

Minnesota Orchestra

Osmo Vänskä, conductor
 Jess Gillam, alto saxophone
 Kevin Kling, writer and narrator

Tuesday, December 31, 2019, 8:30 pm | Orchestra Hall
 Wednesday, January 1, 2020, 2 pm | Orchestra Hall

Edward Elgar	Military March No. 1 in D major from <i>Pomp and Circumstance</i> , Opus 39	ca. 6'
Peter Maxwell Davies	<i>An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise</i>	ca. 13'
John Williams	<i>Closing In</i> , from <i>Escapades from Catch Me If You Can</i> Jess Gillam, alto saxophone	ca. 3'
Darius Milhaud	<i>Scaramouche</i> , Suite for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra, Opus 165c Vif Modère Brazileira Jess Gillam, alto saxophone	ca. 9'
Hannah Kendall	<i>The Spark Catchers</i>	ca. 10'
	I N T E R M I S S I O N	ca. 20'
Einojuhani Rautavaara	<i>A Tale of Love</i> , from <i>Book of Visions</i>	ca. 10'
Benjamin Britten	<i>The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra</i> , Opus 34 Kevin Kling, writer and narrator	ca. 18'
Thomas Arne/ arr. Malcolm Sargent	<i>Rule, Britannia!</i>	ca. 3'

CD Signing: Join us in the Orchestra Hall lobby following the January 1 concert as Osmo Vänskä will sign the Orchestra's Mahler CDs, including the newly-released album of Mahler's Fourth Symphony.





Osmo Vänskä, conductor

Profile appears on page 6.



Jess Gillam, alto saxophone

Saxophonist Jess Gillam closed the 2018 BBC Proms in London with three

appearances in the world-famous “Last Night of the Proms,” in what was her fourth appearance at the festival following two performances in 2017 and a cameo at the 2018 BBC Young Musician Prom. Since her international debut in June 2018 with the Gothenburg Symphony, her international appearances have built rapidly, including concerts with the Tampere Philharmonic, at l’Auditori Barcelona, a Swiss debut with the Argovia Philharmonic, and a U.S. debut recital in Washington, D.C. She records exclusively for Decca Classics, and her first album *RISE* features a selection of her favorite pieces ranging from Marcello and Shostakovich to David Bowie and Kate Bush. She programs and presents shows on TV and radio, and is currently the youngest BBC presenter ever. She was the recipient of a Classic Brit Award in the Sound of Classical Poll 2018, which promotes the best emerging artists and ones-to-watch in classical music. More: jessgillamsax.co.uk.

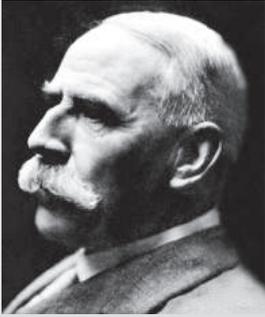


Kevin Kling, writer and narrator

The plays of Kevin Kling—mastermind of the Minnesota Orchestra’s Home for the Holidays concerts—have been produced in the Twin Cities and around the world. His collaborations with composer Victor Zupanc include *For the Birds* for Zeitgeist, *Best Summer Ever* for Children’s Theatre Company, and *The Burning Wisdom of Finn McCool* performed by the Dakota Valley Symphony, Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra, St. Olaf Orchestra and Wilmar Area Symphonic Orchestra. Kling and Zupanc recently premiered their *The Twelve Dancing Princesses* with the Metropolitan Symphony Orchestra. Kling was named the Minneapolis Story Laureate by then-Mayor R.T. Rybak in 2014. More: kevinkling.com.

one-minute notes

To celebrate the New Year, Music Director Osmo Vänskä and the Minnesota Orchestra have taken inspiration from the Last Night of the Proms, the popular finale concert of London’s annual BBC Proms classical music festival, at which formality goes out the window and unexpected gems, frivolity and beloved British traditions take center stage. One such Proms tradition opens this program: Elgar’s *Pomp and Circumstance*—known around the world as the “Graduation March”—which has been part of British regal ceremony since its use as the coronation anthem of King Edward VII. Continuing the British theme, Davies’ jovial *An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise* depicts a Scottish wedding celebration, complete with drunken brass, dancing woodwinds and a solo bagpiper representing the rising morning sun. Next come two works for alto saxophone and orchestra performed by Britain’s Jess Gillam, who was featured at the 2018 Last Night of the Proms: *Closing In*, from John Williams’ jazz-influenced score for the 2002 film *Catch Me If You Can*, and Milhaud’s jaunty, toe-tapping *Scaramouche*. This concert’s most recently-composed work, Hannah Kendall’s *The Spark Catchers*, is titled after the Irish immigrant workers who caught flying sparks to guard against factory fires and who went on strike over factory conditions in London in 1888. After intermission comes the lyrical, tender *Tale of Love* movement from Rautavaara’s *The Book of Visions*. Our celebration nears its end with Britten’s *Young Person’s Guide to the Orchestra*, the classic instrumental roll call that has introduced the orchestra to generations of listeners—performed here with new narration written and spoken by Minnesota’s Kevin Kling—followed by one last Proms tradition: the anthem *Rule, Britannia!*



Edward Elgar

Born: June 2, 1857,
Broadheath, England
Died: February 23, 1934,
Worcester, England

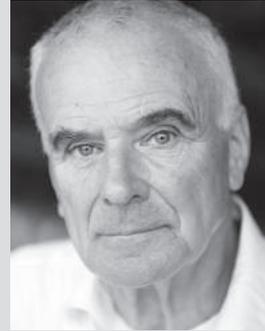
Military March No. 1 in D major from *Pomp and Circumstance*, Opus 39

Premiered: October 19, 1901

In 1901, Edward Elgar could hardly have been happier with his fortunes. His music was connecting with an ever-larger audience at home and abroad. It's easy to see the appeal: Elgar's music has the unique ability to express both triumph and nostalgia, reflecting the optimism and exuberance of England at the dawn of a new century during the reign of King Edward, a time when the sun still did not set on the British Empire. But never in his wildest dreams could Elgar have predicted the popularity of his *Pomp and Circumstance* March No. 1, now known the world over as the "Graduation March" because of its stately central theme.

Elgar would eventually write six *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, although none would rival the popularity of his first—the old cliché that “the sequel is never as good as the original” would seem to apply here. The premiere of the famous first march in 1901 was so well received that it was chosen the following year as the official coronation anthem of King Edward, cementing Elgar's place as a de facto musical spokesman for a generation of Brits. In the U.K., this march is also known as *Land of Hope and Glory*, and it is played each year at BBC Proms festival's “Last Night of the Proms,” the inspiration for the program you are attending today.

How, then, did this march become almost universally adopted as graduation music? This stems from an American event four years after it was written. In 1905, Elgar crossed the Atlantic to receive an honorary doctorate degree from Yale University. Since he was the celebrity attendant, many of his works were performed during the ceremony, ending with the March No. 1 as the graduates, faculty and distinguished muckety-mucks filed out. Two years later, Princeton used it, followed by the University of Chicago in 1908, Columbia in 1913, Vassar in 1916 and Rutgers in 1918. By the 1920s, *Pomp and Circumstance* March No. 1 had become *de rigueur* at American graduations.



Peter Maxwell Davies

Born: September 8, 1934,
Salford, England
Died: March 14, 2016,
Sanday, Orkney, England

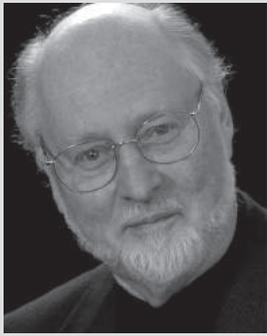
An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise

Published: May 10, 1985

fitting right in with (or perhaps exceeding) the spirit of New Year's revelry is *An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise*—a decidedly Scottish wedding celebration that vividly depicts the riotous and boozy celebrations after a wedding on the island of Orkney. One of Peter Maxwell Davies' lighter (and most popular) pieces, it might also be the only work in the classical repertoire to feature a bagpipe solo, which Davies describes as symbolic of the rising sun after a night of prolonged revelry. The score specifies that the bagpiper, dressed in full Scottish regalia, enter the hall from the back, parading to the stage and taking the soloist's position as the piece concludes.

An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise was inspired by Davies' attendance at an actual wedding party, its various sections corresponding with the succession of events he witnessed. As the guests arrive, the festivities inside the hall gather momentum. Listen for the processional tune that is passed around the woodwinds as the guests ceremoniously greet the bride and groom. The brass enter noisily (how else?) as drinks are passed; then the musicians raucously tune their instruments in preparation for the evening's dances. What follows is hilarious: as each new tune is played, the band becomes audibly more inebriated. The brass players smear and burp their way along, occasionally “freelancing” with wrong notes added by the composer for comic relief. The party evidently lasts all night, for as the guests depart, they witness the first rays of dawn, announced by the bagpiper.

An Orkney Wedding, with Sunrise was commissioned by the Boston Pops Orchestra and John Williams in 1985, and it has since been performed and recorded many times, twice by the composer himself. Its popularity is ironic, given that Davies was known in the 1960s as an *enfant terrible* of composers, whose music often shocked audiences and critics. Case in point: his theatrical *Eight Songs for a Mad King* from 1969 attempted to portray the madness of King George III by appropriating a revered work—Handel's *Messiah*—into a musical parody.



John Williams

Born: February 8, 1932,
Floral Park, New York;
now living in Los Angeles,
California

Closing In, from Escapades from Catch Me If You Can

Film released: December 18, 2002

The 2002 Steven Spielberg film *Catch Me If You Can* tells the remarkable true-life story of con man Frank Abagnale (played by Leonardo DiCaprio), who in the 1960s successfully posed as a Pan American Airways pilot, a Georgia doctor and a Louisiana prosecutor, netting him millions in ill-gotten gains before he was finally convicted of check fraud. His expertise in that area was so renowned that the FBI employed him as a consultant to help catch other check forgers.

The film was the 19th collaboration between director Spielberg and composer John Williams, although Williams' style here is decidedly "retro." He assembled a jazz-oriented score that returns to the idioms of his youth, back when he was known as Johnny Williams, the talented young pianist-arranger for Henry Mancini. Along with his original music, for good measure Williams folds in nostalgia-inducing classics from Frank Sinatra, Nat King Cole, Stan Getz and Sammy Cahn that conjure perfectly the musical vernacular of the '60s. In this colorful score, Williams proves yet again that no matter what the musical idiom, he manages to expertly make it his own.



Darius Milhaud

Born: September 4, 1892,
Marseille, France
Died: June 22, 1974,
Geneva, Switzerland

Scaramouche, Suite for Alto Saxophone and Orchestra, Opus 165c

Composed: ca. 1939

While it remains an open question whether *Scaramouche* can actually do the fandango (Freddy Mercury was a bit vague on this), we do know with certainty that 38 years prior to Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*, Darius Milhaud penned an original work titled *Scaramouche* for piano with two players.

Milhaud was a French composer, conductor and influential teacher who came of age in the musically fertile Petri dish that was Paris in the early 20th century. He assimilated a variety of vernacular styles of the day quite successfully—notably Brazilian music and jazz—the latter of which he encountered on the streets of Harlem during a trip to America in 1922. Both of those styles are smartly represented in the jaunty, carefree tune of *Scaramouche*, accompanied by a Brazilian rhythm track that made it an irresistible toe-tapper to audiences circa 1937.

Milhaud's *Scaramouche* takes its name from the Théâtre Scaramouche that specialized in productions aimed at children. (A venue which in turn takes its name from the buffoonish stock character from the Italian commedia dell'arte, the same Scaramouche referred to in Queen's *Bohemian Rhapsody*—should your inquiring mind want to know.)

Although Milhaud was one of the 20th century's most prolific composers, with a huge catalog of works, it was the brief *Scaramouche* which proved to be his reliable cash cow. It became so popular over time that he found himself returning to it repeatedly in order to satisfy demands for new arrangements. Versions for clarinet and saxophone are probably the best-known arrangements, but *Scaramouche* exists in dozens of other iterations: for concert band, wind sextet, a chamber trio, three guitars and even 16 saxophones.



Hannah Kendall

Born: 1984, London, England;
now living in New York City

The Spark Catchers

Premiered: August 30, 2017

The story of the courageous, primarily Irish immigrant women who went on strike in 1888 over safety conditions at East London's Bryant and May Match Factory inspired Hannah Kendall to compose *The Spark Catchers* in 2017. The title is a reference to the eagle-eyed women at the factory who caught and crushed flying sparks to guard against their greatest occupational hazard: fire. Premiered at the BBC Proms in August 2017, Kendall's piece takes inspiration from a poem of the same name by Lemn Sissay that commemorated the story, penned in 2012.

The London-born Kendall, daughter of Guyanese immigrants to the U.K., came to the profession relatively late. "I'd never thought

of composing before the age of 20 because I'd never seen anyone like myself doing it," she recalls. "Certainly not a woman of color writing contemporary classical music." Kendall was educated at the University of Exeter and the Royal College of Music, with further studies at the Royal Welsh College of Music and Drama, and at Columbia University in New York. In addition to composing, she works part-time as a director at London Music Masters, a charity that aims to enable opportunity, diversity and excellence in classical music.



Einojuhani Rautavaara

Born: October 9, 1928,
Helsinki, Finland

Died: July 27, 2016,
Helsinki, Finland

A Tale of Love, from Book of Visions

Premiered: April 15, 2005

Einojuhani Rautavaara's music is not unfamiliar to Minnesota Orchestra audiences, as it has been frequently championed by his countryman, one Osmo Vänskä. In fact, several premieres of Rautavaara's works have taken place on the Orchestra Hall stage, including his cello concerto *Towards the Horizon* in 2010, for which Minnesota Orchestra cellist Arek Tesarczyk was the soloist.

Rautavaara, who died in 2016, remains one of Finland's most important composers after Sibelius. His four-movement *Book of Visions* was completed in 2003 despite the composer suffering a serious heart attack mid-composition that kept him hospitalized for six months. The four movements each address a dedicated subject: Night, Fire, Love and Fate. *A Tale of Love* is an intimate, tender vignette, full of lyricism that evokes a much earlier time.



Benjamin Britten

Born: November 22, 1913,
Lowestoft, England

Died: December 4, 1976,
Aldeburgh, England

The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra, Opus 34

Premiered: October 15, 1946

One of Benjamin Britten's most popular pieces, *The Young Person's Guide to the Orchestra* is also known by its subtitle

Variations and Fugue on a Theme of Purcell, paying homage to England's most famous composer circa 1700, Henry Purcell. Originally commissioned for the British educational film *Instruments of the Orchestra* in 1946, the piece has essentially become part of the standard repertoire twice: as a work with narration that is perfectly suited to introducing kids of all ages to the instruments of the orchestra, and as a pure concert work—no narration required—that stands entirely on its own in a more formal setting.

In either context, Britten accomplishes a remarkable feat, first deconstructing the component parts of the orchestra before our ears, before reassembling them, piece by piece, into a brilliant finale, an intricate fugue based on an original tune. Beginning coyly in the piccolo, the fugue builds continual layers of complexity before Britten cleverly reintroduces Purcell's original theme in the brass, ending the piece in a glorious, technicolor blaze of orchestral color. Today's performance comes with a special Minnesotan twist: writer-storyteller Kevin Kling, the creative force behind the Minnesota Orchestra's Home for the Holidays theatrical concerts, will perform his own newly-written narration.



Thomas Arne/ arr. Malcolm Sargent

Born: March 12, 1710,
London, England

Died: March 5, 1778,
London, England

Rule, Britannia!

Premiered: August 1, 1740

Perhaps the quintessential British patriotic song, *Rule, Britannia!* originated from a poem of the same name written by James Thomson and set to music by Thomas Arne in 1740. Long associated with the Royal Navy, the tune was originally crafted for use in a dramatic play to commemorate the accession of King George II (and to a lesser extent, Princess Augusta's third birthday). The tune became instantly popular, so much so that Handel even quoted it in his *Occasional Oratorio*.

Rule, Britannia! is traditionally sung at the BBC's Last Night of the Proms, featuring a prominent guest vocalist such as Bryn Terfel, Thomas Hampson or Jane Eaglen. And if you should encounter the U.K. Grammar Police in the New Year, a word to the wise: *Rule, Britannia!* is often written as simply *Rule Britannia*, sans both the comma and the exclamation mark, which significantly changes the meaning of the lyrics by altering the grammar. Consider yourself warned!

Program notes by **Michael Adams**.