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Symphony Orchestra

Formations and Friends!

Gary Lewis, conductor

Featuring the **Fairview High School Chamber Orchestra**

Lee Anderson, conductor

Thursday, Nov. 20, 2025, 7 p.m.

Macky Auditorium

Fairview High School Chamber Orchestra

Habari Gani

Quenton Blache (b. 2001)

La Folia

Arcangelo Corelli (1653-1713)

arr. Caryn Niedhold

Julia Cowell, guest alumni soloist

Valsa para Sofia

Bianca d'Avila do Prado (b. 1985)

String Quartet No. 2 in D Major

Alexander Borodin (1833-1887)

arr. Lucas Drew

Allegro moderato

Renee Gilliland, guest conductor

In the Bleak Midwinter

Gustav Holst (1874-1934)

arr. Katie O'Hara LaBrie

Travis Keller, guest conductor

Zamacueca

José White (1836-1918)

arr. Robert Debbaut

Plan & Elevation

Caroline Shaw (b. 1982)

The Ellipse

IV. The Orangery

V. The Beech Tree

Atlantis in the Sands

Chris Pilsner (b. 1987)

Intermission

CU Symphony Orchestra

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

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

- I. C.A.E.
- II. H.D.S-P
- III. R.B.T.
- IV. W.M.B.
- V. R.P.A.
- VI. Ysobel
- VII. Troyte
- VIII. W.N.
- IX. Nimrod
- X. Dorabella
- XI. G.R.S.
- XII. B.G.N.
- XIII. * * *
- XIV. Finale: E.D.U

Intermission

Symphony No. 1: Formations (2013; revised 2025)

Jeffrey Nytch (b. 1964)

- I. Orogenies
- II. Rush!
- III. Requiems
- IV. Majesties

PROGRAM NOTES

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

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Premiering in 1899, Elgar’s Enigma Variations has captivated and bemused listeners for more than a century. Elgar set out to create a compositional puzzle inspired by the people close to him. Regarding the theme and its use over the course of the work, Elgar stated, “The enigma I will not explain - its ‘dark saying’ must be left unguessed, and I warn you that the apparent connection 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...”. The work consists of a theme and fourteen variations, with each variation incorporating the principal theme, sometimes microscopically, to represent the personalities and lives of his friends and family. The variations are named with a three letter abbreviation to represent a loved one and the structure of the piece is as follows:

Theme: an Andante expressive string opening.

Variation 1—C.A.E.: a musical portrait of the composer’s wife, Caroline Alice Elgar, incorporating the theme with more romance and expression.

Variation 2—H.D.S-P.: Hew David Steuart Powell, who played piano in a chamber group with the composer. Known for his humorous sixteenth-note-run warmups at the piano, this humorous texture is explored in the woodwinds.

Variation 3—R.B.T.: Richard Baxter Townshend, a scholar friend with a high squeaking voice who rode his bicycle around town constantly ringing his bell.

Variation 4—W.M.B.: William Meath Baker, a squire and country man. This variation is the shortest of the set, a boisterous outburst of fast paced orchestral dialogue.

Variation 5—R.P.A.: Richard Penrose Arnold, a poet by trade was also a self taught musician whose love for serious conversation was always in balance with his witty and whimsical character.

Variation 6—Ysobel: Isabel Fritton, a violist friend of Elgar. This movement incorporates the viola predominantly, and uses large melodic leaps to represent her tall stature.

Variation 7—Troyte: Arthur Troyte Griffith, an architect who wished to learn the piano from Elgar. Unfortunately, his clumsy efforts to play the instrument frustrated Elgar, resulting in him slamming the piano shut at the end of the movement.

Variation 8—W.N.: Winifred Norbury. Less of a portrait of the woman herself, this variation is an expression of Norbury's beautiful century home in the countryside.

Variation 9—Nimrod: The most famous variation of the work, “Nimrod” represents Elgar’s closest friend August Jaeger. Jaeger (or Jäger) is the German word for hunter, and Nimrod is the great hunter mentioned in *Genesis*. In this movement, a beautiful hymn-like texture emerges that builds to a soaring musical climax.

Variation 10—Dorabella: A nickname given to Dora Penny. The name enunciated “Dor-a-bella” can be heard in the woodwinds in this intermezzo-like movement.

Variation 11—G.R.S.: George Robertson Sinclair, an organist friend of Elgar. The movement is more so about Sinclair's dog Dan. While walking along the River Wye, Dan fell into the racing water, paddled back upstream, and barked in rejoice once getting back onto land- all of which plays out audibly in the orchestra in this movement.

Variation 12—B.G.N.: Basil Nevinson, a cellist who often played trios with Elgar. This variation includes solo cello in dialogue with the rest of the orchestra.

Variation 13—*:** Elgar states, “asterisks take the place of the name of a lady who was, at the time of the composition, on a sea voyage.”

Variation 14—E.D.U.: “Edu” was Caroline Alice’s nickname for Edward Elgar. This movement serves as a more reflective self portrait, with the theme presented as a march. Two contrasting lyrical episodes occur before one final accelerando and build to the work’s grandiose finish.

Symphony No. 1: Formations (2013; revised 2025)

Jeffrey Nytch (b. 1964)

One of the interesting things about the geology of the Rocky Mountains is how musical the history is: rocks that are formed at the very beginning continually reappear, just as musical themes do in a composition; components of those rocks—motives, if you will—are modified, varied and transformed over the course of the work; patterns and repetition are at the core of our geologic history, just as they are at the core of most Western music. This allowed me to form four guiding principles that helped me shape this symphony:

1. I was not going to attempt a complete telling of the geologic history of the Rocky Mountains—such an undertaking would require many symphonies!
2. I would find musical ways to express geologic processes so that the symphony would not just be a reflection of the landscape but of the processes that formed that landscape.
3. When one views a modern feature such as a mountain, one sees the many different events that have shaped that feature in the aggregate. This compression of perception, and of time, gave me the freedom to superimpose or rearrange geologic events according to the best musical outcome, even if it took geologic events out of the order in which they occurred.
4. There would be some portion of the work that would explore the relationship between humans and the geology that has such enormous influence on our lives and history.

Of course, it's every composer's desire that the music work on its own terms, without the benefit of any outside narrative. This is precisely what I found to be so satisfying about writing this symphony: while developing the connecting points between geologic principles and musical ones I was not forced to compromise either: the music was already in the geology, making it easy to bring the geology into the music.

Each movement explores a different episode in the geologic story of the Rocky Mountains:

Movement 1: Orogenies - Dark, primal

The first movement describes the Precambrian formation of the crust that would eventually form the majority of western North America. I thought of this as the laying of both geological foundations and musical ones, so that just as the Precambrian basement keeps appearing throughout the region's geologic history, so do the motives and harmonies presented in this movement play out over the course of the symphony. The three climaxes correspond to three major orogenies—mountain-building events—while a suddenly calm coda represents the Great Unconformity, a period lasting nearly 700 million years and during which we have no geologic record whatsoever.

Movement 2: Rush! Scampering; becoming progressively more manic

This movement depicts the gold and silver rushes of the 19th century. We hear a rustic fiddle tune such as what one might have heard in a mining camp, but the tune keeps going awry and fizzling out—just as each rush failed to fulfill its promise and

lost its momentum (sometimes very quickly!). A middle section superimposes the sounds of miners panning for gold with the sounds of that gold forming: the hiss of hydrothermal veins and the thundering of the Cripple Creek Diatreme, a type of explosive volcano that erupts with tremendous force. This geologic event is in turn interrupted by a human one: the labor strife between miners and mine owners, accompanied by the sounds of gun shots that brought the rush era—and bring this movement—to a crushing conclusion.

Movement 3: Requiems - Larghetto

The third movement evokes the Cretaceous Seaway of North America and the huge amounts of organic material accumulated there to create coal, oil, and natural gas. As I contemplated this chapter in geologic history, I was struck by two things. The first was the realization that the fuels that make our modern society possible are derived from the remains of plants and animals—creatures that were previously alive, and whose death provided the material for the very thing our modern world depends on. I found this thought worthy of contemplation, and it inspired the title Requiems as well as the bulk of the music for this movement. The more animated music towards the end of the movement provides a contrast to the dark world of buried organic sediment: a sunny evocation of what must have been a tranquil and beautiful region, with warm lagoons and rich, tropical forests. Marine reptiles such as plesiosaurs arched gracefully in clear, tropical waters, while pterosaurs and early bird species soared through the air.

Movement 4: Majesties - Dark, unsettled; Furiously churning; Gradually building momentum; Jubilant

The final movement depicts the long and complex history behind the modern Rocky Mountains. First we hear a brooding tuba solo dissolve into a slow, climbing chorale for brass: the steady uplift of the Laramide Orogeny, approximately 65 million years ago. But this uplift didn't result in the mountains we see today. In fact, those highlands were buried by their own debris and that of an extended period volcanic activity that showered thousands of meters of ash, lava, and pyroclastic flows upon the region. It was not until about five million years ago that either climate change, renewed uplift or some combination of the two caused sudden and rapid erosion of the Laramide highlands—carving out the majestic mountains we see today. As the erosion picks up pace, we hear snippets of motives from the entire symphony culminating in a grand chorale of joyous celebration for the magnificent region we know today as the Rocky Mountains. This movement also seeks to address the tension between human beings and our planet: while that tension is by no means resolved today, the triumphant vision of this finale perhaps can give us a glimpse of a future marked by harmonious coexistence.

—Program note by composer

PERSONNEL

Gary Lewis, conductor

Renee Gilliland, conductor

Lee Anderson

Lee Anderson is the director of orchestras at Fairview High School and Southern Hills Middle School in Boulder. Prior to arriving in Boulder, he was the assistant director at Seven Lakes Junior High in Katy, Texas and then was named head director of the newly-opened Adams Junior High in Katy. Since arriving in Boulder in 2021, he has grown the middle school program from 45 to 95 and the high school program from 70 to 95. Under his direction, the Fairview Chamber Orchestra performed as an invited ensemble at the 2022 CMEA Conference, and won third place at the 2024 National Orchestra Festival in Louisville, Kentucky. This December, they will perform at the 79th annual Midwest Clinic in Chicago as one of four orchestras invited nationally, and as only the third ensemble from Colorado to be invited in its history.

Anderson keeps an active performing and conducting schedule. As a conductor, he directs the String Ensemble and Allegro Strings as part of Denver Young Artists Orchestra, and has conducted Honor Orchestra ensembles in Kansas (SCKMEA), Adams County, and Denver Public Schools. As a violist, he performs regularly in the viola section of the Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra and as Principal Viola of the Boulder Symphony Orchestra. He has also served as a substitute violist for the Louisville Orchestra and Houston Grand Opera.

Anderson received a Bachelor of Music Education, Bachelor of Music in viola performance, and Master of Music in viola performance from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, where his principal instructors were Stephen Wyrczynski, Ed Gazouleas and Brenda Brenner. When not in the orchestra classroom or on the performance stage, he enjoys hiking, crossword puzzles, and spending time with his wife Aspen, their dog, Max and their cat, Clara.

Symphony Orchestra

Violin 1

Kristen Barrett

Concertmaster

Ryannah Blackman

Sidney Lofthouse

Katharine Nelson

Laura Perez Rangel

BB Seidenberg

Emilie Tupper

Adam Weller

Shai Wexler

Daniel Yu

Violin 2

Anna Cummings

Alex Earle

Milan Forrester

River Juarez

Elizabeth Kaszycki

Ellie Lim

Leo Matsuoka

Principal

Ginevra Strasser

Viola

Shelley Armer

Walt Conte

Julia Cowell

Rebecca Donoho

Aaron Lockhart

Principal

Aimee McAnulty

Ryan Nguyen

Taylor Sapanara

Xi Xin

Cello

Julian Bennett

Principal

Thea Dardanis

Martinique Flickenger

Katharine Fornshell

Matthew Huff

Lance Johnson

Priscilla Kim

Sam Moore

Everlin Roark

Caleb Seifert

Double Bass

Asher Dobrin

Carson Fast

Claire Koch

Sasha Nepomnyashy

Principal

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John St. Cyr

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Aurora Conroy
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Susannah Greenslit
Jordan Spivack
Sophie Steger
Danielle York

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Toshiro Chun
Elise Ehler
Sydney Hoehl
Williams Reynolds
Leilani Spurlock
Adam Warnke

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Mark Bennett
Ben Garcia
Corey Nance

Tuba

Jesse Factor

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Jack Arman
Lily Manzanares
Isabelle O'Neill
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Jenny Xu
Principal Second Violin
Jonah Wang
Colin Eisner
Levi Greenberg
Mari Kanda
Hannah Lee
Luciana Lee-Cheng
Pragnya Pilli
Michael Zhang
Katie Zhou

Cello

Nathan Dane
Principal
Althea Nelson-Todd
Paloma Atkins
Leo Chang
Sara Jang
Eddie Lee

Double Bass

Luca Smathers
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