020 Musical America Worldwide Instrumentalist of the Year, the first guitarist to receive the coveted honor in its 59-year award history. Hailed as "the pre-eminent guitarist of our time," she has been soloist with over 200 orchestras, and has performed in the world's finest halls across 40 countries.

Winner of the Munich ARD, Madrid and Toronto Competitions, Germany's Echo Klassik and Guitar Player's Best Classical Guitarist awards, she performed in Scorsese's Oscar-winning *The Departed*, at Ground Zero for the first internationally televised 9/11 memorial, the White House by invitation of President Obama, and as the only classical artist in the 2010 Grammy Awards. The documentary *Sharon Isbin: Troubadour*, seen by millions on over 200 PBS stations across the U.S. and abroad, won the ASCAP Television Broadcast Award and is available on DVD/Blu-ray and Amazon streaming. Recent highlights include sold-out concerts at the Kennedy Center, Kimmel Center, and Carnegie Hall including a collaboration with Sting.

Isbin's catalogue of over 35 albums has sold nearly a million copies. Her two recent recordings were named Best of 2020 and feature world premieres composed for her: *Affinity* showcasing Chris Brubeck's dazzling guitar concerto, along with works by Leo Brouwer, Tan Dun, Antonio Lauro and Richard Danielpour; and *Strings for Peace* with India's legendary sarod master Amjad Ali Khan.

Her 2019 *Souvenirs of Spain & Italy* with the Pacifica Quartet debuted at #1 on Amazon and #2 on Billboard, and *Alma Española* with opera star Isabel Leonard, the first Spanish art song album with guitar of its kind in 40 years, was honored with a 2018 Grammy Award for Producer of the Year. Her Grammy-winning *Journey to the New World* with guests Joan Baez and Mark O'Connor spent 63 consecutive weeks on top Billboard charts, and her Latin Grammy-nominated Rodrigo Aranjuez disc with the New York Philharmonic is their only recording with guitar. Other highlights include Bach Complete Lute Suites in landmark editions created with her mentor Rosalyn Tureck, and *Sharon Isbin & Friends: Guitar Passions* with rock and jazz guests Steve Vai, Heart's Nancy Wilson, Stanley Jordan and Romero Lubambo.

Author of the *Classical Guitar Answer Book*, Isbin has premiered over 80 works written for her by some of the world's finest composers, including concerti by John Corigliano, Christopher Rouse, Tan Dun, Aaron Jay Kernis, Joseph Schwantner, and Lukas Foss. Upcoming world premieres include *Song of a Dreaming Sparrow* (2020) for her by Schwantner which she premieres with the Pacifica Quartet at New York's 92NY Kaufmann Concert Hall and on tour in November 2022. She directs the guitar departments at the Aspen Music Festival and The Juilliard School, which she created in 1989.

Sharon Isbin appears by arrangement with:
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www.sharonisbin.com



KAREN LEFRAK

A native New Yorker, composer Karen LeFrak began playing the piano at age three. Her works have been performed by leading ensembles and musicians at prestigious venues in the US, Europe, Russia and Asia. Recent performances include her ballet *Gentle Memories*, at the Koch Theatre and main stage of the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, the ballet *Tous Les Jours*, at the Moscow Kremlin, her oboe and horn double concerto with New York Philharmonic principals Liang Wang and Philip Myers with the Shanghai Symphony Orchestra, the world premiere of *A Bite of the Apple* with the New York Philharmonic, and *Windy Sand* by the Joffrey Ballet both in Chicago and at the Koch Theatre and the world premiere of the ballet *Pavlovsk* at the Mariinsky Theatre in Saint Petersburg, Russia.

Future 2016 highlights include *Gloriosa*, with the *Gloriosa Trio* at the Boulder Chamber Orchestra's Chamber Music Series and repeat performances of *Pavlovsk* at the Mariinsky Theatre.

<https://www.karenlefrak.com>

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HOLLYWOOD, FL



PROGRAM NOTES

CALM SEA AND PROSPEROUS VOYAGE

Felix Mendelssohn

Two poems by Goethe, the first titled *Calm at Sea* and the second titled *Prosperous Voyage*, were the source for three 19th century settings: Beethoven's Opus 112, (1814-1815) Schubert's song "Calm Sea" (1815) and Mendelssohn's Overture Opus 27, (1828, revised in 1834.) Originally, Mendelssohn had intended that *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*, and *Hebrides* be published as a single set with a single opus number, but that later changed.

The first poem reads:

Silence, deep rules over the waters
Calmly slumbering lies the main
While sailor views with trouble
Nought but one vast level plain
Not a zephyr is in motion!

Silence fearful as the grave!
In the mighty waste of ocean
Sunk to rest is every wave. (1795)

The second poem reads:

The mist is fast clearing
And radiant is heaven
While Aeolus loosens
Our anguish-fraught bond.
The zephyrs are sighing
Alert is the sailor.
Quick! Nimbly be plying!
The distance approaches
I see land beyond! (1795)

Mendelssohn wrote the following notes:

“The introduction I planned in this way: That a pitch gently sustained by the strings for a long while hovers here and there and trembles, barely audible, so that in the slowest Adagio, now the basses, now the violins, rest on the same pitch for several bars. The whole stirs sluggishly from the passage with heavy tedium. Finally it comes to a halt with thick chords and the Prosperous Voyage sets out. Now all the wind instruments, the timpani, oboes and utes begin and play merrily to the end.”

In place of vocal settings, chosen by Schubert and Beethoven, Mendelssohn sets the poems into an orchestral seascape. Although he had only seen the sea one time at this point in his life, he wrote a stunning and convincing representation of the danger and terror of being becalmed and the celebration of nally seeing land and the renewal of wind.

The music begins piano and adagio: a sustained chord sounds from strings and winds, with a tiny downward movement in the basses for two measures before violins and violas pick up the theme: hymn-like, the instruments move together with small colorations from the ute. The atmosphere is lonely, frightening, and deadly calm. Sailors faced a certain death if things did not change. There is no panic, only resignation.

Hope does emerge when a birdcall emerges from the ute; a climbing gesture leads into a general swell of a sustained fortissimo chord. At this point, we launch into the “prosperous” section marked *molto allegro e vivace*. Excitement grows, trumpet fanfares announce the salvation and the orchestra races headlong into an unending celebration. Embedded into this section is a small hymn of thanksgiving, momentarily stopping the euphoria. Joy and relief re-enter into a lyrical conclusion, with the bird singing small interjections in a zestful renewal of life and a second chance for the living of it. The Overture concludes with a peaceful chord: and all is well.

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PROGRAM NOTES

Miami Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra

Miami = Dance! Dance has been a defining phenomenon to the peoples who have “lived” Miami’s history. The Miami Concerto for Guitar and Orchestra is an homage to the musical heritage of Miami. That heritage includes influences from Africa, Europe, and the indigenous peoples of Latin America.

The guitar is, perhaps, the instrument most linked to the music of Latin America. It was first introduced to the Americas by Spanish colonists as early as the 16th century. It rapidly became popular with the native peoples of the area.

Many of the rhythms and polyrhythms common to the music of Latin America can be traced to the peoples of West and Central Africa. Many of those rhythms, instruments, and vocal characteristics would become an important part of the music of Cuba, the Caribbean, and Latin America. The influence of Europe and the Iberian Peninsula in particular, can be found in the melodies, harmonies, and instruments of music throughout Latin America. This influence extended to such dances and rhythms as the Rumba, with its many variations, the Samba, Son, Tango, Habanera, Bembé, and so many more.

The Miami Concerto is a concerto in three movements. Each movement features a characteristic dance rhythm that became a part of Latin American music.

“Bailamos,” the sub-title of the concerto’s 1st movement uses the Guaguancó, (Gwag-wan-ko’), one of the many subgenres of the Cuban rumba. Throughout much of the movement, the percussion section will be playing claves, congas, and bongo drums. These instruments are fundamental to the music of Latin America, Cuba, and the many vibrant styles that exist in the music of present day Miami.

“Romántico”, the concerto’s 2nd movement, is a tango, a partner dance that is commonly believed to have originated in the border area between Argentina and Uruguay. It’s melodies, harmonies, rhythms, and instruments have been influenced by the rhythms, melodies, and harmonies of Africa and Europe.

“Festivo” is the 3rd and final movement of the concerto. The percussion section will be, once again, playing claves, congas and bongos. This movement features the rhythm of the bembé, a 6/8 rhythm common to the people of West Africa.

In the language of the Yoruba people of Nigeria, one translation of “bembé” is “celebration”. A wonderful way to end the concerto.

This concerto is a tribute to Miami, my second home, and the closeness and love I feel for this ebullient, colorful and lively city. Featuring the unusual solo instrument, the classical guitar, I hope this piece will be remembered for its interesting motifs, hummable melodies and exciting dance rhythms.

PROGRAM NOTES

Enigma Variations

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

The initials C.A.E. stand for Carolina Alice Elgar, the composer's wife, and bear the distinctive mark of a melody he whistled upon arriving home. According to the author: "The variation is actually an extension of the theme with which I wanted to present myself in a romantic and delicate manner. Those who know C.A.E. will understand the reference to someone whose life was a source of romantic and delicate inspiration."

Variation II (Allegro) "H.D.S.-P."

The initials of this variation belong to Hew David Steuart-Powell, of whom the author wrote: "He was a well-known amateur pianist and a great interpreter of chamber music. (...) His characteristic diatonic introduction on the keys before starting to play is parodied here with passages in semiquavers; this might suggest a toccata, but chromatically beyond the capabilities of H.D.S.-P."

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

The humorous, almost caricature-like tone is evident in this variation inspired by Richard Baxter Townshend, the creator of the Tenderfoot series. This passage alludes to the portrayal in those books of an elderly character in an amateur theatrical performance whose deep voice sometimes reaches the soprano range.

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

Brief and lively, as one would expect the expression of William Meath Baker to be, a member of rural nobility, lord of Hasfield in Gloucestershire, who, according to Elgar's comments, "used to express himself energetically."

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

Richard Penrose Arnold, son of the famous Victorian poet Matthew Arnold and a notable amateur pianist. A subtle romantic evocation of a character from the author's circle seamlessly linked with the next variation.

Variation VI (Andantino) "Ysobel"

Isabel Fitton, whom Elgar himself taught viola. Hence, it's not surprising that this instrument takes center stage in the variation, opening with three repeated notes on three strings, as if it were an exercise for beginners.

Variation VII (Presto) "Troyte"

Not all of the composer's friends were directly connected to music. The inspiration for this lively and bombastic variation is the architect Arthur Troyte Griffith. The humor in this section is supposed to allude to the pianistic challenges of the architect, an amateur of the instrument, and a reference to an evening when, caught in a storm during a walk, had to, amidst thunder and lightning, seek refuge in the house of Norbury, the theme of the next variation.

Variation VIII (Allegretto) "W.N."

Rather than representing Winifred Norbury, another amiable friend, the variation is intended to capture the atmosphere of peace and tranquility that prevailed in her home, one of Elgar's favorite places. A sustained note by the violin serves as a bridge to the next variation, the most famous and beloved of all.

Variation IX (Adagio) "Nimrod"

The most beautiful and frequently performed of the variations is nicknamed Nimrod, a hero mentioned in the Bible as "a mighty hunter before the Lord." However, this doesn't imply that the person inspiring this variation was a hunting enthusiast; it's a play on words with the surname of Augustus J. Jaeger, as Jaeger means hunter in German. This friend, also one of the sternest critics and greatest inspirations for Elgar, served as the editor for Novello & Co., which published some of Elgar's works. His opinion was highly valued by the author, often lifting him from the depression caused by the initial lack of recognition. Jaeger pointed to Beethoven as an example, advising Elgar to disregard criticism and compose even better each time. Hence, there is a hint of the opening of this variation resembling the second movement of Beethoven's "Pathétique" Sonata, as Elgar confessed to Dora Penny, to whom he would dedicate the next variation.

Variation X (Intermezzo: Allegretto) "Dorabella"

Dora Penny had a certain stutter, cleverly captured by this variation in the woodwinds. This friend and confidante was connected to other members of Elgar's circle who also inspired variations, as she was the stepdaughter of William Meath Baker's sister (to whom the fourth variation is dedicated) and the sister-in-law of Richard Baxter Townsend (inspiration for the third). She is considered one of the most respected sources regarding the interpretation of this work and the life of the author, thanks to her book: Edward Elgar, 'Memories of a Variation.'

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

Possibly the most amusing of all variations, rather than being inspired by a person, it draws from a humorous incident involving Dan, a large bulldog owned by Elgar's friend George Robert Sinclair, the organist of Hereford Cathedral. The opening bars evoke the rolling of the animal down the high banks of the River Wye toward the water, his struggle with the current, and triumphant barks when he manages to return to the shore. Dan's owner jokingly told Elgar, "Put music to that," and eventually, the composer did so with this variation.

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

This variation evokes the personality of the renowned cellist Basil G. Nevinson, and that's why the central melody is assigned to the cello. It is precisely this performer who would inspire Elgar years later for his famous Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85.

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

According to Dora Penny, this variation is dedicated to Lady Mary Lygon, a friend of the Elgar couple and a promoter of the music festivals at Madresfield, where she sought to champion the composer's music. As the recipient of this variation was about to embark on a ship to Australia, where her brother had been appointed governor of a county, Elgar included a quote from Mendelssohn's "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage" in the clarinet. However, orchestral conductor Sir Andrew Davis suggests that this variation is for Helen Weaver, to whom Elgar was engaged for 14 months, and who went to New Zealand in 1885, causing great sadness to the author.

The last variation, Variation XIV (Finale: Allegro Presto) "E.D.U.," is Elgar's self-portrait. His wife used to call him Edu, a diminutive of his name in German: Eduard. Recollections of the first and ninth variations emerge here, as his wife and the critic Jaeger undoubtedly held a significant place in his life.

The original version of this variation was about 100 measures shorter, but Jaeger asked the composer to extend it, including the surprise of the organ. This is the version that premiered on September 13, 1899, at the Worcester Three Choirs Festival, and it is still performed today.

As for the original theme inspiring all these variations, numerous opinions have been ventured. While some suggested it was derived from "Rule Britannia" (which, in turn, borrows the melody from Arne's opera "Artaxerxes"), many discard this as unlikely.

More interesting proposals have been made, such as pianist Joseph Cooper's view that it was taken from Mozart's Symphony No. 38 (Prague), which was on the premiere program. Orchestral conductor Sir Charles Mackerras shares this opinion, conducting a concert in 1992 titled: "Elgar – The Enigma Solved?"

Speculations about the actual theme behind the Variations are numerous and might be entertaining and interesting, but ultimately futile, as discovering the final enigma the composer never revealed adds little to the enjoyment of this work. Particularly when one encounters a carefully and emotionally performed rendition, just as the one we are hearing tonight, Conducted by Maestro Eduardo Marturet and the Miami Symphony Orchestra.

Elgar publicly and privately explained the character or situation inspiring each variation, but he also clarified that it was a personal matter that should never have transcended and that the work should be taken "simply as a musical piece." Indeed, one doesn't need to know what lies behind each melody, each harmonic play to appreciate this multifaceted creation, blending elements of neoromanticism, the chromaticism of impressionists, and even a certain cyclical syntax revealing its debt to César Franck.

Daniel Fernández, El Nuevo Herald, Miami



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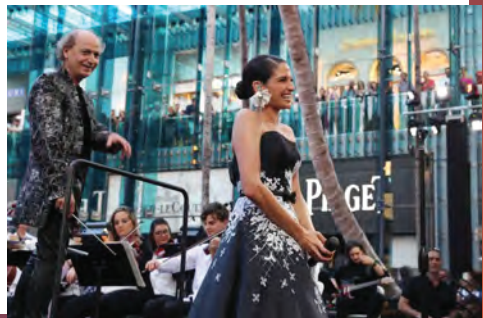
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