

# ELGAR REIMAGINED

## Quartet in E minor

arr. David Matthews

## Miniatures for Cello & Strings

arr. Donald Fraser

English String Orchestra

Raphael Wallfisch

Kenneth Woods

Lyrta



# ELGAR REIMAGINED

	<b>String Quartet in E minor, Op. 83</b>	<b>28.44</b>
	arr. David Matthews	
1	Allegro moderato	8.48
2	Piacevole (poco andante)	10.52
3	Allegro molto	9.04
	<b>Miniatures for Cello and Strings (world premieres)</b>	<b>40.43</b>
	arr. Donald Fraser	
4	Chanson de Matin, Op.15 No.2	3.08
5	Chanson de Nuit, Op.15 No.1	4.05
6	The Wild Bears, Wand of Youth Suite No.2	2.39
7	Nimrod, The Enigma Variations, Op.36	3.52
8	Romance, Op.62	5.56
9	Sospiri, Op.70	4.49
10	Mazurka, Op.10 No.1	3.28
11	Pleading, Op.48	3.07
12	In Moonlight	3.16
13	Salut d'Amour, Op.12	3.05
14	Adieu	2.33
	Total playing time	<b>69.27</b>

**English String Orchestra**  
**with Raphael Wallfisch** *cello*  
conducted by **Kenneth Woods**

## **PRODUCTION INFORMATION**

String Quartet

Recorded at Wyastone Concert Hall, Monmouth, on 22nd September 2020

Producer: Phil Rowlands Videographer: Tim Burton

Music Publisher – Faber Music

Miniatures for Cello and Strings

Recorded at Wyastone Concert Hall, Monmouth, on 9th October 2020

Producer: Phil Rowlands Editor: Tim Burton

Music Publisher: FraserMusic Interactive

English Symphony Orchestra

Andrew Farquharson – Chief Executive Officer

Orchestra Manager: Simon Brittlebank / The Music Agency

Stage Manager: Ed Hayes / The Music Agency

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### **ELGAR arr. David Matthews - String Quartet, Op.83**

Although Elgar was a highly accomplished violinist, he wrote no mature string chamber music until, at the end of his creative life, he produced three major works: a violin sonata, a piano quintet and a string quartet. His creativity was incapacitated by the First World War: “I cannot do any real work with the awful shadow over us”, he wrote to his friend Sidney Colvin. He was living in his grand Hampstead house and much of the time was ill and deeply depressed. But in 1917 his wife found an isolated cottage, Brinkwells, near Fittleworth in Sussex. It was here, in the autumn of 1918, his spirits revived, that Elgar worked on the three new pieces, and also made sketches for his last major completed work, the Cello Concerto. These sketches were originally intended for string quartet, and the Quartet proper begins with similar E minor material.

Both outer movements are full of mercurial changes of mood; both end at the last minute in the major, the finale with an exhilarating display of renewed energy. In between comes an intermezzo marked ‘Piacevole’, ‘peacefully’ – a pastoral C major interlude between the two stormy outer movements. Alice Elgar was particularly fond of this movement, and it was played at her funeral in 1920. In 2002, I arranged the slow movement for string orchestra and George Vass conducted it that year at the Deal Festival. The remainder of the Quartet was orchestrated in 2010. The substantial part of the arrangement is the addition of a double bass part, but I have also thickened the upper parts in a number of places. At two points in the first movement and at the end of the Andante I have preserved the original writing for solo strings. The arrangement was commissioned by the John S. Cohen Foundation.

© David Matthews

### **Elgar arr. Donald Fraser - Miniatures for Cello and Strings**

In 2019 English Symphony Orchestra were asked to give the official 100th Anniversary performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto under the auspices of the Elgar Society, Elgar Birthplace and the Elgar Festival with Raphael Wallfisch in Worcester Cathedral.

It was at that concert that Wallfisch met composer Donald Fraser, whose choral arrangement of Elgar’s *Sea Pictures* was being featured on the same concert. Wallfisch

suggested that perhaps Fraser arrange and orchestrate a few of Elgar's shorter works for cello and strings, and over the following year the project expanded in scope to finally comprise the eleven-movement suite heard here. The pieces include several standalone miniatures from Elgar's catalogue, such as the much-loved *Salut d'Amour* and *Chanson de Matin*, but also includes excerpts from larger works, such as 'Nimrod' from the Enigma Variations, and transcriptions from other concert pieces, like the *Romanza*, originally for bassoon and symphony orchestra.

© Kenneth Woods

### ***About the Artists***

With a singular body of work spanning almost 60 years, **David Matthews** has established an international reputation as one of the leading symphonists of our time. Born in London in 1943, he began composing at the age of sixteen. He read Classics at the University of Nottingham – where he has more recently been made an Honorary Doctor of Music – and afterwards studied composition privately with Anthony Milner. He was also helped by the advice and encouragement of Nicholas Maw and spent three years as an assistant to Benjamin Britten in the late 1960s. In the 1970s a friendship with the Australian composer Peter Sculthorpe (leading to collaboration and numerous trips to Sydney) helped Matthews find his own distinctive voice.

The natural world provides Matthews with a constant source of inspiration, and his scores often evoke strong feelings of place and are filled with birdsong. As well as growing out of his English background, his musical language is also strongly connected to the central European tradition – back through Mahler to Beethoven. He has been preoccupied with working in the great inherited forms of the past – symphony, string quartet, and oratorio – and the task of finding new ways to renew them. Matthews's music unashamedly embraces his own brand of tonality and he retains a firm commitment to a music that is grounded in song and dance, and is connected to the vernacular.

Matthews has been the recipient of numerous BBC commissions, including *Cantiga*, his dramatic 1988 scena for soprano and orchestra, and the *Concerto in Azzurro* for cellist Steven Isserlis, which was nominated for a 2003 BBC Radio 3 Listeners' Award. Matthews has written prodigiously for string quartet and in his vocal music has set poets

from E.E. Cummings and Rilke to Housman and D.H. Lawrence; Hill, Eliot and Auden to Sappho (in the original Greek). Choral music is equally important. Matthews composed his most ambitious work to date, *Vespers for soloists, chorus and orchestra*, for the Huddersfield Choral Society in 1994, and his 2014 anthem *To what God shall we chant our songs of battle?* was broadcast live on BBC Television as part of a vigil at Westminster Abbey commemorating the outbreak of the First World War.

Since 1985 Matthews has split his time between London and Deal, where from 1989 to 2003 he was Artistic Director of the Deal Festival. Matthews has largely avoided teaching, but has undertaken editorial work to support his composing career, collaborating with Deryck Cooke on the performing version of Mahler's Tenth Symphony, editing the music of Vaughan Williams, and orchestrating film music (most notably for Carl Davis). He has written books on the music of Tippett and Britten and penned numerous reviews for music journals. A collection of writings by and about Matthews was published by Plumbago Books to mark his 70th birthday in 2014.

For a long time the Music Advisor to the English Chamber Orchestra, Matthews also enjoys particularly close relationships with the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra, the Nash Ensemble and the Britten Sinfonia (with whom he was Composer in Residence from 1997-1999). His music has been recorded extensively, with his symphonic output attracting particularly appreciative reviews: "one of our leading composers" wrote Calum MacDonald in BBC Music Magazine, "a leading 21st-century exponent of the form" wrote Arnold Whittall in Gramophone. In 2011, the Dutton recording of his Second and Sixth Symphonies with the BBC National Orchestra of Wales was awarded a prestigious BBC Music Magazine Award. Matthews served as the English Symphony Orchestra's "John McCabe Composer-in-Association" from 2018-19, and during this time wrote his Ninth Symphony (NI6382) for the orchestra's 21<sup>st</sup> C. Symphony Project. He continues to collaborate with the orchestra as Composer Laureate and has recently completed a new work for string quartet and string orchestra, *Shiva Dances*, which the ESO will premiere at the 2022 Elgar Festival.

**[www.david-matthews.co.uk](http://www.david-matthews.co.uk)**

**Donald Fraser** began his musical life as a chorister in his local Parish Church and subsequently learned piano and trumpet. He was a member of his local youth and community orchestras as both player and conductor.

He began composing at age 13 and at 17 entered the Royal College of Music to study composing and conducting. In his second year he was awarded all five composition prizes, most notably the Cobbett Prize for his first string quartet performed by the then newly formed Chilingirian Quartet. His principal professors were Humphrey Searle and Alexander Goehr. He became Resident Composer at the Royal College of Art Film School and began composing for film and television at age 19, while still a student. His first film, for the Shell Film Unit was nominated for a BAFTA (British Film Academy) award. It was at this time that he composed and co-produced the music theatre work "Why Tears, Achilles?" based on the translations from the Iliad by Christopher Logue. This was subsequently to become a three-hour radio drama programme for the BBC and revived as "War Music" for the Old Vic Theatre Company. The production toured internationally.

Upon leaving the RCM he worked mainly in film and television as a composer as well as co-producing theatre and film productions. Arranging and record producing for major label record companies soon followed and he was co-creator of British Academy Award winning TV series "Rock Follies". He began working with documentary film director Geoffrey Jones in this period, their work garnering many prestigious international awards. The British Film Institute have recently issued a DVD of Jones' work. He was then to work as composer and music director for the Prospect Theatre Company which developed into the Old Vic Theatre Company. Productions toured many International Festivals, including Edinburgh, Istanbul and Perth, Australia as well as London's West End.

Composing concert music has been a serious and continuing part of his output. This early period saw the completion of many chamber works. A 'one man show' of these works was given at the Wigmore Hall sponsored by SONY and performed by the Medici Quartet and Peter Donohoe with the Alexander Ensemble conducted by Lionel Friend. Other works at this time included "Airs and Graces" commissioned by the 'Equale Brass' with Dorothy Tutin and Christopher Logue as narrators, Ancient Chinese Lyrics

performed by the English Chamber Orchestra with Teresa Cahill, soprano and the song cycle *Cu Chullain!* sung by baritone Andrew Golder. The last two works were given their first performances at the Queen Elizabeth Hall and the Purcell Room at London's South Bank arts complex.

Donald Fraser first became involved in orchestrating Elgar's music at the request of the ESO's former Principal Guest Conductor, Yehudi Menuhin, in the early 1980s. During this period, Donald purchased The Studio, Bedham near Fittleworth, West Sussex and made the move from London to the English countryside. The main room of the house had been moved from Brinkwells, a nearby cottage and two wings were added. It was the studio in which Edward Elgar worked on his last major compositions, including his cello concerto. More recent arrangements include the choral version of *Sea Pictures*, which has quickly become a favourite of choirs all over the world, and has been performed at a number of major festivals. In 2015, the ESO's premiere performance of Fraser's orchestration of the Elgar Piano Quintet was named *Classical Music Magazine's* Premiere of the Year, and Birmingham Post senior music critic Chris Morley called the performance one of the two "most exciting events I have experienced during a reviewing career approaching half a century. It deserves to be acknowledged immediately as a worthy addition to the Elgar canon." The CD release of the Quintet was immediately named Classic FM's Disc of the Month for May 2016. Fraser's most recent recording with the ESO was *Songs for Strings*, recorded under Fraser's baton in Abbey Road studios. That disc was Classic FM Disc of the Week when it was released, and chosen as Featured New Release on dozens of American radio networks.

**[www.donaldfraser.com](http://www.donaldfraser.com)**

The outstanding British cellist, **Raphael Wallfisch** was born in 1953 into a family of distinguished musicians, his mother the cellist Anita Lasker Wallfisch, and his father the pianist Peter Wallfisch. From an early age, Raphael was fortunate to be guided by the fine teaching of Amaryllis Fleming, Amedeo Baldovino and then Derek Simpson at the Royal Academy of Music. Subsequently, Raphael was given the unique opportunity to study with the great cellist Gregor Piatigorsky at USC in Los Angeles. Whilst there he was often invited to play chamber music with the legendary violinist Jascha Heifetz. During that

period 1973-75, he was also honoured to be invited to play Aaron Copland's solo cello pieces in the presence of the composer.

At the age of 24, Raphael won first prize at the International Cassado Cello Competition in Florence. He is the only British string player to have ever won an International Competition. Since then, he has enjoyed a world-wide career playing with such orchestras as London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, English Chamber Orchestra, City of Birmingham, Halle, Royal Scottish, Konzerthaus Orchestra Berlin, Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Gewandhaus Leipzig, Minnesota Orchestra, LA Philharmonic, Indianapolis Symphony, Warsaw and Czech Philharmonic and countless others. Frequent appearances at International Festivals have included The BBC Proms, Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Spoleto, Prague Autumn, Prades, Oslo, Adelaide, and Schleswig Holstein.

Widely recognised as the world's most recorded cellist, his astonishing discography of more than eighty albums are on labels such as EMI, Chandos, Lyrita, Nimbus, CPO, ASV, Naxos and Dutton. Many of these highly acclaimed recordings are with his duo partner of more than thirty years, John York. This extraordinary discography includes music by 46 British composers as well as Dvorak, Brahms, Beethoven, Schumann, Martinu, Shostakovich, Strauss, Dohnanyi, Bartok, Seiber, Vivaldi, CPE Bach, Spohr, Weber, Prokofiev, Schedrin, Respighi, Weinberg, Hindemith, Bloch, Caplet Khachaturian, Kabalevsky, etc..

Other leading British composers that have written for or worked closely with Raphael include, Richard Rodney Bennett, Giles Swayne, James MacMillan, Kenneth Leighton, Peter Maxwell Davies, John Joubert, Robert Simpson, Richard Blackford, Paul Patterson, John Tavener and Adrian Williams.

Raphael plays on the "ex Romberg" Montagnana 1733.

**[www.raphaelwallfisch.com](http://www.raphaelwallfisch.com)**

Hailed by Gramophone Magazine as “a symphonic conductor of stature”, **Kenneth Woods** was appointed Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the English Symphony Orchestra in 2013, and has quickly built up an impressive and acclaimed body of work and recordings with them. Woods also serves as Artistic Director of both the Colorado MahlerFest – the only US organisation other than the New York Philharmonic to receive the International Gustav Mahler Society’s Gold Medal – and (since 2017) the founding Artistic Director of The Elgar Festival in Worcester. Woods has conducted the National Symphony Orchestra, Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and the English Chamber Orchestra, and has made numerous broadcasts for BBC Radio 3, National Public Radio and the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He has appeared on the stages of some of the world’s leading music festivals, such as Aspen, Scotia and Lucerne. Under Kenneth Woods’ leadership, the English Symphony Orchestra has gained widespread recognition as one of the most innovative and influential orchestras in the UK. The first of Woods’ many acclaimed ESO discs was volume one in the Complete Piano Concertos of Ernst Krenek, selected by The Times as one of their “Best Recordings of 2016.” His recording of Fraser’s Elgar orchestrations for Avie was a Classic FM Disc of the Month. The ESO’s Nimbus Alliance recording of Kenneth’s orchestration of the Brahms’ Piano Quartet in A Major was chosen as one of the 10 Best Classical CDs of 2018 by The Arts Desk. In 2016 Woods and the ESO launched their 21st Century Symphony Project, an ambitious multi-year effort to commission premiere and record nine new symphonies by leading composers, with the triumphant premiere of Philip Sawyers’ Third Symphony at St John’s Smith Square. In 2018, the Project continued with the premiere of David Matthews’ Ninth Symphony, selected by The Spectator as one of the Top Ten Classical Events of the year. The most recent work in the series is Matthew Taylor’s Fifth Symphony hailed by ClassicalSource as “a masterpiece” at its 2019 premiere

**[www.kennethwoods.net](http://www.kennethwoods.net)**

The **English Symphony Orchestra**, the International Orchestra of Elgar Country, is an ensemble which in recent years has become synonymous with artistic excellence innovative and visionary programming, distinctive commissioning and ground-breaking recordings. Since 2013, the orchestra has re-emerged as a major force in British musical life, presenting and recording the orchestra's first full length opera (the world premiere of John Joubert's Jane Eyre) to overwhelming critical acclaim, presenting the 2015 Classical Music Magazine "Premiere of the Year," (Donald Fraser's orchestration of the Elgar Piano Quintet) and releasing a triumphant series of recordings, including the Complete Piano Concertos of Ernst Krenek (Sunday Times Best Recordings of 24 NI6408 2016) and John Joubert's opera Jane Eyre (2017 MusicWeb Opera Recording of the Year). Founded by William Boughton in 1980, the ESO have a long and distinguished history of collaboration with legendary figures of British music making. As the professional orchestra of Elgar's home city, and orchestra-in-residence of The Elgar Festival, the music of Elgar has long been a central part of the ESO's repertoire. Past ESO collaborators include some of the leading Elgar interpreters of the last 50 years, including conductors Yehudi Menuhin (Principal Guest Conductor 1990-2000) and Vernon Handley (Principal Conductor 2007—8) and soloists Nigel Kennedy, Nicola Benedetti, Steven Isserlis and Alexander Sitkovetsky. Appropriately for an orchestra based in Elgar's home town, the ESO has made many acclaimed recordings of that composer's music as well as that of major 20th century British composers including Vaughan Williams Britten, Butterworth and Bridge. The ESO discography also highlights a commitment to the music of our time; in addition to the notable recordings which grew out of the orchestra's affiliation with Sir Michael Tippett, are recordings of music by John Metcalfe John Joubert, Nicholas Maw and Michael and Lennox Berkeley. John McCabe served as the orchestra's Composer-in-Association from 2013 until his death in 2015. Following McCabe's death in 2015, the ESO appointed Philip Sawyers as "John McCabe Composer-in- Association" who was succeeded by David Matthews in 2018. The ESO's current John McCabe Composer-in-Association is Adrian Williams.

**[www.eso.co.uk](http://www.eso.co.uk)**



Raphael Wallfisch with the ESO and Kenneth Woods at the Elgar Festival, 2019

Also Available from the ESO. Full details at [www.wyastone.co.uk](http://www.wyastone.co.uk)

