



UNC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
TONU KALAM, MUSIC DIRECTOR AND CONDUCTOR

Wednesday, April 26, 2023 at 7:30 P.M.
Beasley-Curtis Auditorium, Memorial Hall

PROGRAM

Finlandia, Op. 26

Jean Sibelius
(1865–1957)

Concerto for Double Bass and Orchestra (1948)
Allegro con moto—Andante sostenuto—
Allegro non troppo, poco marciale

Eduard Tubin
(1905–1982)

Leonid Finkelshteyn, double bass

INTERMISSION

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

Sir Edward Elgar
(1857–1934)

Theme (Enigma)

Variation I (C.A.E.)

Variation II (H.D.S-P.)

Variation III (R.B.T.)

Variation IV (W.M.B.)

Variation V (R.P.A.)

Variation VI (Ysobel)

Variation VII (Troyte)

Variation VIII (W.N.)

Variation IX (Nimrod)

Variation X (Dorabella) Intermezzo

Variation XI (G.R.S.)

Variation XII (B.G.N.)

Variation XIII (* * *) Romanza

Variation XIV (E.D.U.) Finale

SOLOIST

Double bassist **Leonid Finkelshteyn** enjoys an active career as a performer and teacher. Currently principal bassist of the North Carolina Symphony, which he joined in 1996, and the Eastern Music Festival Orchestra in North Carolina since 1999, Finkelshteyn also serves on the faculty of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, North Carolina State University, and the Eastern Music Festival, in addition to maintaining a large private studio.

As a soloist, he has made numerous concerto appearances with the North Carolina Symphony, Young Artists Orchestra at the Eastern Music Festival, East Carolina University Symphony Orchestra, Punta Gorda Symphony in Florida, and the Peninsula Music Festival Orchestra in Wisconsin, performing works by Bottesini, Bruch, Koussevitzky, and Tübin.

Finkelshteyn has also performed the North American premiere of Gareth Glyn's *Microncerto* and the world premiere of J. Mark Scearce's *Antaeus*, a concerto for double bass and orchestra, which the North Carolina Symphony commissioned for Finkelshteyn. In 2018, Finkelshteyn performed a premiere of the Double Bass Concerto by Terry Mizesko, which was written for and dedicated specifically to him.

Upon arriving in the United States, Finkelshteyn attended the Aspen Music Festival, where he won the E. Nakamichi Double Bass Competition, performing the Koussevitzky Concerto with the festival orchestra.

Other artistic pursuits have included tours with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the New York Philharmonic, and the Philharmonia Hungarica. In addition, Finkelshteyn has appeared with the symphonies of St. Louis, Cincinnati, and Dallas, and the Mostly Music Festival as guest principal bassist.

He has also performed with the Lyric Opera of Chicago, the Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra, the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, and The Cleveland Orchestra, and has appeared with the All-Star Orchestra under the direction of Gerard Schwarz, as part of an award-winning series of programs for PBS.

Finkelshteyn has performed with a number of prominent conductors throughout his career, including Daniel Barenboim, Pierre Boulez, Alan Gilbert, Mariss Jansons, Neeme and Paavo Järvi, Louis Langrée, Lorin Maazel, Andrew Manze, Zubin Mehta, Riccardo Muti, Yannick Nézet-Séguin, Gerard Schwarz, Yuri Temirkanov, and Osmo Vänskä.

An avid chamber musician, Finkelshteyn has participated in the Southampton Arts Festival in New York, the Four Seasons Chamber Music Festival at East Carolina University, the Eastern Music Festival Chamber Music Series, and the North Carolina Symphony Chamber Music Series. He has collaborated with his brother, cellist Ilya Finkelshteyn, Julia Fischer, Mark Kosower, Adam Neiman, Awadagin Pratt, Julian Schwarz, and Elina Vähälä, among others.

A committed teacher, Finkelshteyn was invited to give master classes at Yale University and in New York City, for students from the Manhattan School of Music and the Mannes School of Music, Penn State, Colburn, and UNC School of the Arts, among others. He makes a point of being involved within his community as well, leading sectionals for local youth philharmonic orchestras and the North Carolina All-State Orchestra. In addition, Finkelshteyn works with local music teachers with their double bass students, offering master classes and sectionals.

A native of Leningrad in the former Soviet Union, he joined the Symphony Orchestra of the Leningrad Philharmonic at only 19 years of age, while still a student at the Leningrad Conservatory, from which he earned a master's degree, graduating with honors. His primary teachers were Peter Weinblatt and Sergei Akopov. Eventually, he became Principal Double

Bassist of the Symphony Orchestra and was a prize winner of the Soviet Union Bass Competition before emigrating to the U.S. in 1990.

Finkelshteyn performs on an Italian double bass made in the Mantua region around 1770 and a French double bass made by Charles Jacquot in 1860 in Paris. His bows of choice are by H.R. Pfretzschner, made in Markneukirchen, Germany, as well as a bow made especially for him in 2003 by a famous American bow-maker, Susan Lipkins in Woodstock, New York.

PROGRAM NOTES

BY TONU KALAM

Jean Sibelius: Finlandia, Op. 26

At the turn of the 20th century, Finland's desire for national independence from the Russian Empire was beginning to accelerate rapidly.

Finlandia was originally composed in 1899 (incidentally, the same year as Elgar's Enigma Variations, also on tonight's program). It was part of a set of pieces called *Music for the Days of the Press*, ostensibly produced for a charity event in support of a journalists' pension fund. The patriotic nature of this project was thinly veiled, however; as a result, the public's resistance to Russian rule grew stronger. The seventh movement of these pieces was originally titled "Finland Awakens," but it was subsequently revised in 1900 to become the beloved stand-alone symphonic tone poem we know today, *Finlandia*.

The famous melodic section in the middle of the work has often been transformed into sung hymns, such as "Be Still My Soul," "We Rest on Thee," "Dear Friend of Mine," and others. At first, Sibelius was irritated by this and said, "It is not intended to be sung. It is written for an orchestra. But if the world wants to sing it, it can't be helped." He finally consented to approving a version for chorus and orchestra in 1940.

To many listeners, this piece endures as a statement of Finnish pride and patriotism, which finally manifested itself in Finland's independence from Russia in 1917.

Eduard Tubin: Concerto for Double Bass and Orchestra

Eduard Tubin was the most important Estonian symphonic composer of the 20th century. In addition to the Double Bass Concerto featured on tonight's program, his output includes ten symphonies, two violin concertos, a concertino for piano and orchestra, two operas, a ballet, numerous choral works, and a significant amount of solo piano and chamber music.

Estonia is a small country of 1.5 million people in northern Europe on the Baltic Sea, directly south of Finland and west of Russia. Its difficult political history in the 20th century includes a period of independence as a republic from 1918 to 1940, followed by a harsh occupation by the Soviet Union for one year, then three years of German occupation from 1941 to 1944, and a return to Soviet occupation from 1944 to 1991. When the Soviet Union dissolved, Estonia once again became a free democratic republic, now one of the most technologically advanced countries in the world.

During the transition from the German occupation to the second Soviet rule in the fall of 1944, some 80,000 Estonians fled the country. Among them was Eduard Tubin who emigrated to Sweden, where he lived and composed until his death in 1982.

The Double Bass Concerto was written for the well-known Estonian double bass player Ludvig Juht, who had come to the United States in 1934 and was hired by Serge Koussevitzky to be a member of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, where he played for over 20 years. During a concert tour of Sweden in 1947, Juht asked Tubin to write a concerto for him, as he was gaining prominence as a solo bass player, quite a rarity in those days. Tubin relied greatly on Juht's advice regarding the technical capabilities of the instrument, and they shared a lengthy correspondence during its creation. The concerto was completed in 1948 and premiered by Juht in Rockport, Massachusetts, with piano accompaniment. It has since become an important addition to the double bass solo repertoire.

The concerto is in three main sections (fast-slow-fast), played without pause, and includes a substantial cadenza for the soloist before the final section. It is scored for a large orchestra, including full brass and percussion, but the orchestration is skillful and transparent whenever the solo bass is playing. Tubin's compositional style often features motoric rhythmic patterns that build to large climactic moments, which occur in this concerto as imposing interludes between the quieter solo passages.

Sir Edward Elgar: Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 36, "Enigma"

The Variations on an Original Theme, popularly known as the Enigma Variations, was premiered in 1899 and was the first major success of Edward Elgar's career, assuring him a position as England's leading composer at the turn of the 20th century. The work had a modest beginning – with Elgar sitting at the piano one evening, improvising variations on a simple theme. Out of this theme, which fostered countless possibilities for melodic and harmonic development, emerged this set of brilliantly orchestrated variations that Elgar dedicated "to my friends pictured within." Each variation is headed by a puzzling title, usually a set of initials, identifying the person or event depicted in Elgar's music.

In a program note for a 1911 performance of the piece, Elgar wrote:

This work, commenced in a spirit of humour & continued in deep seriousness, contains sketches of the composer's friends. It may be understood that these personages comment or reflect on the original theme & each one attempts a solution of the Enigma, for so the theme is called. The sketches are not "portraits," but each variation contains a distinct idea founded on some particular personality or perhaps on some incident known only to two people. This is the basis of the composition, but the work may be listened to as a "piece of music" apart from any extraneous consideration.

Beyond that simple descriptive storyline lies a more puzzling mystery—the true enigma—that has never been solved, in spite of countless speculative articles written about it. In Elgar's own cryptic words:

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.

A Personal Note from the Conductor

Tonight's presentation of the Tubin Double Bass Concerto holds special significance for me. My parents were among the 80,000 Estonian war refugees who, like Tubin, fled their homeland in the fall of 1944. They spent six years in Displaced Persons camps in Germany, waiting for immigration quotas to allow them to come to the United States under the Displaced Persons Act of 1948, signed by President Truman.

At that time, it was necessary for immigrants to secure a sponsor who would vouch for a refugee family, help them get settled and find work. My family's sponsor for our immigration to America in 1950 – two years after my birth – was none other than the double bass player Ludvig Juht, for whom Tubin's concerto was written, and who had heard of my father's prominence as a violist in the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra. It was due to Juht's generous sponsorship that we settled in Boston, where I grew up and had many occasions to spend time with Ludvig and his wife, Amanda.

My father, who conducted the American premiere of Tubin's Fifth Symphony in New York in 1952, also sustained a regular correspondence over many years with Tubin, whom I had the privilege to meet when he visited the United States in 1981 for the Boston Symphony Orchestra premiere of his 10th Symphony.

I am honored to curate tonight's performance, which celebrates two great Estonian musicians whose lives touched mine in profoundly meaningful ways.



Tonu Kalam, age 3, with Ludvig Juht, who commissioned and premiered the Tubin Concerto. This photo appeared on the front page of *The Christian Science Monitor* to accompany a human-interest feature on European war refugees.

UNC SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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VIOLIN I

Siana Wong, *concertmaster*
Ayman Bejjani
Evan Canavan
Tony Feng
Gilda Ferrie
Sharayu Gugrani
Martha-Grace Jackson
Hannah Lee
Michael Lee
Frances Norton
Karyn Ostrom
Ameer Qaqish
Andrew Withrow
Alanna Zhang
Amber Zhen

VIOLIN II

Anant Malpani, *principal*
Lauren E. Burris
Christopher Cooper
Charlsie Doan
Michael Dolschenko
Woody Livesay
Hope Lusby
Ellis Murphy
Sophie Shan
Lillian Soucaze
Krista Wiese Telford
Perry Tseng
Caroline Vo
Henry Woodburn

VIOLA

Tate Jones, *principal*
Jacob Bandy
Abbey Benzinger
Sarah Davis
Natalie Druffner
Alexandra Love
Annagabriela Redding
Lauren Southwell
Kinza Syeda Subzwari

CELLO

Kevin Agner, *principal*
Noor Bejjani
Katherine Chay
Shudy Du
Olivia Fults
David Daehyun Kim
Henry Nachman
Arush Narang
George Nielsen
Aaron Osborne
Ellie Rogers
Gracelynn Whitaker
Jenny Zhang

BASS

Cindy Xu, *principal*
Benjamin Burch
Julien Cox
Olivia Jones
Christopher Law, Jr.
Lydia Nusbaum

FLUTE AND PICCOLO

Hylton Baker, *principal*
Abigail Poirier
Emily Qiu

OBOE AND ENGLISH HORN

Emily Harmon, *principal*
Stephen Litt

CLARINET AND BASS

CLARINET
Ryan Phillips, *principal*
Ivan Wang, *co-principal*

BASSOON AND CONTRABASSOON

J Suddreth, *principal*
Marni Weinreb
John Shields Caldwell, *contra*

HORN

Monet Jowers, *principal*
Thayer Hicks, *co-principal*
Blayne Owens, *co-principal*
Harrison L. Dixon

TRUMPET

Nico McLaurin, *principal*
Naomi Major
Mia Sabin

TROMBONE

Jordan Shirtz, *principal*
Derek Yao
Andrew Kuntz, *bass*

TUBA

Daniel Horn

TIMPANI

Ben Frens

PERCUSSION

Trevor Du
Umaesh V. Kumaran
Nikolai Sbityakov

HARP

Matthew Gillespie

STAGE MANAGER

Kinza Syeda Subzwari

String players are listed alphabetically following the principals in each section

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