CONCERT PROGRAM
February 28-March 2, 2014

Juanjo Mena, conductor
Benedetto Lupo, piano

**GINASTERA**
(1916-1983)

Varaciones concertantes, op. 23 (1953)

Tema per Violoncello ed Arpa—
Interludio per Corde—
Variazione giocosa per Flauto—
Variazione in modo di Scherzo per Clarinetto—
Variazione drammatica per Viola—
Variazione canonica per Oboe e Fagotto—
Variazione ritmica per Tromba e Trombone—
Variazione in modo di Moto perpetua per Violino—
Variazione pastorale per Corno—
Interludio per Fati—
Ripresa dal Tema per Contrabasso—
Variazione finale in modo di Rondo per Orchestra

Performed without pause

**RACHMANINOFF**
(1873-1943)

Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, op. 43 (1934)

Benedetto Lupo, piano

**ELGAR**
(1857-1934)

Enigma Variations
(Variations on an Original Theme), op. 36 (1898-99)

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”: Moderato
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.” Finale: Allegro
ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Benedetto Lupo is the Essman Family Foundation Guest Artist.

The concert of Friday, February 28, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Mr. and Mrs. James L. Nouss, Jr.

The concert of Saturday, March 1, is underwritten in part by a generous gift from Cheryl and Larry Katzenstein.

Pre-Concert Conversations are sponsored by Washington University Physicians.

These concerts are part of the Wells Fargo Advisors series.

Large print program notes are available through the generosity of Delmar Gardens and are located at the Customer Service table in the foyer.
Kristin Ahlstrom, Associate Principal Second Violin, on Elgar’s *Enigma Variations*: “I’ve played *Enigma* several times now, and I love that it is always a challenge. The first time I played it (or even heard it) was in college, and I remember how absolutely clueless I was about how all the parts fit together. That was a real learning experience for me as concertmaster! There is something technically tricky about a lot of the variations, whether it’s the fast-and-furious 16th notes of the bulldog swimming [Variation XI. ‘G.R.S.’], or the bow control and pacing of ‘Nimrod,’ or simply just getting the feeling of the characters right.”
Nature provides many examples of myriad variations of fundamentally uniform phenomena. Consider, for example, the many species of avian creatures that inhabit our planet. They differ in shape, size, color and other details, yet they all are distinctly and recognizably birds. Much the same can be said of most species, as well as of rivers, mountains and other features of the natural world. Again and again, apparent diversity is united by basic identity or, looking at it another way, a singular fact assumes many different forms.

We find the same principle at work in music, most especially in the compositional procedure known as theme-and-variations. This format poses a unique creative challenge: to transform a melody in a variety of ways while still maintaining enough of its essence that the successive paraphrases (to use a literary metaphor) are heard as stemming from the same source. Over the centuries, the theme-and-variations process has inspired countless musicians. Beethoven was especially fond of it and cultivated it brilliantly. But Handel, Bach, Mozart, Schubert, Brahms, Copland, Schoenberg, and many other composers used it profitably.

Each of the three pieces on our program employ theme-and-variations form. Together they show how stimulating its rigors can be to creative musicians, and how satisfying the results are to listeners.
ALBERTO GINASTERA
Variaciones concertantes, op. 23

ARGENTINE MASTER Several Latin American countries produced composers of international standing during the last century. Alberto Ginastera, the most important musician yet to emerge from Argentina, consciously infused his scores with the melodic and rhythmic inflections of his homeland’s indigenous music. His early works quoted Argentine folk melodies and native dance rhythms. Later, he abandoned such overt nationalist references, allying himself with the mid-century avant-garde.

But even while he experimented with advanced compositional techniques during the late 1950s and ’60s, Ginastera did not lose touch with the folkloric roots of his art. As he himself noted, even his most abstract music “uses rhythmic and melodic motifs whose expressive tension has a pronounced Argentine accent.” Composed in 1953, Variaciones concertantes is something of a transitional work. It entails neither outright quotation of Argentine folk melodies (though “a pronounced Argentine accent” certainly characterizes many passages), nor a determined use of advanced musical idioms.

SHOWCASING DIFFERENT INSTRUMENTS In this piece, Ginastera uses the classical theme-with-variations procedure to feature different instruments with each succeeding transformation of his musical subject. And he employs not only the traditional decorative type of variation but also the more modern technique of evolving entirely new material out of elements of the original musical idea.

The theme that engenders the work is presented by solo cello with harp accompaniment. It is an original melody, not derived from a folk tune, and it unfolds in a clear A-B-A form, with subdued music flanking a more impassioned central section. The variations that follow are adequately described by their titles: “Giocosa Variation for Flute”; “Scherzo Variation for Clarinet”; “Dramatic Variation for Viola”; “Canonic Variation for Oboe and Bassoon”; “Rhythmic Variation for Trumpet and Trombone”; “Perpetual Motion Variation

Born
April 11, 1916, Buenos Aires
Died
June 25, 1983, Geneva
First Performance
June 2, 1953, in Buenos Aires, Igor Markevitch conducting
STL Symphony Premiere
October 19, 1956, Harry Farbman conducting
Most Recent STL Symphony Performance
April 30, 2006, Asher Fisch conducting
Scoring
2 flutes
piccolo
oboe
2 clarinets
bassoon
2 horns
trumpet
trombone
timpani
harp
strings
Performance Time
approximately 21 minutes
for Violin”; “Pastoral Variation for Horn”; “Recapitulation of the Theme for Bass and Harp”; and “Final Variation in Rondo Form for Full Orchestra.” Preceding both the flute’s variation and the Recapitulation are a pair of Interludes, the first for the string choir, the second for winds. In the rondo-form finale, a new version of the theme recurs several times between far-ranging and brilliantly scored episodes.

SERGE RACHMANINOFF
Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini, op. 43

A RUSSIAN MUSICIAN ABROAD During the early years of the 20th century, three major Russian composers emigrated to the West. Igor Stravinsky gravitated to Paris, where he composed the ballet scores that made him famous. Sergey Prokofiev led a peripatetic life, residing in the United States, Germany, and France before returning to his homeland in the 1930s. And Serge Rachmaninoff came to America by way of Germany and Scandinavia. A superb pianist as well as a composer, Rachmaninoff enjoyed enormous success in this country, which he adopted as his homeland, eventually becoming a U.S. citizen.

Rachmaninoff composed his Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini during a month of concentrated work in the summer of 1934, and he appeared as piano soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra in the work’s premiere performance the following November. This and subsequent presentations in both America and Europe met with exceptional success, and the work has remained one of Rachmaninoff’s most popular compositions.

A CONCERTO IN VARIATION FORM The title “Rhapsody,” which implies a kind of spontaneous and loosely structured composition, is a misnomer that fails to credit the carefully planned architecture of this music. Formally, the piece presents a set of variations on a melody from the Caprice in A minor by the celebrated 19th-century violin virtuoso Nicolò Paganini. (This theme has attracted a number of other composers, most famously Liszt, who transcribed it for piano as
one of his Grand Etudes after Paganini, and Brahms, who used it as the subject of his own Variations on a Theme of Paganini, op. 35.) At the same time, the work’s scoring for solo piano and orchestra gives the impression of a concerto, an impression reinforced by the overall shape of the piece. It begins and ends with a series of fast variations framing a central group in slower tempo, an arrangement that mirrors the conventional three-movement, fast-slow-fast, concerto design.

The combination of variation and concerto forms is not the only formal feature of interest in this work. Rachmaninoff refrains from presenting the Paganini melody at the outset, where we should normally expect it, beginning instead with a brief introduction followed by the first of 24 variations.

With the seventh variation, the composer introduces a new thematic element. While cellos and bassoons play a paraphrase of the Paganini melody, the piano presents an ancient plainsong melody. It is the Dies irae, the traditional chant for the dead, simply but eloquently harmonized. That theme, which Rachmaninoff quoted in several other compositions and thereby made something of a musical signature, reappears in the 10th variation. The variation that follows is essentially an accompanied cadenza for the soloist and marks the beginning of the more leisurely “middle movement.” This section concludes with a wonderfully lyric 18th variation, which features the type of memorable, song-like melody for the piano that Rachmaninoff wrote so well. Thereafter the music grows increasingly brilliant and energetic, closing with a dramatic recurrence of the Dies irae melody played against a variant of the Paganini theme during the final variation.
**EDWARD ELGAR**

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

**A TANTALIZING MYSTERY** The first recorded reference to Edward Elgar’s *Enigma Variations* is found in a letter of October 24, 1898, written by the composer in humorous shorthand to his close friend August Jaeger:

> I have sketched a set of Variations (orkestra) on an original theme: the Variations have amused me because I’ve labelled ’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 nuffin.”

“Amusing” in a typically English way and innocent enough, it would seem. But Elgar, intentionally or otherwise, created with this work one of the most tantalizing mysteries in music. For although he freely divulged the identities of the friends pictured in each of the 14 variations, he designated the original theme that sets the entire piece in motion as simply “Enigma.” Elgar’s comments, provided in a program note for the work’s first performance, only deepened the mystery:

> The enigma I will not explain—its “dark saying” must be left unguessed… ; 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… the chief character is never on the stage.

Thus Elgar posed not one but two riddles: the “dark saying” represented in the single word “enigma,” and the identity of the “larger theme” that “goes” through the set. Elgar hinted that the latter was a well-known melody to which his original theme is a variant or counter-melody. His friends tried to hit upon what this familiar tune might be, offering up “God Save the King” and “Auld Lang Syne.” But the composer dismissed these and other guesses, and its identity remains a secret.

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**Born**  
June 2, 1857, Lower Broadheath, near Worcester, England

**Died**  
February 23, 1934, Worcester

**First Performance**  
June 19, 1899, in London, conducted by Hans Richter

**STL Symphony Premiere**  
March 15, 1912, Max Zach conducting

**Most Recent STL Symphony Performance**  
October 23, 2011, Vasily Petrenko conducting

**Scoring**

- 2 flutes  
- piccolo  
- 2 oboes  
- 2 clarinets  
- 2 bassoons  
- contrabassoon  
- 4 horns  
- 3 trumpets  
- 3 trombones  
- tuba  
- timpani  
- percussion  
- strings

**Performance Time**  
approximately 29 minutes
The programmatic nature of this theme—its “dark saying,” as Elgar alluded to it—has proved an even more intriguing puzzle. Did it represent Elgar himself? This seems unlikely, for he paints his own portrait in the final variation, “E.D.U.” (a paraphrase of “Edoo,” his wife’s nickname for him). More general themes have been proposed, among them friendship, religious devotion—Elgar was a practicing Catholic—and the trials and joys of musical creation.

THE ENDURING ENIGMA Elgar never revealed the meaning of the “enigma,” and in all likelihood its true nature will never be known with certainty. Fortunately, this in no way diminishes the attractiveness of the Variations as music, and it is to the music itself, as distinct from its attending mysteries, that we should now turn.

The “enigma” theme, which opens the set, begins and ends with halting phrases built from brief fragments of melody in the key of G minor. Between them is a more lyrical and continuous section in G major. The theme, then, reveals a clear A-B-A form, and this in turn shapes the variations that follow. Each has its own character and its own special charm. The crowning piece of the set is the ninth variation, “Nimrod,” portraying August Jaeger. As an editor at the London publishing house of Novello, Jaeger encouraged Elgar and championed his works long before they were fashionable. The deep friendship that grew between the two men finds reflection in the moving strains of this Adagio. Elgar recalls music from “Nimrod,” and also from “C.A.E.,” in the final variation, his own.

Program notes © 2014 by Paul Schiavo
Juanjo Mena makes his St. Louis Symphony debut this weekend.

**JUANJO MENA**

Chief Conductor of the BBC Philharmonic in Manchester, England, Juanjo Mena is one of Spain’s most distinguished international conductors.

Following a season conducting the symphonies of Boston, Chicago, Los Angeles, Cincinnati, Baltimore, and Pittsburgh, Mena returns to North America for a 2013-14 season that includes the Houston Symphony Gala Season Opening Concert with Renée Fleming and concerts with the Cincinnati Symphony and violinist Augustin Hadelich, and the Toronto Symphony with violinist Julian Rachlin.

Mena’s other activities this season includes a BBC Philharmonic tour through Germany, Austria, Hungary, Croatia, Turkey, and Spain and concerts with the London Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Rotterdam Philharmonic, Luxembourg Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, Orchestre du Capitole de Toulouse, and Orquesta Sinfónica de Barcelona.

A guest of international festivals, Mena has appeared at the Stars of White Nights Festival in St. Petersburg, Russia, the Hollywood Bowl, Grant Park (Chicago), La Folle Journée (Nantes), and as a regular at the BBC Proms including two separate programs in the summer of 2013.


Born in Vitoria, Juanjo Mena began his musical training at the Vitoria-Gasteiz Conservatory (Basque Country). He studied composition and orchestration with Carmelo Bernaola and conducting with Enrique Garcia-Asensio at the Royal Higher Conservatory of Music in Madrid, where he received the Prize of Honor. Awarded a Guridi-Bernaolo Scholarship, he pursued further conducting studies in Munich with Sergiu Celibidache.
Benedetto Lupo’s 2013-14 season includes North American appearances with the Domaine Forget International Festival, Columbus Symphony, Nashville Symphony, and Louisiana Philharmonic; recital performances in Vancouver B.C., Bellingham, Washington, and Cincinnati; and international appearances with the Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano Giuseppe Verdi, Orchestra Sinfonica Siciliana, Orchestra Sinfonica Bari, Orchestre Philharmonique des Pays de la Loire, and Malaysian Philharmonic.

After winning the bronze medal in the 1989 Van Cliburn International Piano Competition, Lupo made acclaimed debuts with several major American orchestras, as well as chamber appearances with the Tokyo String Quartet. His New York City recital debut at Alice Tully Hall followed in 1992, the same year he won the Terence Judd International Award, which in turn led to his debut at London’s Wigmore Hall. Lupo’s recent North American performances include his Tanglewood Festival debut playing Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 18, K. 456; Mozart’s Piano Concerto No. 27, K. 595 with the Los Angeles Philharmonic; Bartók’s Piano Concerto No. 1 with the Baltimore Symphony; Schumann’s Piano Concerto with the Huntsville Symphony; Chopin’s E-minor Concerto with I Musici de Montréal; his Mostly Mozart Festival and subscription debut with the Chicago Symphony; as well as appearances with the symphony orchestras of Calgary, Colorado, Jacksonville, Kansas City, Philadelphia, Montreal, Oregon, San Antonio, Seattle, Utah, Vancouver, and Virginia.

Benedetto Lupo teaches at the Nino Rota Conservatory in Italy, gives master classes around the world, and has served on the jury of both the Cleveland International Competition and the Gina Bachauer Competition in Salt Lake City, from which he previously won second and third prizes, respectively. He is featured on the Emmy-award winning documentary *Here to Make Music: The Eighth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition* and the seven-part series *Encore! The Final Round of Performances of the Eighth Van Cliburn International Piano Competition*, both for PBS.
A BRIEF EXPLANATION

You don’t need to know what “andante” means or what a glockenspiel is to enjoy a St. Louis Symphony concert, but it’s always fun to know stuff. For example, how often did Rachmaninoff perform with the St. Louis Symphony?

**Rachmaninoff in St. Louis:** As the sidebar to *Rhapsody on a Theme of Paganini* says, Serge Rachmaninoff premiered the work in St. Louis only one month after its world premiere. Arguably the most revered pianist of his generation, Rachmaninoff performed on seven programs with the Symphony, from 1920-1938. He played his first three piano concertos (the First Concerto once, the popular Second Concerto four times, the Third Concerto once), the *Rhapsody* once, and Beethoven’s First Piano Concerto in his final concert with the Symphony, on November 5, 1939. He played all his concerts at the Odeon Theater, until his final performance at Municipal Auditorium, later known as Kiel.

PLAYING HARMONY:
KRISTIN AHLSTROM, ASSOCIATE PRINCIPAL SECOND VIOLIN

“One of the great things about playing second violin is that we often get to play harmony instead of the melody. Melodies can be pretty on their own, but usually what really makes them interesting and what shapes the phrasing of the melody is the harmony underneath. Elgar gives the second violins and violas some heart-tugging harmonies to play, and that is really gratifying.”
YOU TAKE IT FROM HERE

If these concerts have inspired you to learn more, here are suggested source materials with which to continue your explorations.

ostinato.tripod.com/ginah.html
Page devoted to Ginastera on the website of Fondación Ostinato, an organization promoting and disseminating Argentine music, includes a detailed biography, works list, sound clips, and more

Tony Palmer, director
Rachmaninoff: The Harvest of Sorrow
DVD
A documentary film about Rachmaninoff

Michael Kennedy, The Life of Elgar
Cambridge University Press
Probably the best of the many biographies of the English composer.

Read the program notes online at stlsymphony.org/planyourvisit/programnotes

Keep up with the backstage life of the St. Louis Symphony, as chronicled by Symphony staffer Eddie Silva, via stlsymphony.org/blog

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Grant Riew, cello

WAGNER  Rienzi Overture
ELGAR  Cello Concerto
TCHAIKOVSKY  Symphony No. 5

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Please turn off all watch alarms, cell phones, pagers, and other electronic devices before the start of the concert.

All those arriving after the start of the concert will be seated at the discretion of the House Manager.

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ORCHESTRA LEVEL
(PARQUET, ORCHESTRA RIGHT & LEFT)

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