

Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

Concert Program



Sunday, January 26, 2014

4:00 P.M.

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Society of Musical Arts

Stephen Culbertson, Conductor

Sunday, January 26, 2014

4:00 pm

People and Places

Symphony No. 31 in D Paris

W. A. Mozart

Allegro assai

Andantino

Allegro

Montserrat, Concerto for Cello and Orchestra

Paul Moravec

Jameson Platte, Cello

Meet the composer.

Q&A with Paul Moravec and Jameson Platte

~~~ Intermission ~~~

**Enigma Variations, Op. 36**

**Edward Elgar**

Theme (Enigma: *Andante*)

I. *L'istesso tempo* (C.A.E.)

II. *Allegro* (H.D.S-P.)

III. *Allegretto* (R.B.T.)

IV. *Allegro di molto* (W.M.B.)

V. *Moderato* (R.P.A.)

VI. *Andantino* (Ysobel)

VII. *Presto* (Troyte)

VIII. *Allegretto* (W.N.)

IX. *Adagio* (Nimrod)

X. Intermezzo: *Allegretto* (Dorabella)

XI. *Allegro di molto* (G.R.S.)

XII. *Andante* (B.G.N.)

XIII. Romanza: *Moderato* (\* \* \*)

XIV. Finale: *Allegro - Presto* (E.D.U.)

# Program Notes

by Stephen Culbertson

## **W. A. Mozart (1756-1791)**

### ***Symphony No. 31 in D, K. 297 Paris***

In 1777, the 21-year-old Mozart traveled to Mannheim in southwestern Germany to look for new opportunity. He had resigned his position as a court musician in Salzburg. The pay was quite low and there was no opportunity to write grand operas that could make him rich. Mannheim was home to a famous orchestra, full of leading virtuosos who became his musical friends. Though Mozart did not find work, he heard the huge orchestra (for the time — about the size of SOMA) and the latest styles of orchestral composition. He then went to Paris where the *Paris* symphony was written and premiered. From the very first notes — a unison “Mannheim Crescendo” — we hear the influence. This *was* “modern” music to the French audience, and in many ways it is a “breakthrough” work. The orchestra that premiered the work was unusually large (over 50 players, including clarinets for the first time). Though Mozart also failed to find work in Paris, Salzburg offered him triple his former salary to come back. Eventually the operas, as well as more symphonies and concertos influenced by the Mannheim school were written and premiered. And the rest is history....

## **Paul Moravec (b. 1957)**

### ***Montserrat, Concerto for Cello & Orchestra***

“The idea for *Montserrat* occurred to me when I happened upon a statue of Pablo Casals at the legendary mountain monastery north of Barcelona in 1994. The concerto gestated over a period of several years and I finally finished it at the MacDowell Colony in the summer of 2001”, writes the composer.

“The scope and range of Paul Moravec’s *Montserrat* is a fantastic challenge for the cello and cellist. *Montserrat* explores the full range of the cello, and has ample virtuosity to assure the listener an exciting afternoon. The greatest features of this piece, however, are the arching long melodies, which frequently use the upper extreme range of the cello. These plaintive, aching melodies are the centerpiece of a work that I feel surely will become standard repertoire in my lifetime”, writes today’s soloist Jameson Platte.

From the rich sound of the cello itself, to the origins of the beginning motive in a plainchant by Monteverdi, I find *Montserrat* to be a deeply moving, even spiritual work.

## Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

### Variations on an Original Theme “*Enigma*”, Op. 36

Although Elgar was a Romantic through-and-through, he was way ahead of his time in marketing his music: over 100 years after it was written, we still don't know what the Enigma is, or even if there really is one. There have been literally hundreds of attempts at an explanation, and Elgar gave various clues. In the program note for the first performance, he was quoted “The Enigma I will not explain – its ‘dark saying’ must be left unguessed...[a] larger theme ‘goes’, but is not played...so the principal Theme never appears...” The British conductor and author Norman Del Mar states “there would be considerable loss if the solution were to be found, much of the work's attraction lying in the impenetrability of the riddle itself.”

But we do know two things: (1) the work is one of the greatest examples of Romantic “program” music and variation form in the repertoire, and (2) the identities of the friends “pictured within” are very well-documented.

Elgar was doodling around on the piano one evening (as composers do) and his wife liked a particular theme and asked him to repeat it. He then proceeded to improvise other variations in the style or highlighting a trait of his friends. The centerpiece of the work is IX, *Nimrod*. Elgar said that this variation is not really a portrait, but portrays an experience with his close friend and editor, Augustus Jaeger, At a time when Elgar was depressed, Jaeger visited and encouraged him to keep composing. Using Beethoven as an example of a composer with many burdens who kept writing great music, Jaeger sang the opening of the slow movement of the *Pathétique* Sonata. Intriguingly, that theme is suggested at the beginning of the variation.

- I: Elgar's wife.
- II: one of Elgar's chamber music friends who liked to run over the piano keys to warm up.
- IV: an energetic neighbor.
- VI: Elgar's viola student (they were evidently working on crossing strings).
- VII: memory of when Elgar and the subject got caught in a thunder storm.
- VIII: a relaxed and easy-going friend.
- IX: Nimrod.
- X: Dorabella - the hesitation in her speech is depicted by the woodwinds.
- XI: Elgar's friend's bulldog once fell down a bank into a river, paddled upstream to find a landing place, then barked happily when got back on land. “Set that to music,” the friend said. So he did.
- XII: a famous cello-playing friend.
- XIII: a friend who was leaving for Australia with the quote from Mendelssohn's *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*.
- XIV: (Finale): Elgar himself, echoing the variations of his wife (II) and Nimrod (IX).

# Orchestra January 2014

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director

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## **Jameson D. Platte** - Violoncello

*"What made the performance of this wonderful work was the absolutely spell-binding playing of cellist Jameson Platte. The composer provided a terrific platform for a cello virtuoso, and Platte excelled."*  
–Vox Views and Reviews

*"Mr. Platte's soulful rendition was a lesson in rich cello sound and expressiveness. His sound poured forth to the furthest seat of the balcony"*  
–The Chronicle

*"richness and beauty of sound"*  
–Times Union

Jameson Platte maintains an active career both as a performer and a teacher. He is currently a member of the critically acclaimed Axis quintet, the Conservatory Quartet, Duo 92 with pianist/composer Matthew Quayle, principal cellist of the Glens Falls Symphony, principal of the Orchestra of Northern New York and assistant principal of the Allentown Symphony. Mr. Platte works extensively as a clinician, guest conductor and cello coach, performs as a soloist and maintains a large private studio. He is in constant demand as a guest principal cellist throughout the north east. A frequent recitalist in New York City, he has been featured in Carnegie Hall, Merkin Hall, St. Patrick's Cathedral, Lincoln Center and the 92<sup>nd</sup> St. Y, among others. His recitals have been heard throughout North America, South America, Europe, Asia and Australia. Mr. Platte is Artist/Faculty at New England Music Camp.

Mr. Platte has attended the Brevard Music Festival as a teaching assistant where he won the concerto contest. He also attended the Blossom Chamber Music Festival where he played principal cello under Leonard Slatkin. Mr. Platte has been a member of the Tuscaloosa Symphony (under Louis Lane), the Alabama Symphony and the Huntsville Symphony. Mr. Platte also served as Professor of Cello at the Montclair State University Preparatory Division and the Stokes Forest Music Festival. He has been a featured soloist with the Jacksonville Symphony, Allentown Symphony, Glens Falls Symphony, The Orchestra of Northern New York and the Stokes Forest Festival Orchestra, among others. Mr. Platte's recordings of contemporary music may be heard under the Koch International and Seedmusic labels. Mr. Platte's principal teacher was Carlton McCreery; he has also pursued studies with such teachers as Yo-Yo Ma, Lynn Harrell, Mstislav Rostropovich, Harvey Shapiro and Carter Brey.

Mr. Platte plays on cellos by Hannibal Fagnola (1925), J.B. Guadagnini (1757) and G.F. Pressenda (1825) as well as bows by François Xavier Tourte, Dominique Peccatte, Bernard Ouchard, and James Tubbs.

## **Paul Moravec** - Composer

Paul Moravec, recipient of the 2004 Pulitzer Prize for Music, is the composer of numerous orchestral, chamber, choral, operatic and lyric pieces. His music has earned many distinctions, including the Rome Prize Fellowship, a Guggenheim Fellowship, three awards from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Rockefeller Foundation. A graduate of Harvard College and Columbia University, he has taught at Columbia, Dartmouth, and Hunter College and currently holds the unique position of University Professor at Adelphi University. He was the 2013 Paul Fromm Composer-in-Residence at the American Academy in Rome, recently served as Artist-in-Residence at the Institute for Advanced Study in Princeton, NJ, and was also recently elected to membership in the American Philosophical Society.

Frequently commissioned by notable ensembles and major music institutions, Mr. Moravec's upcoming premieres include *The King's Man*, with Kentucky Opera, and *Amorisms*, with the Nashville Ballet. Last season included the New York premiere of *The Blizzard Voices*, with the Oratorio Society of NY at Carnegie Hall, as well as the premieres of *Violin Concerto*, with Maria Bachmann and Symphony in C, and *Shakuhachi Concerto*, with James Schlefer and the Orchestra of the Swan (U.K.). Other recent premieres include *Danse Russe*, an opera for the Philadelphia International Festival of the Arts; *Brandenburg Gate*, with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra at Carnegie Hall; *Piano Quintet*, with Jeremy Denk and the Lark Quartet; and *Wind Symphony*, with a consortium of American concert bands.

Mr. Moravec's discography includes *Northern Lights Electric*, an album of his orchestral music with the Boston Modern Orchestra Project released in 2012 on the BMOP Sound label. He has four albums of chamber music on Naxos American Classics: *Tempest Fantasy*, performed by Trio Solisti with clarinetist David Krakauer; *The Time Gallery*, performed by eighth blackbird; *Cool Fire*, with the Bridgehampton Chamber Music Festival; and *Useful Knowledge*, with soprano Amy Burton, baritone Randall Scarlata, Trio Solisti, and la Fenice Quintet. Among his many other recorded works are: *Double Action*, *Evermore*, and *Ariel Fantasy*, performed by the Bachmann/Klibonoff Duo (Endeavour Classics); *Sonata for Violin and Piano* performed by the Bachmann/Klibonoff Duo (BMG/RCA Red Seal); *Atmosfera a Villa Aurelia* and *Vince & Jan*, performed by the Lark Quartet (Endeavour Classics); *Morph*, performed by the String Orchestra of New York (Albany); *Anniversary Dances*, with the Ying Quartet (Dorian Records); *Cornoean Airs*, with American Brass Quintet and organist Colin Fowler; and *Andy Warhol Sez*, with bassoonist Peter Kolkay and pianist Alexandra Nguyen. Releases appearing in early 2014 include *Blue Fiddle*, with Hilary Hahn on Deutsche Grammophon, and *Piano Quintet*, with Jeremy Denk and the Lark Quartet, on Bridge Records.

His work is published by Subito Music, available at [www.subitomusic.com](http://www.subitomusic.com).

# Stephen Culbertson

## *Conductor*

Stephen Culbertson, Music Director for the Society of Musical Arts, has conducted over 35 orchestras, opera productions, and ballet companies, ranging from major to community level, in Europe and the United States. Major engagements include a Spoleto USA debut on the 20th-Century Perspective Series and a new production of Prokofiev's Cinderella for the San Joaquin Ballet in California. In recent seasons, Culbertson has appeared with the Montclair Chamber Orchestra and Orchestra Society of Philadelphia. He has served as Music Director of the Sussex County (New Jersey) Community Orchestra and Associate Conductor of the Bergen (New Jersey) Philharmonic Orchestra. With the latter two orchestras, he conceived and conducted a series of family concerts for the community to great acclaim. He served on the board of Unity Concerts of NJ and was its Artistic Director for the 2002-3 season. Culbertson's most recent activities include leading the New Jersey Reading Orchestra and serving as interim Music Director at the Presbyterian Church of Upper Montclair.

After graduating from University of the Pacific in his native California, Culbertson was awarded a scholarship to study at the Sibelius Academy in Helsinki (Finland) with famed conducting teacher Jorma Panula. During his five-year stay, he studied the works of Sibelius with the composer's son-in-law, Jussi Jalas, and conducted most of Finland's major ensembles: The Finnish National Opera, the Helsinki Philharmonic, The Finnish Radio Orchestra, The Vaasa and Tampere Operas, and the Oulu Philharmonic. In addition to conducting, he gained valuable experience (not to mention much-needed income) by singing in a number of professional choruses, including the Finnish Radio Choir, Savonlinna Opera Chorus and the Helsinki Festival production of Britten's Church Parables.

Culbertson introduced Finnish audiences to works by Copland, S.R. Beckler, John Forsman and many others. He introduced local listeners to American music by writing a six-hour series of radio programs entitled A History of American Music for the Finnish Broadcast Corporation. As a guest conductor, Culbertson has worked for the Netherlands Opera and appeared in Czechoslovakia (with the Košice State Philharmonic), Italy, Hungary, and England. Culbertson has been a strong advocate of American music as both a conductor and a publisher. In 1993, he co-founded Subito Music Publishing and became its President in 1997. From 1987 to 1992, he was director of the rental and publications departments for G. Schirmer, Inc., where he supervised the music preparation of, among others, John Corigliano's opera *The Ghosts of Versailles* (for the Metropolitan Opera) and *Symphony No. 1* (for the Chicago Symphony).

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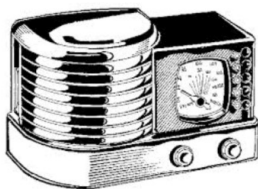
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# **Society of Musical Arts**

## **who we are**

The Society of Musical Arts (SOMA) was founded in 1981 by Dr. Samuel Applebaum, New Jersey's world famous master teacher of the violin. We are continuing Dr. Applebaum's objectives to provide an opportunity for both amateur and professional string musicians to play baroque and classical music in a chamber orchestra and to present free public concerts with multi-generational appeal to the residents of Essex and surrounding counties.

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