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NOV 1 **PIANO**

Bruce Liu

NOV 5-8 **ORCHESTRAL**

Beethoven 5 & Mao Fujita

NOV 22 **CHAMBER MUSIC**

Nemanja Radulović
& Double Sens

JAN 10 **PIANO**

Rudolf Buchbinder

FEB 4-7 **ORCHESTRAL**

Rana Plays Tchaikovsky
Featuring Beethoven's
Leonore Overture

FEB 19-21 **ORCHESTRAL**

Karina Canellakis
& Randall Goosby

MAR 11-14 **ORCHESTRAL**

Beethoven Violin
Concerto & Mendelssohn

MAR 21 **PIANO**

Leif Ove Andsnes

MAR 24-27 **ORCHESTRAL**

Lang Lang Plays the Complete
Beethoven Piano Concertos*

APR 25 **PIANO**

Evgeny Kissin

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Mäkelä Conducts
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CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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ONE HUNDRED THIRTY-SIXTH SEASON

Thursday, October 15, 2026, at 7:30

Friday, October 16, 2026, at 1:30

Saturday, October 17, 2026, at 7:30

Giancarlo Guerrero Conductor

Anne Akiko Meyers Violin

SIERRA

Fandangos

MÁRQUEZ

Fandango

Folia Tropical

Plegaria (Chacona)

Fandanguito

First Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances

ANNE AKIKO MEYERS

INTERMISSION

ELGAR

Variations on an Original Theme (*Enigma*), Op. 36

Theme (Andante)

1. C.A.E. (Andante)

2. H.D.S.-P. (Allegro)

3. R.B.T. (Allegretto)

4. W.M.B. (Allegro di molto)

5. R.P.A. (Moderato)

6. Ysobel (Andantino)

7. Troyte (Presto)

8. W.N. (Allegretto)

9. Nimrod (Adagio)

10. Intermezzo (Dorabella). (Allegretto)

11. G.R.S. (Allegro di molto)

12. B.G.N. (Andante)

13. *** Romanza (Moderato)

14. Finale. E.D.U. (Allegro)

The appearance of Giancarlo Guerrero is made possible by the Juli Plant Grainger Fund for Artistic Excellence.

The appearance of Anne Akiko Meyers is made possible by the Grainger Fund for Excellence.

Newsradio 105.9 WBBM is a Media Partner for this event.

ROBERTO SIERRA

Born October 9, 1953; Vega Baja, Puerto Rico

Fandangos for Orchestra



Prudish eighteenth-century travellers from England and other parts of Europe, who were prone to exaggerating the exoticisms of their destinations, were scandalized when they visited Spain and witnessed locals dancing the lively fandango. “It is odd and entertaining enough when they execute with precision and agility all the various

footings, wheelings of the arms, and cracking of fingers,” noted Henry Swinburne in his travelogue. “But it exceeds in wantonness all the dances I ever beheld. Such motions, such writhings of the body and positions of the limbs, as no modest eye can look upon without a blush!” According to an apocryphal but widely circulated anecdote from the 1760s, the ostensibly lascivious fandango was subject to a formal obscenity trial at the Vatican, and when the dance was performed before the pope and cardinals, they

... could not hold on to their seats, their legs began to move, and the fury of the fandango got hold of them, leaving them breathless. ... His Sacred Majesty was obliged to say this dance was one of the best things he had seen.

Fandangos were typically accompanied by the castanets or a crowd of clapping onlookers, who established an infectious rhythmic framework in 3/4 time. Guitars would



COMPOSED
2000

FIRST PERFORMANCE
February 28, 2001; National Symphony Orchestra, Washington, D.C.

INSTRUMENTATION
2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes and english horn, 2 clarinets and bass clarinet, 2 bassoons and contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, piano, celesta, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME
13 minutes

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCE
July 31, 2005, Ravinia Festival. James Conlon conducting

THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: Roberto Sierra, portrait, courtesy of Wise Music Classical

Madrid from the Casa de Campo, engraving from 1795 based on a drawing by Henry Swinburne (1743–1803), published in his travelogue *Travels Through Spain in the Years 1775 and 1776*

OPPOSITE PAGE: *Le Fandango* by artist Mélanie d'Hervilly Hahnemann (1800–1878) and lithographer Pierre Langlumé (1790–1830), from the series *Types of Social Dances*. Musée Carnavalet, History of Paris



oscillate between a confident, implication-filled, major dominant chord and a solemn, responsive tonic chord in minor, and occasionally bring phrases to a close with a distinctive descending cadence. Musicians could riff endlessly on the two principal harmonies, creating bursts of activity that were nonetheless held tautly in place by the restricted tonal sequence and generating a distinctive sense of erotic tension in the process.

Many eighteenth-century composers were inspired to write instrumental works modelled on the fandango. Mozart included a short one as a contrasting episode in the finale of act 3 of *The Marriage of Figaro*, though it demonstrates less patience for harmonic stasis than a proper fandango generally does. Musicians working in Spain, like Luigi Boccherini and Antonio Soler,

wrote more authentic ones. Boccherini's fandango movements for string quartet and guitar quintet mine all manner of clever techniques from the instruments to lend as much variety as possible to the endless, mesmerizing alternation of chords. And in his milestone harpsichord fandango, the tonally innovative Soler keeps up the energy by engaging in sudden jumps to nearby keys and employing striking dissonances that draw a unique richness from the fandango's harmonic rotations.

It was principally Soler's example, and its "strange and whimsical twists," that the Puerto Rican composer Roberto Sierra turned to in 2000 when he wrote a fandango in response to a commission from Leonard Slatkin and the National Symphony Orchestra. "My *Fandangos* is a fantasy, or a 'super-fandango,' that takes as point of departure Soler's work and incorporates elements of Boccherini's fandango and my own baroque musings," Sierra explains in a brief note in the score. Sierra, who is a prolific composer of symphonic music and a brilliant orchestrator, loosely transcribes and colorfully expands on Soler's piece. At several junctures, he adds swirling, dense interludes that reflect his eclectic stylistic background and musical training, which included time spent studying with the crunchy, hard-edged Hungarian modernist György Ligeti. As Sierra describes it,

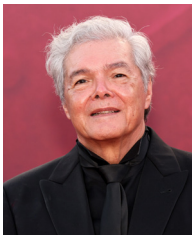
Some of the oddities in the harmonic structure of the Soler piece provided a bridge for the incorporation of contemporary sonorities, opening windows to apparently alien sound worlds. In these parenthetical commentaries, the same materials heard before are transformed, as if one would look at the same objects through different types of lenses or prisms. **C**

—Nicky Swett

ARTURO MÁRQUEZ

Born December 20, 1950; Álamos, Sonora, Mexico

Fandango for Violin and Orchestra



Arturo Márquez was born in Sonora, the Mexican state that borders Arizona, and his family moved to California when he was eleven years old. It was a musical household—his father, Arturo, Sr., spent his weekends playing mariachi violin, and the young Márquez was exposed to all kinds of Mexican and American popular music. He studied first at the

National Conservatory in Mexico City, and then in France in the 1980s, where he dipped his toes into contemporary, avant-garde trends in composition. In the 1990s, he turned away from these methods, choosing instead to emphasize potential points of contact between classical music and more popular fare—what he describes in a 2011 interview as “the kind of music that everyday people hear and dance to.”

From a young age, he remembers hearing the fandango—a dance that became popular in Spain in the eighteenth century and spawned numerous, diverse Latin American variations—everywhere: in movies, on the radio, and in his



COMPOSED
2021

FIRST PERFORMANCE
August 24, 2021; Los Angeles, California. Anne Akiko Meyers as soloist

INSTRUMENTATION
solo violin, 2 flutes and piccolo, 2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons, 4 horns, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, harp, strings

APPROXIMATE
PERFORMANCE TIME
35 minutes

These are the first Chicago Symphony Orchestra performances.

THIS PAGE, FROM TOP: Arturo Márquez at the Twenty-Fifth Annual Latin Grammy Awards at Kaseya Center, Miami, Florida, November 14, 2024. Photo by Dia Dipasupil/Getty Images

Anne Akiko Meyers and Arturo Márquez accept the award for Best Classical Contemporary Composition for *Fandango* during the Latin Grammy Awards at Miami Beach Convention Center, Miami Beach, Florida, November 14, 2024. Photo by Mike Coppola/Getty Images for the Latin Recording Academy

OPPOSITE PAGE: *Mexican Costumes, A Fandango*. Lithograph by Casimiro Castro (1826–1889), Mexican lithographer, draftsman, and painter; and Juan Campillo (active nineteenth century) from *México y sus alrededores* (Mexico and Its Surroundings), ca. 1855–56



father's performances. In the 1990s, as he was developing a new composing style and aiming to incorporate elements of popular music into his works, he started writing a violin concerto based on the Mexican fandango, but the project stalled. He was thrilled when, in 2018, the American violinist Anne Akiko Meyers suggested that he write her a violin concerto that was connected to Mexican music. "The proposal interested and fascinated me from that very moment," he explains in a program note for *Fandango*, the piece he ultimately wrote for her, "not only because of Maestra Meyers's emotional, aesthetic proposal, but also because of my admiration for her musicality, virtuosity and, above all, for her courage in proposing a concerto so out of the ordinary."

He did the bulk of the work on *Fandango* in 2020, as the COVID-19 pandemic was claiming lives around the world. "Composing in this 2020 pandemic was not easy, due to the huge human suffering," he acknowledged. "Undoubtedly my

experience with this work during this period has been intense and highly emotional." The concerto was premiered in August 2021 by Meyers, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, and Gustavo Dudamel, and the live recording of that performance won Best Classical Album and Best Contemporary Composition Latin Grammy awards in 2024.

In his note, Márquez provides a detailed explanation of the structure and historical lineage of the three movements of his concerto:

—Nicky Swett

Arturo Márquez on *Fandango* for Violin and Orchestra

The first movement, *Folia Tropical*, has the form of the sonata or traditional classical concerto: introduction, exposition with its two themes, bridge, development, and recapitulation. The introduction and the two themes

COMMENTS

share the same motif in a totally different way. Emotionally, the introduction is a call to the remote history of the fandango; the first theme and the bridge, which is totally rhythmic, are based on the Caribbean clave [beat pattern] and the second is eminently expressive, almost like a romantic bolero. Folias are ancient dances that come from Portugal and Spain. The root and meaning of this word also takes us to the French word “Folie”: madness.

The second movement, Plegaria, is the fruit of an imaginary marriage between the huapango-mariachi and Pablo Sarasate, Manuel de Falla, and Issac Albeniz, three of my beloved and admired Spanish composers. It is also a freely treated chaconne [a dance form in which continuous variations unfold above a short, repeated bass pattern]. Perhaps few people know that the chaconne, as well as the sarabande, were two dances forbidden by the Spanish Inquisition in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, long before they became part of European

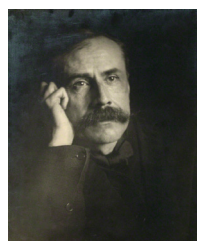
baroque music. Moreover, the first writings on these dances place them in colonial Mexico.

The third movement, Fandanguito, is a tribute to the famous fandanguito huasteco [from the Huasteca region in northeastern Mexico]. The music of this region is composed of violin, jarana huasteca (small rhythm guitar), and huapanguera (low guitar with five orders of strings), and, of course, accompanies their songs and improvisations, sung or recited. The huasteco violin is one of the instruments with the most virtuosity in all of America. It has certain features similar to baroque music but with great rhythmic vitality and a rich, original variety in bow strokes. Every huasteco violinist must have a personal version of this song if he wants to have and maintain prestige. This third movement is a free elaboration of the fandanguito huasteco, but it maintains many of its rhythmic characteristics. It demands great virtuosity from the soloist, and it is the music that I have kept in my heart for decades. **C**

EDWARD ELGAR

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

Variations on an Original Theme (*Enigma*), Op. 36



The temptation to improvise at the piano after a hard day's work surely never produced greater results than on an October evening in the Worcestershire countryside in 1898. Tired out from hours of teaching violin and writing music that

would never make him famous, Edward Elgar began to play a tune that caught his wife's ear. Alice asked what it was. “Nothing,” he replied, “but something might be made of it.” And then, to prove—or perhaps, test—his point, he began to play with it. “Powell would have done this, or Nevinson would have looked at it like this,” he

commented as he went, drawing on the names of their friends. Alice said, “Surely you are doing something that has never been done before!”

Alice wasn't quite right, in terms of historical fact—Schumann's *Carnaval*, for example, depicts a number of characters, real and imagined—but she obviously sensed that her husband had hit upon something important—not only to his own faltering career, but also for music itself. And so what was begun “in a spirit of humor” was soon “continued in deep seriousness,” as Elgar later recalled of the music that would make him famous, along with Powell, Nevinson, and a number of the composer's other friends. On October 24, he wrote to August Jaeger, the closest of all those friends,

... I have sketched a set of Variations (orkestra) on an original theme: the Variations have amused me because I've labeled 'em with the nicknames of my particular friends—you are Nimrod. That is to say, I've written the variations each one to represent the mood of the "party"—I've liked to imagine the "party" writing the var: him (or her) self and have written what I think they wd. have written—if they were asses enough to compose—it's a quaint idea & the result is amusing to those behind the scenes & won't affect the hearer who "nose nuffn."

The work went well. On November 1, Elgar played at least six variations for Dora Penny, now known as Dorabella, or variation 10. On January 5, Elgar wrote to Jaeger: "I say—those variations—I like 'em." By February 22, he told Dorabella that the variations were done, "and yours is the most cheerful. . . . I have orchestrated you well." The orchestration of the piece took the two weeks from February 5 to 19, 1899. Elgar then sent the score off to Hans Richter, the great German conductor known for championing both Wagner and Brahms. Elgar waited a long, nervous month for a response, but Richter recognized the quality of this music and agreed to give the premiere in London. For Elgar, already in his forties and not yet a household name, even in England, Richter's advocacy was decisive.

The first performance was a great success for both Elgar and for British music. The critics recognized the work as a landmark, and although one was aggravated that the dedication "To my friends pictured within" didn't name names, he was at least honest enough to admit that the music stood handsomely on its own. The friends have long ago been identified, but a greater question still remains. At the time of the premiere, Elgar wrote:

The enigma I will not explain—its "dark saying" must be left unguessed, 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—so the principal Theme never appears, even as in some late dramas—e.g., Maeterlinck's *L'intruse* and *Les sept princesses*—the chief character is never on the stage.

Those are words Elgar later came to regret, for the public's curiosity often overshadowed the music. Elgar himself only made matters worse by divulging that the "larger theme" fit in counterpoint with his original theme, by telling Arthur Troyte Griffith (variation 7) that the theme "is so well known that it is extraordinary that no one has

COMPOSED

October 1898–February 19, 1899

FIRST PERFORMANCE

June 19, 1899; London, England.
Hans Richter conducting

INSTRUMENTATION

2 flutes (2nd doubling piccolo),
2 oboes, 2 clarinets, 2 bassoons
(2nd doubling contrabassoon),
4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones,
tuba, timpani, side drum, triangle,
bass drum, cymbals, organ, strings

APPROXIMATE PERFORMANCE TIME

29 minutes

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES

January 3 and 4, 1902, Auditorium
Theatre. Theodore Thomas
conducting (U.S. premiere)

June 30, 1939, Ravinia Festival.
Sir Adrian Boult conducting

CSO PERFORMANCES, THE COMPOSER CONDUCTING

April 5 and 6, 1907, Orchestra Hall

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES

February 10 and 12, 2022,
Orchestra Hall. Marin Alsop
conducting

July 27, 2025, Ravinia Festival.
Marin Alsop conducting

CSO RECORDINGS

1974. Sir Georg Solti conducting.
London

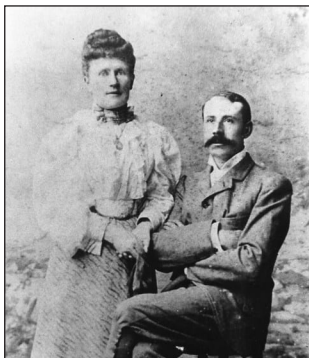
1986. Sir Georg Solti conducting.
CSO (*From the Archives*, vol. 21:
Soloists of the Orchestra III)
(Nimrod)

COMMENTS

spotted it,” and by admonishing Dorabella that she, of all people, had not guessed it. Several melodies have been favored over the years, including “God Save the King,” “Rule, Britannia!,” and, most often, “Auld lang syne,” but to date the *Enigma* still maintains its place in Elgar’s title. (Dorabella and her husband Richard Powell once asked Elgar outright about “Auld lang syne” and he denied it, but by then he was so tired of the whole mystery that many doubted the sincerity of his answer.)

For full descriptions of the “friends pictured within,” we are indebted to the invention of the piano roll; when the Aeolian Company later issued the *Enigma* Variations in this newfangled format, Elgar contributed his own comments on this circle of men and women in his life. Here, then, follows the portrait gallery, with some of Elgar’s remarks.

Theme. This is an original melody, as Elgar’s title boasts, born that October night in 1898 and without connections to anyone in the composer’s life. (It has been suggested that those important first four notes perfectly set the



composer’s own name, but, as we shall see, Elgar saves himself for last.) It’s worth remembering, however, that when he wrote *The Music Makers* (an autobiographical, *Ein Heldenleben*-kind of work) in 1912, he recalled this theme to represent the loneliness of the creative artist.

1. (C.A.E.) Caroline Alice Elgar was the composer’s wife. “The variation,” Elgar writes, “is really a prolongation of the theme with

what I wished to be romantic and delicate additions; those who knew C.A.E. will understand this reference to one whose life was a romantic and delicate inspiration.” She was his muse; after Alice died in 1920, Elgar never really worked again. The little triplet figure in the oboe and the bassoon at the very beginning mimics the whistle with which Elgar signaled Alice whenever he came home.

2. (H.D.S.-P.) Hew David Steuart-Powell played chamber music with Elgar. “His characteristic diatonic run over the keys before beginning to play is here humorously travestied in the semiquaver [sixteenth note] passages; these should suggest a toccata, but chromatic beyond



PREVIOUS SPREAD: Edward Elgar, bromide print, ca. 1903, by Charles Frederick Grindrod (1847-1910) | **THIS PAGE, TOP:** Edward and Caroline Alice Elgar (1848-1920) soon after their marriage | **THIS PAGE, BOTTOM, FROM LEFT:** Hew David Steuart-Powell, Variation 2; Richard Baxter Townshend, Variation 3; William Meath Baker, Variation 4; Richard Penrose Arnold, Variation 5 | **OPPOSITE PAGE, TOP, FROM LEFT:** Isabel Fitton, Variation 6; Arthur Troyte Griffith, Variation 7 | **OPPOSITE PAGE, BOTTOM, FROM LEFT:** Winifred Norbury, Variation 8; August Jaeger, Variation 9 | **NEXT SPREAD, FROM LEFT:** Dora Penny, Variation 10; Dr. George R. Sinclair and his dog Dan, Variation 11; Basil G. Nevinston, Variation 12; Lady Mary Lygon, Variation 13

H.D.S.-P.'s liking." (Their frequent partner was Basil Nevinston, variation 12.)

3. (R.B.T.) Richard Baxter Townshend, who regularly rode through the streets of Oxford on his bicycle with the bell constantly ringing, is here remembered for his "presentation of an old man in some amateur theatricals—the low voice flying off occasionally in 'soprano' timbre." (Dorabella also recognized the bicycle bell in the pizzicato strings.)

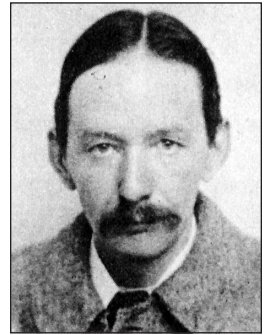
4. (W.M.B.) William Meath Baker was "a country squire, gentleman, and scholar. In the days of horses and carriages, it was more difficult than in these days of petrol to arrange the carriages for the day to suit a large number of guests. This variation was written after the host had, with a slip of paper in his hand, forcibly read out the arrangements for the day and hurriedly left the music room with an inadvertent bang of the door."

5. (R.P.A.) Richard Penrose Arnold was a son of Matthew Arnold and "a great lover of music which he played (on the pianoforte) in a self-taught manner, evading difficulties but suggesting in a mysterious way the real feeling." In the middle section we learn that "his serious conversation was continually broken up by whimsical and witty remarks."

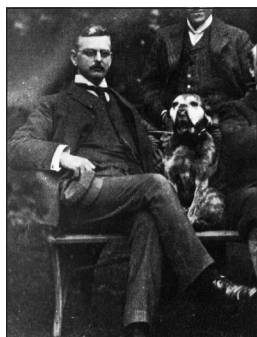
6. (Ysobel) Isabel Fitton was an amateur violinist. "The opening bar, a phrase made use of throughout the variation, is an 'exercise' for crossing strings—a difficulty for beginners; on this is built a pensive, and for a moment, romantic movement."

7. (Troyte) Arthur Troyte Griffith, an architect, was one of Elgar's closest friends. "The uncouth rhythm of the drums and lower strings was really suggested by some maladroit essays to play the pianoforte; later the strong rhythm suggests the attempts of the instructor (E.E.) to make something like order out of chaos, and the final despairing 'slam' records that the effort proved to be in vain."

8. (W.N.) Winifred Norbury lived at Sherridge, a country house, with her sister Florence. The music was "really suggested by an eighteenth-century house. The gracious personalities of the ladies are sedately shown"—especially Winifred's characteristic laugh.



9. (Nimrod) Nimrod is the "mighty hunter" named in Genesis 10; August Jaeger ("Jaeger" is German for "hunter") was Elgar's greatest and dearest friend. That is apparent from this extraordinary music, which is about the strength of ties and the depth of human feelings. These forty-three bars of music have come to mean a great deal to many people; they are, for that reason, often played in memoriam, when common words fail and virtually all other music falls short. The variation records "a long summer evening talk, when my friend discoursed eloquently on the slow movements of Beethoven." The music hints at the slow movement of the *Pathétique* Sonata, though it reaches the more rarefied heights of Beethoven's last works. Dorabella remembered that Jaeger also spoke of the hardships Beethoven endured, and he urged Elgar not to give up. Elgar later wrote to him: "I have omitted your outside manner and have only seen the good lovable honest SOUL in the middle of you. The music's not good enough: nevertheless, it was an attempt of your E.E." Jaeger died young, in 1909. Twenty years later Elgar wrote: "His place has been occupied but never filled."



10. (Dorabella) Dora Penny, later Mrs. Richard Powell, and to the Elgars, always Dorabella, from Mozart's *Così fan tutte*. Her variation, titled *Intermezzo*, is shaded throughout by "a dance-like lightness," and delicately suggests the stammer with which she spoke in her youth.

11. (G.R.S.) Dr. George R. Sinclair was the organist of Hereford Cathedral, though it's his

beloved bulldog Dan who carries the music, first falling down a steep bank into the River Wye, then paddling upstream to a safe landing. Anticipating the skeptics, Elgar writes "Dan" in bar five of the manuscript, where Dr. Sinclair's dog barks reassuringly (low strings and winds, fortissimo).

TRACKING DOWN THE ENIGMA

In 1953 the *Saturday Review* sponsored a contest for the best solution to the identity of Elgar's "enigma." The top prizes (the composer's daughter Carice Elgar Blake was one of the judges) were awarded to the *Agnus Dei* from Bach's B minor mass, the trio "Una bella serenata" from Mozart's *Così fan tutte*, the slow movement of Tchaikovsky's *Pathétique* Symphony, and "God Save the Queen." None, however, seemed particularly convincing, and the search continued. In 1976 Theodore Van Houten proposed "Rule, Britannia!," which includes a phrase that's nearly identical to the opening of the *Enigma* and should have been obvious to Dora Penny, "of all people," as Elgar remarked, because the British penny was engraved with the figure of Britannia. In 1984 Derek Hudson showed even more persuasively how a phrase of "Auld lang syne" fits Elgar's theme and many of the variations.

In 1991 Joseph Cooper, a British pianist, proposed a new solution. He claimed he had stumbled upon the answer thirty years earlier at a performance of Mozart's *Prague* Symphony in Royal Festival Hall in London but chose to keep it a secret. As he followed a score during that long-ago concert, Mr. Cooper noticed, midway through the slow movement, echoes of the opening of Elgar's *Enigma* Variations. The two passages aren't identical rhythmically—moreover, Mozart is in G major, Elgar in G minor—but they are strikingly similar. There are other connections: two weeks before Elgar invented his theme at the piano, he had heard the *Prague*

Symphony. Mozart's symphony also was the closing work on the concert of June 19, 1899, when the *Enigma* Variations were given their first performance. Although Elgar authority Jerrold Northrop Moore hailed Cooper's solution, other scholars, Elgar lovers, and puzzle fanatics remain unconvinced.

The detective game continues. In 2017 a Cleveland police officer claimed that nineteen symbols written by Elgar into the margin of an 1886 program for a concert of Liszt's music is a code for the solution, which through a convoluted deciphering process, connects the first six measures of the *Enigma* Variations with Liszt's *Les préludes*. That same year, Bob Padgett, from Plano, Texas, made news with his carefully developed theory that the secret tune is "A Mighty Fortress Is Our God," which fits perfectly in counterpoint with Elgar's theme—if you use three different versions of Martin Luther's hymn (those by Luther, Bach, and Mendelssohn) and play it backwards. Elgar scholars have remained uniformly skeptical. More recently, Edward Newton-Rex, formerly a member of the Choir of King's College, Cambridge, has proposed an underlying bass line in Pergolesi's *Stabat mater* as the secret counterpoint, though that solution too has failed to win converts. The quest continues, as does the enigma.

—P.H.

12. (B.G.N.) Basil G. Nevinston was a fine cellist who regularly joined Elgar and Hew David Steuart-Powell (variation 2) in chamber music. The soaring cello melody is “a tribute to a very dear friend whose scientific and artistic attainments, and the whole-hearted way they were put at the disposal of his friends, particularly endeared him to the writer.”

13. (***) The only enigma among the portraits: just asterisks in place of initials, and “Romanza” at the top of the page. The clarinet quoting from Mendelssohn’s *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage* midway through points to Lady Mary Lygon, who supposedly was crossing the sea to Australia as Elgar wrote this music (she wasn’t). “The drums suggest the distant throb of a liner,” Elgar writes. Although Elgar eventually confirmed the attribution, it has never entirely satisfied a suspicious public. Dorabella claimed that in the composer’s mind, the asterisks stood for “My sweet Mary.”

14. (E.D.U.) Edu was Alice’s nickname for her husband. This is his self-portrait, written “at a time when friends were dubious and generally discouraging as to the composer’s musical future.” Alice and Jaeger, two who never lost faith in him, make brief appearances. The music is forceful, even bold. It’s delivered with an unusual strength known best to late bloomers, the defiance of an outsider intent on finding an

audience, and the confidence of a man who has always wished to be more than another variation on a theme.

A parting word about the title. The work wasn’t at first called *Enigma*. Elgar used the word for the first time in a letter to Jaeger written at the end of May 1899, three months after the score was finished. *Enigma* is written on the title page of the autograph manuscript, but it’s written in pencil and not by Elgar. When Theodore Thomas and the Chicago Orchestra introduced this music to the United States in 1902, the program page listed it only as “Variations, op. 36.” 

—Phillip Huscher

Cellist, writer, and music researcher Nicky Swett holds a PhD in music from the University of Cambridge, where he was a Gates Scholar. From 2016 to 2018, he was a section member and community engagement fellow in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago.

Phillip Huscher has been the program annotator for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra since 1987. His history of the Orchestra, Passing the Baton: The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Music Directors Who Shaped Its Greatness, has just been published by The University of Chicago Press.



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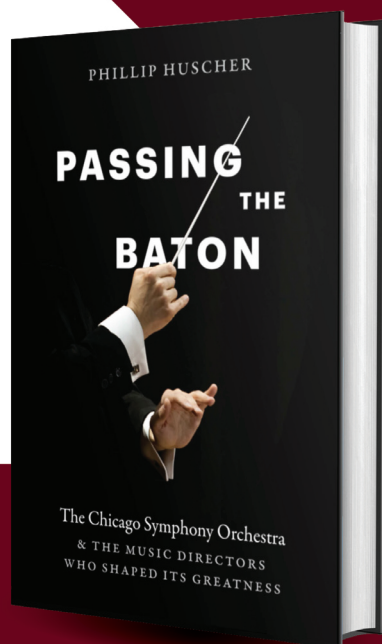
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In ***Passing the Baton: The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and the Music Directors Who Shaped Its Greatness***, longtime CSO program annotator Phillip Huscher traces the Orchestra's remarkable history through the music directors who helped build, challenge and transform the ensemble — from its founding years to the modern eras of Fritz Reiner, Sir Georg Solti, Riccardo Muti and beyond.



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Giancarlo Guerrero Conductor

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES

May 23, 24, 25, and 26, 2019, Orchestra Hall. Ginastera's *Four Dances* from *Estancia*, Rodrigo's *Concierto de Aranjuez* with Pablo Sainz-Villegas, Chabrier's *España*, and Piazzolla's *Sinfonia Buenos Aires* with Daniel Binelli

MOST RECENT CSO PERFORMANCES

April 25, 26, and 27, 2024, Orchestra Hall. Adams's *The Chairman Dances* and Shostakovich's *Suite for Variety Orchestra* no. 1, along with selections from Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet* and Marsalis's *All-American Pep* from *Swing Symphony* with Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra with Wynton Marsalis



Giancarlo Guerrero is a six-time Grammy Award-winning conductor whose imaginative programming and contagious enthusiasm on the podium have prompted critical acclaim in such publications as the *Chicago Tribune*, *BBC Music Magazine*, and the *San Francisco Chronicle*.

In the 2025–26 season, Guerrero took on the role of music director of the Sarasota Orchestra, the seventh since its founding in 1949. He also completed his first season as artistic director and principal conductor of the Grant Park Music Festival in Chicago.

Guerrero continues to serve as music director laureate of the Nashville Symphony after a sixteen-year tenure during which he championed the works of prominent American composers. Under his direction, the orchestra commissioned and premiered nearly two dozen pieces—including works by Béla Fleck, Kip Winger, Ben Folds, Jennifer Higdon, Hannibal Lokumbe, and Terry Riley—and released twenty-four commercial recordings, which have garnered thirteen Grammy nominations and six Grammy awards across multiple categories. He also guided the creation of the orchestra's biannual Composer Lab and Workshop alongside Aaron Jay Kernis.

Guerrero opened his 2026–27 season with a return to the San Francisco Symphony, where he conducted Hilary Hahn in Mendelssohn's *Violin Concerto*. He also appeared as a guest conductor

with the Oregon Symphony and leads the Baltimore and Indianapolis symphony orchestras plus international engagements with Buenos Aires Philharmonic, KBS Symphony Orchestra in Seoul, Orquesta Sinfónica de Galicia in Spain, Brussels Philharmonic, Frankfurt Opera and Museum Orchestra, Sinfónica de Tenerife, and Orquesta Sinfónica del Principado de Asturias.

In recent seasons, Guerrero has also performed with prominent North American orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra, among others; and he has worked with such European ensembles as the Bilbao Symphony Orchestra, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Frankfurt Radio Symphony, London Philharmonic, and Orchestre National de France. He counts conducting during Bad Bunny's Super Bowl LX halftime show among his career highlights.

Guerrero also conducts concerts this season with the NFM Wrocław Philharmonic, where he recently completed a six-season tenure as music director. With that orchestra, he made several recordings, including the *Billboard* chart-topping *Bomsori: Violin on Stage* on Deutsche Grammophon and albums of works by Szymanowski, Brahms, Poulenc, and Jongen.

He previously held posts as principal guest conductor of both the Cleveland Orchestra's Miami Residency and the Gulbenkian Symphony in Lisbon, music director of the Eugene Symphony, and associate conductor of the Minnesota Orchestra.

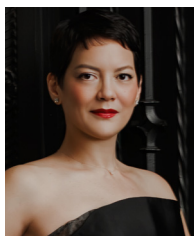
Born in Nicaragua, Giancarlo Guerrero immigrated during his childhood to Costa Rica, where he joined the local youth symphony. He studied percussion and conducting at Baylor University in Texas and earned his master's degree in conducting at Northwestern University. Guerrero is committed to conducting training orchestras and has worked with the Curtis Institute of Music, the Colburn School, the Juilliard School, Carnegie Hall's National Youth Orchestra (NYO2), the Yale Philharmonia, and Nashville Symphony's Accelerando program.

giancarlo-guerrero.com

Anne Akiko Meyers Violin

FIRST CSO PERFORMANCES

April 17, 18, 19, and 22, 2014, Orchestra Hall. Bates's Violin Concerto, Leonard Slatkin conducting



Grammy Award-winning violinist Anne Akiko Meyers, one of today's most influential classical artists and sought-after soloists, has commanded the concert stage since her teens and recorded an extensive discography, which features

works written for and premiered by her.

Meyers has inspired new music from some of the world's most celebrated composers, including Arvo Pärt, Einojuhani Rautavaara, John Corigliano, Arturo Márquez, Philip Glass, Michael Daugherty, Billy Childs, Jakub Ciupínski, Ola Gjeilo, Wynton Marsalis, Somei Satoh, and Eric Whitacre.

In recognition of her artistic vision and collaborative leadership, Meyers was recently named the first-ever artistic partner of the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra.

Highlights of her 2026–27 season include the European premiere of Márquez's *Fandango* with the Barcelona Symphony Orchestra and National Orchestra of Catalonia under Ludovic Morlot and appearances with the Miami Beach-based New World Symphony Orchestra. Meyers performed Glass's Violin Concerto no. 1 with the Grant Park Orchestra in Chicago in August, to be followed by the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra in December, the Nuremberg Symphony Orchestra in February, and the Los Angeles Philharmonic in March. She also joins the Los Angeles Master Chorale in celebration of Grant Gershon's twenty-fifth anniversary at Walt Disney Concert Hall, premieres a new work by Childs at the Library of Congress in Washington (D.C.), and plays Daugherty's *Blue Electra* with the Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestra and the Reno Philharmonic.

October marks the twenty-fifth anniversary reissue of the remastered vinyl edition of *East Meets West* with pianist Li Jian. In January, for Glass's ninetieth birthday, Platoon releases Meyers's performance of the composer's Violin Concerto no. 1 on vinyl, recorded with the LA Phil and Gustavo Dudamel.

Meyers also releases Márquez's *Danzón* no. 2, arranged for her by the composer; Gene Pritsker's *Animals Carnaval*, a Brazilian-inspired reimagining of Saint-Saëns's *Carnival of the Animals* alongside Jobim's *The Girl from Ipanema*; and works by Gershwin, José Luis Merlín, and Villa-Lobos.

In 2025–26 Meyers premiered, recorded, and released Whitacre's *The Pacific Has No Memory*, co-commissioned by the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, Colorado Music Festival, and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra.

In 2024 her recording of Márquez's *Fandango* with the LA Phil and Dudamel earned two Grammy nominations and Latin Grammy awards for Best Classical Album and Best Contemporary Composition.

Meyers commissioned and performed the world premiere of Childs's *In the Arms of the Beloved* with Childs, Gershon, and the LA Master Chorale. Other recent releases include Daugherty's *Blue Electra* with the Albany Symphony and David Alan Miller and works by Glass with the LA Phil and Dudamel.

The recipient of the Avery Fisher Career Grant and the Distinguished Alumna Award and an honorary doctorate from the Colburn School, Meyers also is a member of the Asian Hall of Fame and serves on the boards of the Juilliard School and the Dudamel Foundation.

Born in San Diego and raised in southern California, Anne Akiko Meyers traveled from the Mojave Desert to Pasadena for lessons with Alice and Eleonore Schoenfeld. At fourteen, she moved to New York to study with Dorothy DeLay, Masao Kawasaki, and Felix Galimir at the Juilliard School; and recorded her debut album at eighteen.

She performs on the legendary 1741 "Ex-Vieuxtemps" Guarneri del Gesù violin.

The Chicago Symphony gratefully acknowledges the **Sally Mead Hands Foundation**, **Irving Harris Foundation**, **Lori Julian for the Julian Family Foundation**, and **Margo and Michael Oberman** for providing support of the presentation of contemporary music for Chicago Symphony Orchestra's 2026–27 season.

Championing music of our time remains a vital thread in Chicago Symphony's history. Through this generous support, we continue this commitment to new music that compels audiences today and are proud to celebrate this tradition throughout the 2026–27 concert season by featuring innovative contemporary works.

October 15–17

ROBERTO SIERRA *Fandangos*

ARTURO MÁRQUEZ *Fandango* for violin and orchestra

November 19–21

JULIA WOLFE *Liberty Bell*

February 25–27

MASON BATES *The Escapist Symphony*

WORLD PREMIERE; COMMISSIONED BY MARGO AND MICHAEL OBERMAN

March 4–6

ARVO PÄRT *Summa*

April 22–24

MICHAEL ABELS *More Seasons*

May 20–22

TAN DUN *Passacaglia: Secret of Wind and Birds*

TAN DUN *Water Concerto*

TAN DUN *Concerto for Orchestra from Marco Polo*

May 27–28

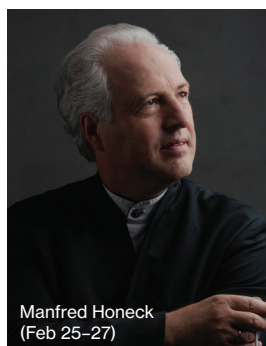
ESA-PEKKA SALONEN *Tiu* (Revised Version)

June 3–6

PHILIP GLASS *The Light*

June 17–20

PIERRE BOULEZ *Le soleil des eaux*



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CHICAGO SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Now in its 136th season, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra is a global artistic leader, hailed as one of the most esteemed ensembles in classical music.

The ensemble's history began in 1889, when Theodore Thomas, the leading conductor in America and a recognized music pioneer, was invited by Chicago businessman Charles Norman Fay to establish a symphony orchestra. Thomas's aim to build a permanent orchestra of the highest quality was realized at the first concerts in October 1891 in the Auditorium Theatre. Thomas served as music director until his death in January 1905, just three weeks after the dedication of Orchestra Hall, the Orchestra's permanent home designed by Daniel Burnham.

Frederick Stock, recruited by Thomas to the viola section in 1895, became assistant conductor in 1899 and succeeded the Orchestra's founder. His tenure lasted thirty-seven years, from 1905 to 1942. Stock founded the Civic Orchestra of Chicago—the first training orchestra in the U.S. affiliated with a major orchestra—in 1919, established youth auditions, organized the first subscription concerts especially for children, and began a series of popular concerts.

Three conductors headed the Orchestra during the following decade: Désiré Defauw was music director from 1943 to 1947, Artur Rodziński in 1947–48, and Rafael Kubelík from 1950 to 1953. The next ten years belonged to Fritz Reiner, whose recordings with the CSO are still considered hallmarks. Reiner invited Margaret Hillis to form the Chicago Symphony Chorus in 1957. For five seasons, from 1963 to 1968, Jean Martinon held the position of music director.

Sir Georg Solti, the Orchestra's eighth music director, served from 1969 until 1991. His arrival launched one of the most successful musical partnerships of our time. The CSO made its first overseas tour to Europe in 1971 under his direction and released numerous award-winning recordings. Beginning in 1991, Solti held the title of music director laureate and returned to conduct the Orchestra each season until his death in September 1997.

Daniel Barenboim became ninth music director in 1991, a position he held until 2006. His tenure was distinguished by the opening of Symphony Center in 1997, appearances with the Orchestra in the dual role of pianist and conductor, and twenty-one international tours. Appointed by Barenboim in 1994 as the Chorus's second director, Duain Wolfe served until his retirement in 2022.

In 2010 Riccardo Muti became the Orchestra's tenth music director. During his tenure, the Orchestra deepened its engagement with the Chicago community, collaborated with visionary musicians and composers, and realized many notable performances of operas in concert. In September 2023, Muti became music director emeritus for life.

In April 2024, conductor Klaus Mäkelä was announced as the Orchestra's eleventh music director and will begin an initial five-year tenure as Zell Music Director in September 2027. In July 2025, Donald Palumbo became the third director of the Chicago Symphony Chorus.

Carlo Maria Giulini was named the Orchestra's first principal guest conductor in 1969, serving until 1972; Claudio Abbado held the position from 1982 to 1985. Pierre Boulez was appointed as principal guest conductor in 1995 and was named Helen Regenstein Conductor Emeritus in 2006, a position he held until his death in January 2016. From 2006 to 2010, Bernard Haitink was the Orchestra's first principal conductor. Pianist Jean-Yves Thibaudet is the CSO's artist-in-residence for the 2026–27 season.

The Orchestra first performed at Ravinia Park in 1905, later helped to inaugurate the Ravinia Festival in 1936, and has been in residence nearly every summer since. Listeners enjoy the weekly CSO Radio Broadcast series as well as releases from the ensemble's extensive commercial discography. Recordings by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Chorus have earned sixty-five Grammy awards from the Recording Academy.

The musicians of the Orchestra are deeply involved in the Chicago Symphony Negaunee Music Institute, which reaches students, families, and early-career musicians through free and low-cost programming and world-class training.

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Rong-Yan Tang

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Assistant Principal

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Ni Mei
Hermine Gagné
Rachel Goldstein
Mihaela Ionescu
Jasmine Mengjia Lin
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*The Paul Hindemith
Principal Viola Chair*
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Sunghee Choi
Paolo Dara
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Weijing Michal
Diane Mues
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Kenneth Olsen
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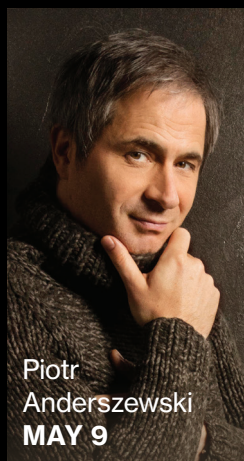
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