

# ~ The Apollo Ensemble of Boston ~

## Keila Wakao Plays Tchaikovsky



**KEILA WAKAO**  
PLAYS  
**TCHAIKOVSKY**

APRIL 20 TH. 2024  
7:30 PM EDT

FIRST CHURCH  
IN CAMBRIDGE  
11 GARDEN STREET  
CAMBRIDGE  
MA 02138

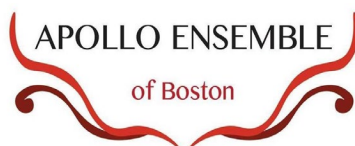
**THE APOLLO  
ENSEMBLE  
OF BOSTON**  
ELIAS MILLER  
MUSIC DIRECTOR

PROGRAM:  
SIBELIUS – FINLANDIA  
TCHAIKOVSKY – VIOLIN CONCERTO  
(KEILA WAKAO, VIOLIN)  
INTERMISSION –  
ELGAR – ENIGMA VARIATIONS

## The Apollo Ensemble of Boston

### Elias Miller, Music Director

Saturday, 20 April 2024 at 7:30PM  
First Church in Cambridge, Cambridge, MA



**Violin I**

Mitsuru Yonezaki, Concertmaster  
Lorenzo Gallegos  
Eli Willis  
Matthew Lamb  
Nancy Goodwin  
Aaron Levett  
Richard Clark  
Stephanie Doong  
Hana Burgess  
Andrew To  
Jimmy Nguyen  
Jad Hilal

**Violin II**

Eun Joo Ahn, Principal  
Mathieu Moutou  
Loris Held  
Anant Maheshwari  
Mary Davis  
Amanda Tan  
Chris Brown  
Toshi Motoyama  
Julia Lin  
Nick Chubrich

**Viola**

Shinwho Kwun, Principal  
Christine Liu  
Timothy Chen  
Peter Chew  
Dana Lee  
Jeff Bigler  
Ruth Mangan  
Mary Tenenbaum  
Sabrina Lang

**Cello**

Isaac Pagano-Toub, Principal  
Eric Schindler  
Nate Steele  
Amy Nolan  
Maddie Tucker  
Raj Kumar  
Caroline Tally

**Bass**

Boris Lu, Principal  
Brett Sawka  
Martha Davis  
Rainbow Chen  
Abby Hau  
Yizhen Wang

**Flute**

Alisa Smith (E)  
Emilia Lew (S, T)

**Piccolo**

Emilia Lew (E)

**Oboe**

Mia Fasanello (E)  
Joel Bard (S, T)

**Clarinet**

Yhasmin Valenzuela-Blanchard (E)  
Danby Cho (S, T)

**Bassoon**

Laura Reyes (E)  
Shu Satoh (S, T)

**Contrabassoon**

Kevin King (E)

**Horn**

William Prince (E)  
John Kessen (S)  
Mike Koehrsen (T)  
Portia Sirinek

**Trumpet**

George Goodwin (E)  
Emily Languedoc (S)  
Chloe Francis (T)

**Trombone**

Tommy Chiu (E)  
Sam Hausman (S)  
Steve Benson

**Tuba**

Peter Belknap (E, S)

**Timpani**

Jeremy Lang (E, S, T)

**Percussion**

Victoria Chang  
Eric Cortell  
Stephanie Muto

**Organ**

Brian “Wolfie” Edwards (E)

**Assistant Conductor**

Reuben Stern

**Orchestra Manager**

Michael Tabak

E = Principal on Elgar

S = Principal on Sibelius

T = Principal on Tchaikovsky

# The Apollo Ensemble of Boston

Elias Miller, Conductor

## ~ Program ~

### Finlandia

Jean Sibelius  
(1865-1957)

### Violin Concerto in D Major

Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky  
(1840 – 1893)

I. Allegro Moderato

II. Canzonetta, Andante

III. Finale: Allegro vivacissimo

*Keila Wakao, Violin*

## ~Intermission~

### Enigma Variations

Edward Elgar  
(1857 – 1934)

Theme (Andante)

Variation I. L'istesso tempo "C.A.E."

Variation II. Allegro "H.D.S-P."

Variation III. Allegretto "R.B.T."

Variation IV. Allegro di molto "W.M.B."

Variation V. Moderato "R.P.A."

Variation VI. Andantino "Ysobel"

Variation VII. Presto "Troyte"

Variation VIII. Allegretto "W.N."

Variation IX. Adagio "Nimrod"

Variation X. Intermezzo: Allegretto "Dorabella"

Variation XI. Allegro di molto "G.R.S."

Variation XII. Andante "B.G.N."

Variation XIII. Romanza: Moderato "\* \* \*"

Variation XIV. Finale: Allegro Presto "E.D.U."

## ~ Program Notes ~

### **Finlandia, Op. 26**

Jean Sibelius (1865–1957) composed the tone poem *Finlandia*, Op. 26 for the Press Celebrations of 1899, in protest of censorship from the Russian Empire. The original work titled *Finland Awakes* contained an overture and six movements that illustrated the history and mythology of the Finnish people. In 1900, Sibelius revised the work, turning the seventh and final movement into the stand-alone piece you will hear today and renaming it *Finlandia*. However, to avoid Russian censorship, early performances used alternate names, such as *Happy Feelings at the awakening of Finnish Spring* and *A Scandinavian Choral March*.

The work features a hymn of Sibelius's own creation. When Finland declared its independence from Russia in 1917, many proposed that the nascent country adopt this hymn as its national anthem. Ultimately, another work was selected for that purpose, but the *Finlandia Hymn* still occupies a position of central importance in Finland.

Asked about the meaning of his *Finlandia*, Sibelius used the following words:

*We fought 600 years for our freedom, and I am part of the generation which achieved it! Freedom! My Finlandia is the story of this fight. It is the song of our battle, our hymn of victory.*

## Violin Concerto in D Major, Op. 35

Pyotr Ilych Tchaikovsky (1840–1893) wrote his *Violin Concerto in D major, Op. 35* in 1878 in Switzerland, where he had gone to recover from his depression over the fallout from his brief but disastrous marriage to Antonina Miliukova. While in Switzerland, Tchaikovsky was joined by violinist Iosif Kotek, his composition pupil and lover. The pair played violin and piano duets, which helped pull Tchaikovsky out of his depression, inspiring Tchaikovsky to write the concerto. Tchaikovsky was not a violinist himself, so he worked closely with Kotek on the solo part. However, Tchaikovsky decided not to dedicate the concerto to Kotek for fear of their relationship being discovered.

The concerto was published in 1878 as a reduction for solo violin and piano. Tchaikovsky dedicated the work to Leopold Auer, with the intention that Auer premiere the work in 1879. However, Auer felt that portions of the concerto were unidiomatic, awkward, and unnecessarily difficult for the violinist, and he repeatedly refused to perform it unless he was allowed to make substantial edits first. Years later, he finally did make these edits and began to perform the work in his own version. In the meantime, though, the concerto gained a reputation for being unplayable.

Ultimately, the *Violin Concerto* was dedicated to violinist Adolph Brodsky, who fell in love with the piece and premiered it in 1881 in Vienna. The piece was panned by critics of the time; one influential critic, Eduard Hanslick, wrote a particularly scathing review, calling the piece “long and pretentious” and writing that “the violin was not played but beaten black and blue.” However, audience reaction was much more favorable, and the piece became a sensation. It is now considered to be one of the cornerstones of the violin repertoire.

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

Edward Elgar (1857–1934) composed his *Enigma Variations*, Op. 36 in 1898–99. The piece consists of an original theme and fourteen variations, each dedicated to one of Elgar's friends. Elgar wrote, in a program note for a 1911 performance:

*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.*

The movements and their dedications are as follows:

### Theme: Enigma (Andante)

The opening movement is the theme, and an introduction to the work as if it were a letter to the friends depicted in the later movements. The first notes of the piece suggest the rhythm and inflection of the composer's name, "Edward Elgar."

Elgar wrote of the theme, "it expressed when written (in 1898) my sense of the loneliness of the artist as described in the first six lines of the Ode, and to me, it still embodies that sense."

### Variation I: "C.A.E."

C.A.E. was Elgar's wife, Caroline Alice Elgar. Reportedly, Elgar whistled the four-note melodic fragment on which the movement is based to his wife when arriving home. After her death, Elgar wrote, "The variation 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.”

### **Variation II: “H.D.S-P.”**

H.D.S-P. was Hew David Steuart-Powell. In Elgar’s words, “Hew David Steuart-Powell was a well-known amateur pianist and a great player of chamber music. He was associated with B.G.N. (the cellist, featured in movement XII) and the composer (violin) for many years in this playing. His characteristic diatonic run over the keys before beginning to play is here humorously travestied in the semiquaver passages; these should suggest a Toccata, but chromatic beyond H.D.S-P.’s liking.”

### **Variation III: “R.B.T.”**

R.B.T. was Richard Baxter Townshend, Oxford don and author of the *Tenderfoot* series of books. He was the brother-in-law of the W.M.B. depicted in Variation IV. In some amateur theater performances of the day, R.B.T. played the part of an old man. The movement depicts his low voice flying off occasionally into “soprano” timbre.

### **Variation IV: “W.M.B.”**

W.M.B. was William Meath Baker, squire of Hasfield, Gloucestershire and benefactor of several public buildings. He was the brother-in-law of R.B.T. (depicted in Variation III), and step-uncle of Dora Penny (depicted in Variation X). He was known for “expressing himself somewhat energetically.”

### **Variation V: “R.P.A.”**

R.P.A. was Richard Penrose Arnold, the son of the poet Matthew Arnold, and an amateur pianist.

### **Variation VI: “Ysobel”**

Ysobel was Isabel Fitton, a viola student of Elgar. Elgar explained, “It may be noticed that the opening bar, a phrase made use of throughout the variation, is an ‘exercise’ for crossing the strings—a



difficulty for beginners; on this is built a pensive and, for a moment, romantic movement.”

### **Variation VII: “Troyte”**

Troyte was Arthur Troyte Griffith, a Malvern architect and one of Elgar’s close friends. The variation makes fun of Griffith’s enthusiastic incompetence on the piano. The variation may also refer to an occasion when Griffith and Elgar were out walking and got caught in a sudden thunderstorm.

### **Variation VIII: “W.N.”**

W.N. was Winifred Norbury, one of the secretaries of the Worcester Philharmonic Society. Elgar writes, “Really suggested by an eighteenth-century house. The gracious personalities of the ladies are sedately shown. W.N. was more connected with the music than others of the family, and her initials head the movement; to justify this position a little suggestion of a characteristic laugh is given.” After being caught in the previously mentioned thunderstorm from Variation VII, Griffith and Elgar sought shelter at Norbury’s house. Thus, this variation immediately follows Griffith’s stormy one.

### **Variation IX: “Nimrod”**

Nimrod, an Old Testament character described as “a mighty hunter before the Lord,” refers to Augustus J. Jaeger, a music editor and close friend of Elgar’s. (“Jaeger” is German for “hunter.”) Elgar later related how Jaeger had encouraged him as an artist and had inspired him to continue composing despite setbacks.

According to Dora Penny (the subject of the following variation), when a particularly frustrated Elgar considered giving up composing, Jaeger compared his struggles to those of Beethoven’s as he went deaf. Jaeger sang the slow movement of the famous Beethoven Sonata “Pathétique,” and thus the opening of this variation suggests that music. The Enigma Variations’ most famous movement, Nimrod has enjoyed a life of its own, and is frequently

played at British funerals, memorial services, and many other solemn and/or important events.

### **Variation X: Intermezzo: “Dorabella”**

Dorabella was Dora Penny, a friend whose stutter is gently parodied by the woodwinds—the woodwind entrances are written as four sixteenth notes, but are played with the first note elongated. Dora, later Mrs. Richard Powell, was the daughter of the Reverend (later Canon) Alfred Penny. Her stepmother was the sister of William Meath Baker (the subject of Variation IV). The pseudonym “Dorabella” is a reference to a character from Mozart’s famous opera *Così fan Tutte*.

### **Variation XI: “G.R.S.”**

G.R.S. was George Robertson Sinclair, organist of Hereford Cathedral. Elgar writes: “The variation, however, has nothing to do with organs or cathedrals, or, except remotely, with G.R.S. The first few bars were suggested by his great bulldog, Dan (a well-known character) falling down the steep bank into the River Wye (bar 1); his paddling upstream to find a landing place (bars 2 and 3); and his rejoicing bark on landing (second half of bar 5). G.R.S. said, ‘Set that to music’. I did; here it is.”

### **Variation XII: “B.G.N.”**

B.G.N. was Basil George Nevinson, an accomplished amateur cellist who played chamber music with Elgar.

### **Variation XIII: “\* \* \*”**

The person depicted in this movement is believed to be Lady Mary Lygon, sponsor of a local music festival. Elgar writes, “The asterisks take the place of the name of a lady who was, at the time of the composition, on a sea voyage. The drums suggest the distant throb of the engines of a liner, over which the clarinet quotes a phrase from Mendelssohn’s *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*.” To replicate the sound of steamboat, Elgar asked timpanists to use two half-crown coins instead of mallets to play the drum rolls that

accompany the clarinet solos. There are varying accounts for why Elgar did not include Lygon's initials, one of which is that as she was at sea, he was unable to obtain her consent for the dedication.

#### **Variation XIV: Finale: "E.D.U."**

E.D.U. was Elgar himself, nicknamed "Edu" (short for the German "Eduard" by his wife. The themes from variations IX ("Nimrod") and I ("C.A.E.") are echoed, referring to Jaeger and Elgar's wife Alice, "two great influences on the life and art of the composer," as Elgar wrote in 1927.

In July 1899, one month after the original version was finished, Jaeger urged Elgar to make the variation a little longer. After some cajoling Elgar agreed, adding an additional 100 bars and an organ part.

At the end of the full score Elgar inscribed the words "Bramo assai, poco spero, nulla chieggio," a quote from Torquato Tasso's *Jerusalem Delivered*, Book II, Stanza 16 (1595), altered from third to first person. It means: "I long for much, I hope for little, I ask nothing." Like Elgar's own name, this sentence too can be fitted easily into the Enigma theme.

The Enigma itself remains a mystery, though it is believed to be some well-known (at the time) melody upon which the theme can be played in counterpoint. In the program notes from the premiere, Elgar declared:

*The Enigma I will not explain – its "dark saying" must be left unguessed, and I warn you that the connexion 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.*

- Program notes by Jeff Bigler

## ~ Biographical Notes ~

### Violin Soloist:

Eighteen-year-old violinist **Keila Wakao** makes her Boston Symphony Orchestra debut for the BSO's Opening Night Gala concert in September 2024 under Andris Nelsons, on a concert also featuring world-renowned mezzo-soprano Susan Graham and pianists Lang Lang and Gina Alice Redlinger. The BSO's invitation follows her Grand Prize in the 2023 Boston Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition. She performed a movement from Prokofiev's Violin Concerto No. 2 with the BSO and Thomas Wilkins in the BSO Family Concert in October 2023.

Keila Wakao won First Prize in the 2021 Menuhin International Violin Competition Junior Division and was awarded the Gold Medal and Bach Prize at the 2021 Stulberg International String Competition. In 2023, she was awarded the Aoyama Music Foundation Award in Japan for upcoming artists, and is a recipient of Charlotte White's Salon de Virtuosi Career Grant in New York. Most recently, in April 2024, Keila was awarded the Next Generation Distinguished Cultural Achievement Award from the Japan Society of Boston.

Born in 2006, Keila Wakao is from Boston, MA, and began playing the violin at age 3. Former BSO concertmaster Joseph Silverstein accepted her as a student when she was 6 years old. From age 9, she has been a student of Donald Weilerstein. She worked with Itzhak Perlman and participated in the Perlman Music Program in summers 2018-2022. She has also studied with Soovin Kim at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School. She attends high school at the Walnut Hill School for the Arts, and in fall 2024 she will attend New England Conservatory as a student of Miriam Fried.

Named a "VC Artist" by Violin Channel, Keila Wakao has performed as soloist and in recital throughout the United States, Japan, Germany, Singapore, and the United Kingdom in venues such as Cadogan Hall (London), Victoria Concert Hall (Singapore), Jordan Hall (Boston), and

Carnegie Weill Recital Hall (New York City). She made her solo debut with an orchestra at age 9 and has since performed with ensembles including the Richmond, Reading, Eugene, Chattanooga, Adelphi, Kalamazoo, New Phil, Resound Collective, Baden-Baden, Boston Civic and Lexington symphony orchestras and the Baltimore Chamber Orchestra. In 2017, Keila was invited to speak and perform at TEDxBoston.

She plays a 1745 G.B. Guadagnini violin on generous loan from the Florian Leonhard Fellowship.

## Conductor:

Music Director of the Apollo Ensemble of Boston since 2018 and Principal Conductor of the Upbeat New Hampshire Youth Orchestra since 2022, **Elias Miller** has established a reputation as a leading young conductor and orchestra builder. He has worked with numerous orchestras across the United States including the New York Philharmonic, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Nashville Symphony, the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, and the Albany Symphony, assisting notable conductors such as Giancarlo Guerrero, Juanjo Mena, JoAnn Falletta, Scott Yoo, Carlos Miguel Prieto, Eun Sun Kim, and many more. Miller made his Carnegie Hall debut in the fall of 2023 guest conducting the New York International Symphony Orchestra. His other 2023-24 engagements include work with the Nashville Symphony and the Minnesota Orchestra, 5 masterworks programs with the Apollo Ensemble, and several concerts with Upbeat New Hampshire. Summer 2024 will see Miller conduct two more programs with the Apollo Ensemble and return to the Colorado College Summer Music Festival as its assistant conductor.

An active conductor of opera and oratorio, Miller conducted Festival Theater Hudson's inaugural performance: a staged production of Wagner's *Die Walküre* (Act I) in 2021 and co-conducted a production of Philip Glass' *La Belle et la Bête* at the University of Houston's Moores Opera Center in 2022. Between 2016 and 2019, Miller led the Harvard Early Music Society in several premieres of operatic works including the Boston premiere of

J.A. Hasse's *Alcide al Bivio*, the North American premiere of Telemann's 1745 *Johannespassion*, and the North American premiere of J.A. Hasse's *Sanctus Petrus et Sancta Maria Magdalena*. Miller has also conducted performances of operas by Gluck, Stravinsky, William Grant Still, and Gilbert & Sullivan and has served as Opera Saratoga's assistant conductor.

A distinguished pianist and cellist, Miller has performed solo recitals in the United States and in Europe on both instruments and has worked as a vocal coach and rehearsal pianist on many operatic productions. He holds degrees from Harvard University (A.B. in Music, summa cum laude) and the University of Michigan (M.M. in Orchestral Conducting) and completed his postgraduate studies with Mark Stringer at the University for Music and Performing Arts, Vienna.

## **A Note of Thanks~**

Elizabeth Cai and Community Music Center Boston for the use of their school as a rehearsal venue.

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MUSIC DIRECTOR

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TCHAIKOVSKY – VIOLIN CONCERTO  
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PLAYS **TCHAIKOVSKY**

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FIRST CHURCH CAMBRIDGE

11 GARDEN ST, CAMBRIDGE, MA 02138

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