

THE WORCESTER ORGAN CONCERT SERIES

WILL SHERWOOD, ARTISTIC DIRECTOR



MECHANICS HALL
AN ACOUSTICAL MASTERPIECE

Celebrating 150 Years of Great Organ Music

MECHANICS HALL and the WORCESTER CHAPTER AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS
present

PETER EDWIN KRASINSKI

APRIL 15, 2015 - noon

Variations on an Original Theme ("Enigma") Opus 36
Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

The Electric House (1922) directed by and starring Buster Keaton

Peter Krasinski is a conductor, organist, and music educator that consistently delivers imaginative performances that elevate and inform diverse audiences. He is well respected in both the secular and sacred genres of his field and has taught the enchantment of music to both public and private institutions in the greater Boston area. His Bach playing has been hailed in the press as "sublimely spiritual" and his improvisations have been called "stunning" and "seamless."



Mr. Krasinski currently serves as Organist of First Church of Christ, Scientist in Providence RI, accompanist at Beth El Temple Center Belmont MA, and as a faculty member of St Paul's Choir School, Cambridge, MA. He is Dean of the Boston Chapter AGO, regularly teaches improvisation master-classes to the Harvard Organ Society and is organ consultant to a number of high-profile projects. Past positions include Director of Choral Arts at Beaver Country Day School and Artistic Director of Youth pro Musica. He holds both a Bachelor of Music Degree in Music Education and Organ Performance, and the Master of Sacred Music Degree from Boston University.

Mr. Krasinski has shared his organ accompaniment, interpretation and improvising skills as soloist and with many organizations around the United States, France and Japan. He has conducted internationally, and his numerous commissioned compositions often see repeat performances. His other passions include playing jazz piano and sailing his J-24 off the coast of the North East.

MECHANICS HALL • 321 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608
508-752-5608 • www.mechanicshall.org

WORCESTER CHAPTER AMERICAN GUILD OF ORGANISTS
PO Box 20208, Worcester, MA 01602 • www.WorcesterAGO.org

E & G G Hook

Opus 334 1864

52 stops, 64 ranks, 3504 pipes

I Choir (C-a3, 58)

| | |
|-------------------|-----|
| Aeolina & Bourdon | 16 |
| Open Diapason | 8 |
| Melodia | 8 |
| Keraulophon | 8 |
| Dulciana | 8 |
| Flauto Traverso | 4 |
| Violin | 4 |
| Piccolo | 2 |
| Mixture | III |
| Clarinet | 8 |

II Great (C-a3, 58)

| | |
|------------------|-------|
| Open Diapason | 16 |
| Open Diapason | 8 |
| Stopped Diapason | 8 |
| Viola da Gamba | 8 |
| Claribella | 8 |
| Principal | 4 |
| Flute Harmonique | 4 |
| Twelfth | 2 2/3 |
| Fifteenth | 2 |
| Mixture | III |
| Mixture | V |
| Trumpet | 16 |
| Trumpet | 8 |
| Clarion | 4 |

Couplers

| | |
|------------------|-----|
| Swell to Great * | 8 |
| Swell to Choir | 8 |
| Choir to Great * | 8 |
| Solo to Great * | 8 |
| Choir to Solo | 8 |
| Great to Pedale | 8 |
| Choir to Pedale | 8,4 |
| Swell to Pedale | 8 |
| Solo to Pedale | 8 |

III Swell (C-a3, 58)

| | |
|-------------------|-------|
| Bourdon | 16 |
| Open Diapason | 8 |
| Stopped Diapason | 8 |
| Viol d'Amour | 8 |
| Principal | 4 |
| Flute Octaviante | 4 |
| Violin | 4 |
| Twelfth | 2 2/3 |
| Fifteenth | 2 |
| Mixture | V |
| Trumpet (tenor C) | 16 |
| Cornoepen | 8 |
| Oboe | 8 |
| Clarion | 4 |
| Vox Humana | 8 |

IV Solo (C-a3, 58)

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Philomela | 8 |
| Salicional | 8 |
| Hohl Pfeife | 4 |
| Piccolo | 2 |
| Tuba | 8 |
| Corno Inglese | 8 |

Pedale (C-f1, 30, straight, flat pedalboard)

| | |
|---------------|--------|
| Open Diapason | 16 |
| Violone | 16 |
| Bourdon | 16 |
| Quinte | 10 2/3 |
| Violoncello | 8 |
| Flute | 8 |
| Posaune | 16 |

* Barker lever assist

Next in the 2015 WORCESTER ORGAN CONCERT SERIES

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 5, Noon, Worcester Organ Concert: Monica Czausz, Free

WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 12, Noon, Worcester Organ Concert: Abraham Ross, Free

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 16, Noon, Worcester Organ Concert, Free

The Worcester Organ Concerts are presented by Mechanics Hall and the Worcester Chapter of the American Guild of Organists to showcase the magnificent 1864 Hook Organ - also known as *The Worcester Organ* - and talented organists and musical artists from New England and beyond. Programming includes organ performance, silent films and multimedia performances.

a b o u t t o d a y ' s m u s i c

Elgar composed *Enigma Variations* in 1898-1899. It was first performed in London, on June 19, 1899. The Variations consist of a brief theme and fourteen variations (Elgar adds a self-portrait to the depictions of his friends). Elgar himself recalled how the work came to be conceived on the evening of 21 October 1898:

"After a long day's fiddle teaching in Malvern, I came home very tired. Dinner being over ... I sat down at the piano. In a little while, soothed and feeling rested, I began to play, and suddenly my wife interrupted by saying, '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 tune is the theme of the Variations."

This transcription for organ was premièred by Mr. Krasinski at the Methuen Memorial Music Hall in during the 1998 season. It sprang from the discovery of a piano version by Elgar himself during a visit to a Three Choirs Festival in Worcester England. With this condensed arrangement in hand, the organ transcription came to life. It was helpful that Mr. Krasinski had played the orchestral work numerous times as a violinist under various conductors. The Enigma theme itself remains elusive. However, Elgar made his descriptive intentions of each of the variations clear enough (with a single exception).

ENIGMA, Andante

Elgar's theme, entitled ENIGMA and only 17 measures long, is deceptively complex and contains a huge amount of melodic and harmonic raw material to be used in the succeeding variations. The orchestration is rich and thematically multi-linear. The aware listener will detect the "short short long long" pattern followed by a reflection, "long long short short".

Before the first performance, Elgar said: "The 'Enigma' I will not explain – its 'dark saying' must be left un-guessed, and I warn you that the apparent connection between the Variations and the Theme is often of the slightest texture; further, through and over the whole set another and larger theme 'goes', but is not played ..."

William Steinberg, famous Boston Globe critic, BSO and SFO annotator, has offered these thoughts about the Theme itself: "It seems likely therefore that the larger theme is not musical, but conceptual: a bond that links the 14 individuals. Perhaps the bond is simply friendship – or love. Given Elgar's enjoyment of crosswords, perhaps his 'dark saying' is a cryptic reference to St Paul's first epistle to the Corinthians, with its famous words 'we see through a glass darkly' (or, perhaps, 'through a mirror, in a riddle'), its next verse proclaiming (in the King James Version) 'faith, hope, charity; these three; but the greatest of these is charity'. If this is the correct interpretation, the bond of love that links the Variations makes a telling contrast with its Theme and the one un-enigmatic statement Elgar is known to have made about it, when, in a letter of 1912, he claimed that the Theme 'expressed when written (in 1898) my sense of the loneliness of the artist ... and to me, it still embodies that sense'."

In this transcription for organ the instrument becomes the sonic springboard and as such the arrangement is not created so much as imitating an orchestra as expressing convincingly the characters portrayed with all their personality, distinctiveness, and emotional qualities. Following the initial statement of the theme (Andante), the dramatis personae appear in the following order:

Variation 1 ("C. A. E."), *L'istesso tempo*.

Caroline Alice Elgar was married to the composer in 1889, and according to Elgar, her life "...was a romantic and delicate inspiration." This section stays close to the harmonic and melodic outlines of the theme, but fleshes it out with ornamentation and, in this transcription, multiple "thumbing down" with some sections played on all three manuals and pedal simultaneously.

Variation 2 ("H. D. S.-P."), *Allegro*.

Hew David Stuart-Powell was a gifted amateur pianist who often played trios with Elgar (a violinist) and the cellist Basil Nevinson (the "B. G. N." of Variation 12). The toccata-style figuration probably refers to Stuart-Powell's habitual warm-up routine, although the highly chromatic melody is probably intended a joke--this pianist was notoriously conservative in his musical tastes. Some colorful solo reeds, including the various clarinet stops, are featured in this variation.

Variation 3 ("R. T. B."), *Allegretto*.

Richard Baxter Townsend was an author with a passion for amateur theater. According to his friends, Townsend had an extremely high voice, but loved to play old men in comic roles: growling his lines as low as he could, and suddenly breaking into a high falsetto. Therefore there is a humorous contrast between low and high textures in this variation.

Variation 4 ("W. M. B."), *Allegro di molto*.

In this variation, Elgar pokes gentle fun at a somewhat pompous country gentleman and scholar, William M. Baker. During one of Elgar's visits to his home, Baker officiously read an itinerary of the day's activities and left the music room with an inadvertent slam of the door. The tittering of his guests is heard near the middle, but unlike in the original orchestration, these guests are decidedly brash. The variety of reed choruses, in multiple divisions on this instrument, create a thrilling voice for this character.

Variation 5 ("R. P. A."), Moderato.

Richard P. Arnold, son of the poet Matthew Arnold, is characterized in this section, which is alternately extremely solemn, and suddenly lighthearted. According to Elgar, his music making had a way of "evading difficulties, but suggesting in a mysterious way the real feeling. His serious conversation was continually broken up by whimsical and witty remarks." This variation features many of the various diapason stops along with some charming flutes. This variation continues without pause into Variation 6.

Variation 6 ("Ysobel"), Andantino.

In the original orchestration the viola's prominent role in this variation refers to Isobel Woods, an amateur violist. The musical figure, focused on large intervals that appear throughout this section are taken from a beginner's exercise in crossing strings. Along with some string stops number of beautiful flute stops express the music equally well in this transcription, not to mention Isobel's graceful nature.

Variation 7 ("Troyte"), Presto.

The architect Arthur Troyte Griffith was a boisterous friend and sometime piano student of Elgar's, although he was apparently not a star pupil. Elgar notes that he tried "...to make something like order out of the chaos," but that "...the final despairing 'slam' records that the effort proved to be in vain." That said, this is one of the most complex variations to play in the entire transcription. Often the amateur has something quite grand inside striving to get out.

Variation 8 ("W. N."), Allegretto.

Elgar was associated with Winifred Norbury, an elderly devotee of music, through his connections with the Worcestershire Philharmonic Society. The music depicts both her stately 18th-century home (through elegant figures in sixths) and her characteristic laugh (by way of enchanting trills.) This variation continues brilliantly and directly into the next and the whole harmonic language opens up to the new world of E flat.

Variation 9 ("Nimrod"), Adagio.

In the Book of Genesis Nimrod is 'the mighty hunter'; the name Jaeger means 'hunter' in German. August Jaeger was Elgar's closest musical friend, the man who edited his music and whose judgment he trusted more than anyone else's. This, the most celebrated of all the Variations, is not a portrait of Jaeger's forceful character, but rather emotionally represents a long conversation between Elgar and Jaeger on the grandeur of Beethoven's slower symphonic movements, and, perhaps more importantly, respect for the previous composers continued striving at his art in times of great trial: a concept not unfamiliar to Elgar before the great success of this work.

Variation 10 ("Dorabella -- Intermezzo"), Allegretto.

According to at least one Elgar biographer, the fluttering nature of this section refers to the voice of Miss Dora Penny, an acquaintance of the composer. Elgar himself referred to this as "...a dance of fairy-like lightness." This section also serves as a bridge between the serious Variation 9 and the more rowdy Variation 11 and this transcription reflects closely the original orchestration and features a sailing line on the English Horn stop.

Variation 11 ("G. R. S."), Allegro di molto.

George Robertson Sinclair was organist of Hereford Cathedral. This music mostly refers to his bulldog, Dan, although clever musical references abound to his profession as well. One day, during a picnic, Dan slipped down a muddy bank into the River Wye, and had to swim for a time, looking for a place to climb out. In the opening bars, we hear Dan sliding down the slippery slope, paddling ("pedaling") in the water, and barking ("Bach-ing") with joy when he finds a landing-place. The more majestic tones of the brass depict Dan's master.

Variation 12 ("B. G. N."), Andante.

Basil G. Nevinston, an amateur cellist, was a longtime friend of Elgar's "whose scientific and artistic attainments, and the wholehearted way they were put at the disposal of his friends, particularly endeared him to the writer." In this transcription the theme is expressively developed by the principal choruses, and features the some solo stops. Variation 13 follows immediately.

Variation 13 ("Romanza"), Moderato.

Lady Elgar is said to have inserted the asterisks, presumably to cloak the identity of Lady Mary Lygon, who had sailed for Australia at about the time Elgar began composing the Variations; the musical citation of Mendelssohn's overture "Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage" (played by the solo clarinet) was thought to allude to her ocean trip. (In the orchestra score a deep roll on the drum imitates the ship engine: in the organ transcription that is accomplished by a few pedal pipes.) The possibility was raised, however, that the allusion may have been to Helen Weaver, to whom Elgar had been engaged in 1883-84 and who also sailed to Australia, but in this case as an emigrant rather than a visitor. It now seems most likely that the unidentified subject was actually Alice Stuart-Wortley, a daughter of the English painter Sir John Everett Millais. Elgar had a close relationship with her for some 35 years. In terms of the characters involved, this variation remains an enigma.

Variation 14 ("E. D. U. -- Finale"), Allegro.

EDU are no one's initials, but run them together and they give you Alice's nickname ("Edoo") for Edward. This variation/finale shows the composer's boldly assertive side, as well as his magnificent compositional genius. Alice returns, as does Nimrod, and the music ends in a blaze of confident glory.