

The University of Alberta Department of Music presents:

# MUSIC AT CONVOCATION HALL



*Duo Majoya* Marnie Giesbrecht, organ Joachim Segger, piano  
with Alvin Lowrey, trumpet Brian Jones, percussion

Friday, February 5, 2010 at 8:00 pm  
Francis Winspear Centre for Music



## PROGRAM

- 'Enigma' Variations, Op. 36 (1899)\*  
Theme — Enigma (Andante)  
Variation I — C.A.E. (*L'istesso tempo*)  
Variation II — H.D.S.P. (*Allegro*)  
Variation III — R.B.T. (*Allegretto*)  
Variation IV — W.M.B. (*Allegro di molto*)  
Variation V — R.P.A. (*Moderato*)  
Variation VI — Ysobel (*Andantino*)  
Variation VII — Troyte (*Presto*)  
Variation VIII — W.N. (*Allegretto*)  
Variation IX — Nimrod (*Adagio*)  
Variation X — Dorabella / *Intermezzo* (*Allegretto*)  
Variation XI — G.R.S. (*Allegro di molto*)  
Variation XII — B.G.N. (*Andante*)  
Variation XIII — \*\*\* / *Romanza* (*Moderato*)  
Variation XIV — E.D.U. (*Allegro*)
- Edward Elgar  
(1857-1934)
- Music for Organ and Piano (1996)  
I. Passacaglia, quasi una fantasia  
II. Meccanico Eccentrico, quasi una fantasia  
III. Toccata, quasi una fantasia
- Howard Bashaw  
(b. 1957)

## Intermission

- Pictures at an Exhibition (1874)\*  
Promenade  
Gnomus  
Promenade  
Il vecchio castello  
Promenade  
Tuileries (*Dispute d'enfants après jeux*)  
Bydlo  
Promenade  
Ballet des poussins dans leurs coques  
Samuel Goldenberg und Schmuyle  
Promenade  
Limoges — *Le Marché* (*La grande nouvelle*)  
Catacombae — *Sepulcrum Romanum*  
Cum mortuis in lingua mortua  
La Cabane sur des pattes de poule (*Baba-Yaga*)  
La grande porte de Kiev
- Modest Mussorgsky  
(1839-1881)

\*arranged by Alvin Lowrey in collaboration with Duo Majoya

## Program Notes

by Alvin Lowrey and Howard Bashaw

A picture is worth a thousand words or even a few thousand notes of music. While works of visual art such as drawings, sketches, water colors, paintings or sculptures are frozen in time, composers can be inspired to bring visual arts to life with implied motion or even emotion. Modest Mussorgsky was inspired by the visual art of his friend, Viktor Hartmann, to compose musical impressions. Since some of those works of art are no longer extant, Kathryn Sparks has collaborated in this concert by creating visual art inspired by Mussorgsky's music. Edward Elgar, on the other hand, was inspired by his friends to create musical portraits of their personalities. With a presentation of visual imagery coupled with musical portrayals, the listener should be able to visualize the motion of still art or imagine a story line.

**Sir Edward Elgar** (1857-1934) was a renowned English composer who was most known for his *'Enigma' Variations* and his *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* as well as for his oratorio, *The Dream of Gerontius* and his *Salut d'amour* for violin and piano. He grew up in Worcester, England, where his father was an organist, so it was only natural that he would study piano and organ, but also violin as his chosen instrument. During a depressive mid-life crisis, his friend, August Jaeger, predicted that Elgar's "time of universal recognition" would come. Indeed, countless volumes have been written about Elgar and his prolific compositional output.

*'Enigma' Variations* (1899) had its genesis in October of 1898 while Edward was relaxing at the keyboard after a day of violin teaching. He was rather mindlessly improvising when his wife blurted, "Edward, that's a good tune." Not being aware of what he had just played, he continued to play until she recognized the tune again. Then he continued to improvise on that tune and asked, "Whom does that remind you of?" After characterizing other friends by playing this musical game with his wife, he set out, partly in humour and partly in seriousness, to compose fourteen variations representative of personality traits, idiosyncrasies or incidents occasionally known only to himself and the specified individual.

Although the "enigma" has never been authoritatively solved, there are at least nine popular theories. One of the most intriguing speculations compares the structure of Elgar's fourteen variations with Bach's *Art of the Fugue* which also has fourteen variations. But even this theory has discrepancies that invalidate the comparison.

On the original manuscript, Elgar wrote the full names of only those dedicatees who had died while indicating the others only by initials. The published orchestration included only initials of some and cryptic names for others, and even three asterisks for one friend who was on a sea voyage.

Although Elgar did provide commentaries about each of the variations and characteristics he was attempting to portray, those explanations are omitted here to encourage the audience to discern the personality traits by observing the portraits while listening to the music.

One exception, however, is that the eleventh variation is not actually about the dedicatee but rather about an incident with his dog. George R. Sinclair had a bulldog, Dan, that was a constant companion. Dan had once taken a tumble into the Wye River when out for a walk, and Sinclair challenged Elgar to write some music to depict the incident. In this variation, Elgar begins with very fast descending notes in the first measure followed by very rhythmic

eighth notes to suggest a dog paddling upstream to find a landing place. Upon landing, the dog gives a good bark. (Incidentally, a life-sized wood carving commemorates this dog at the Wye River in Hereford, England; look for it in the slide show.)

Since Elgar was a pianist/organist, it seems quite logical to arrange his *Enigma* Variations for piano and organ, especially since he conceived the work at the piano and added organ to his orchestration. He also arranged the work for solo piano as well as for 2 pianos. With his inclusion of percussion in his orchestration, it also makes sense to include percussion in this arrangement; in fact, the seventh variation virtually features the timpanist as a soloist! In working out the arrangement for trumpet, piano, organ and percussion, certain passages were logically more suitable for piano while other musical material was more idiomatic for organ. The percussion parts for multiple players had to be adjusted for one player, and the trumpet part was destined to play solo instrumental lines in lieu of oboe, clarinet, viola, cello, etc. as well as various brass parts.

**Howard Bashaw** (b. 1957). Originally from White Rock, British Columbia, Canadian composer Howard Bashaw is a graduate of the University of British Columbia (DMA, 1989). Appointed in 1993, he is currently Professor of Music at the University of Alberta where he teaches composition, orchestration, theory and analysis. He has also taught at the University of British Columbia and at the Université Canadienne en France.

Working in the acoustic medium, Bashaw has composed for a range of diverse ensembles including: the Hard Rubber Orchestra, Vancouver New Music, New Music Concerts, Société de musique contemporaine du Québec, Duo Kovalis, East-West Quartet, Standing Wave, Edmonton Symphony Orchestra, Hammerhead Consort, Now Age Orchestra, Duo Majoya, Continuum Ensemble (London), and the Augustana Choir.

Individual performers featured in premiere performances and recordings of works for chamber and large ensembles include: Roger Admiral (piano), Trevor Brandenburg (percussion), Kathleen Corcoran (soprano), Douglas Finch (piano), Niek de Groot (double bass), Philip Hornsey (percussion), Tatjana Kukoc (guitar), Dennis Miller (tuba), Ken Read (trombone), Yan Sallafranque (tuba), Allen Stiles (piano), William Street (saxophone), Alain Trudel (trombone), Russell Whitehead (trumpet) and Cameron Wilson (violin). The piano is included in many of Bashaw's works for ensemble -- but he has also composed several, distinctly demanding works for solo piano. Premiere performances here include: Roger Admiral (*Minimalisms II*), Marc Couroux (*Form Archimage*) Corey Hamm (*Preludes Book I*), Barbara Pritchard (*Hosu*) and Haley Simons (*Preludes Book II*). Selected by performers, Bashaw's piano music has occurred in national and international piano performance competitions.

CD releases presenting only original compositions include: **Hard Rubber, Hard Elastic** (2008) **Form Archimage** (2004) and **BASHAW** (2000). With broadcasts occurring most notably on CBC's *Two New Hours* and *The Signal*, Bashaw's works have been performed across Canada and in the USA, as well as in Europe and beyond. He has received commissions through the Canada Council for the Arts, CBC Radio Music, and the Alberta Foundation for the Arts. Bashaw is a member of the Canadian League of Composers (CLC) and The Canadian Music Centre (CMC). He is also represented by AMP ([www.artmusicpromotion.org](http://www.artmusicpromotion.org)).



*Music for Organ and Piano* (1994-96). Unquestionably difficult to perform, the complex opening movement *Passacaglia, quasi una fantasia* combines three transforming grounds in the organ with free, fantasy-like scalar variations in the piano. In a trio texture of constantly shifting alignments, the organ's three grounds accelerate independently until reaching both their fastest speeds and a strategic unison at the movement's approximate mid-point (the 'first convergence'); this process is then reversed with the three grounds decelerating independently until reaching a second strategic unison (the 'second convergence') to begin the brief, concluding coda.

Based on motivic repetition, expansion and contraction, the intentionally bizarre *Meccanico Eccentrico, quasi una fantasia* engages a curious meshing of mechanical characters, ever-changing yet oddly predictable in their apparent struggle to cooperate.

Beginning a narrative whose overall simplicity cannot be disguised, *Toccata, quasi una fantasia* opens by juxtaposing slow-moving background activity in the organ part with relatively rapid foreground activity in the piano part. After a subtle yet persistent increase in activity, the organ part inevitably assumes foreground prominence, emerging fully in the form of a defiant cadenza at the movement's climax. Inspired (and no quitter), the piano part accompanies this cadenza with its own gusts of bravado and intensity. The storm quickly subsides, and (just as you knew would happen) the instruments resume their original roles to end the movement much as it began.

*Music for Organ and Piano* was commissioned through the Canada Council for the Arts by organists Marnie Giesbrecht and pianist Joachim Segger.

**Modest Mussorgsky** (1839-1881) was a prominent Russian Composer who was a member of a circle of influential composers known as "The Five" that included Mily Balakirev, César Cui, Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov and Alexander Borodin. Their mission was to produce a specifically Russian type of art music.

In 1874, Mussorgsky attended a memorial exhibition of over 400 works of art by his late friend, Viktor Hartmann (1834-1873). Inspired by the artwork, he composed *Pictures at an Exhibition* for solo piano in less than six weeks as a tribute to Hartmann. This piano suite portrays ten of Hartmann's sketches and watercolors that were on display. About seventy of the original 400 works by Hartmann remain extant including only six of those depicted by Mussorgsky's music.

Although Mussorgsky had intended the work to be published immediately, it did not get published until 1886, five years after his death. The first and second editions were severely edited by Rimsky-Korsakov who took the editorial prerogative to emend many of Mussorgsky's daring harmonies. The work did not gain popularity until Maurice Ravel orchestrated it in 1922, and Ravel made his own slight alterations. An urtext edition of the original piano composition was not published until 1931.

Over the years, there have been numerous other orchestrations of *Pictures at an Exhibition* by such well-known musicians as Leopold Stokowsky, Sir Henry Wood, Vladimir Ashkenazy, and others. It has also been arranged for solo piano with orchestra, for 2 pianos, for 3 organs, for symphonic concert band, for brass band, for brass ensemble, for electronically synthesized sounds by Isao Tomita, and even for jazz band by Allyn Ferguson. In fact, there are currently over eighty arrangements for various combinations of instruments.

The present arrangement for trumpet, piano, organ and percussion does not pretend to be an improvement on any of these prior versions; it is simply an adaptation designed specifically for Duo Majoya and inspired by the Davis Concert Organ of Edmonton's Winspear Centre. The fifth promenade was omitted by Ravel and has been re-instated for this arrangement.

The "Promenades" provide a unifying melodic theme intended to portray either the composer or other art patrons walking from one exhibition area to another. Again, audience members are encouraged to use their own imaginations to determine whether Mussorgsky has captured the essence of Hartmann's artwork, or whether Kathryn Sparks has reflected the music with her art. The six Hartmann works that can be accounted for are: Ballet of the Chicks in their Shells (a drawing of ballet costumes); a rich Jew and a poor Jew (two separate paintings); The Catacombs (Roman catacombs beneath the streets of Paris as a self portrait with a friend and a guide holding a lamp); Baba Yaga's Hut on Fowl's Legs (a design for an ornate bronze clock); and the Great Gate of Kiev (a prize-winning architectural design for a city gate that was never built).

**Kathryn Sparks** has created new art for the following Mussorgsky musical images: The Gnome; The Old Castle (with a troubadour playing a mandolin); The Tuilleries Gardens; Bydlo (an oxcart); The Market Place at Limoges; and her own version of Baba Yaga's Hut on Fowl's Legs.

**Kathryn Sparks**, a native Seattleite now living in Texas, first spent a few decades as a student, home caregiver, office temp, house painter, stagehand, grocery bagger, magazine proofreader, freelance designer, university teacher and gallery director, all the while practicing the expensive hobby of personal art-making. Then, she took the leap into dubious but delightful self-employment as an artist to see if there might be a way to better integrate life adventures with the abiding passion for creative pursuits. Sparks continues as always to find much of her inspiration in music\*, particularly Mussorgsky's 'Pictures', a longtime love that inspired her own first purchase of a musical recording, in the ancient days of the LP.

\*[Kathryn's husband, Richard, is Artistic Director of Edmonton's marvelous professional chamber choir, Pro Coro Canada.]

## Musicians

**Marnie Giesbrecht** and **Joachim Segger** are **Duo Majoya**. Their duo repertoire includes piano duets, organ duets and duets for organ and piano. Concert programs are eclectic and innovative, including original and commissioned works as well as transcriptions. Regular performers in the Winspear Centre in Edmonton and Jack Singer Hall in Calgary, they have performed across Canada and the US, at Notre Dame Cathedral, Paris; St. Stephen's Cathedral, Vienna and numerous other venues in Europe and South Africa. A CD of organ duets on the Davis Concert Organ will soon be released. For information on their concerts and CDs visit [www.majoya.com](http://www.majoya.com).

Dr Giesbrecht is Professor of Music at the University of Alberta where she teaches, organ, piano, chamber music and related subjects; she is Adjunct Professor at The King's University College. Dr. Segger is Professor and Chair of the Music Department at The King's University College; he is Adjunct Professor at the University of Alberta. Giesbrecht and Segger are co-directors of music at First Presbyterian Church, Edmonton.

**Alvin Lowrey** is Principal Trumpet Emeritus of the Edmonton Symphony. As a member of the ESO for 33 years with an average of 100 performances per season including classics, pops, ballet and opera, he has performed over 3,300 concerts. During the past three decades, he has been an active recitalist and has been featured frequently as a soloist with the ESO. Alvin and organist Jeremy Spurgeon collaborated in a performance for the popular CBC Wednesdays @ Winspear series in 2003 with a capacity audience and received a resounding standing ovation. At the International Trumpet Guild Conference held in Banff, 2008, he participated in a trumpet ensemble gala concert with twelve principal trumpet players of major Canadian orchestras, and also gave a lecture presentation on "Legends about Legendary Trumpeters" Although retired from his orchestral career, Mr. Lowrey continues to teach trumpet and coach chamber music at the University of Alberta and also performs as a free-lance musician. Prior to coming to Edmonton, he studied at the University of Kansas, University of Illinois and Michigan State University, and has taught at the University of Illinois, University of Northern Colorado, University of Western Michigan and Michigan State University.

**Brian Jones** began his professional career in 1968 when he joined the Edmonton Symphony. Further studies lead him to Los Angeles with Forrest Clarke and Earl Hatch. Brian performed with the UCLA and Pasadena Orchestras and won first prize in their Southern California Percussive Arts Society Timpani Competition. Summer studies included the National Youth Orchestra and three summers at the Music Academy of the West in Santa Barbara. In 1973 Brian joined the Cape Town Symphony Orchestra. Besides the large symphonic repertoire performed, Brian also performed regularly with the opera and ballet orchestras. In 1975 Brian returned to the Edmonton Symphony as Principal Percussionist.

He has performed as soloist in the Milhaud *Marimba Concerto*, *Concerto for Percussion* by Allan Bell, and the Bartok *Sonata for Two Pianos and Percussion* in its symphonic version. Many of Brian's students have become professional musicians across Canada and the United States.

## THE DAVIS CONCERT ORGAN

One of the largest organs in North America, with 6,551 pipes, 122 ranks and 96 stops, the Davis Concert Organ is a truly majestic instrument. Made possible with a \$2 million donation by Dr. Stuart G. Davis in memory of his late wife Winona, work began on the organ in the summer of 2001 and was completed in the summer of 2002. Constructed by Orgues Létourneau Limitée of St. Hyacinthe, Québec, the 19,000 kg organ was transported in parts by five semi-trailer trucks from Québec.

The organ's casement is made of Honduras mahogany and beech wood, its metal pipes made of tin, zinc & lead which were polished for an average of eight hours each. The wooden pipes are made of Yellow Poplar. There are 4 electric blowers to provide wind for the organ, the wind being stored in more than a dozen bellows. A special feature of the organ is found in the 205 horizontal trumpets (called Spanish Trumpets or Chamades) that protrude out towards the audience. These powerful instruments would fly out into the audience from the wind that blows through them if they were not bolted down to the organ!

Like an orchestra, the organ has different complete sound families: the woodwind section being the flutes, oboes, clarinets and Krummhorns of the organ; the brass section being the trumpets of all sizes, the string section of the orchestra being the so-called Principals and Gambes of the organ. The largest pipe (on the organ's façade, far left) stands over 11 m tall, weighs more than 400 kg and has a diameter of 45 cm; the smallest pipe on the organ is smaller than your pinky finger. The organ also has two special sounds which are not produced by pipes: a Rossignol or "Nightingale" (which works with wind and water), and Clochettes — some metal bells which are struck by tiny hammers.

The Davis Concert Organ has a four-manual and pedal low-profile electric-slider key action console (a piano has one keyboard; this organ has four, and a fifth one for the feet to play) with an identical console on a moveable platform at stage level using a solid-state combination system with a digital sequencer and 256 levels of memory. The sequencer allows the organ to mix and project other musical sounds fed through its computer core, while the dual console feature enables two people to play the organ at the same time while sitting apart. The volume that the organ can project is so great it will never need amplification.

### **Acknowledgements**

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