

ROCOCO VARIATIONS

FODEN'S BAND

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| 1. <i>Variations on a Ninth</i> | ©Joseph Weinberger Ltd. | <i>Gilbert Vinter</i> | 14.09 |
| 2. <i>In Memoriam R.K.</i> | ©Chester Music | <i>Elgar Howarth</i> | 14.55 |
| 5. <i>Paganini Variations</i> | ©Novello & Co. | <i>Philip Wilby</i> | 16.11 |
| 4. <i>Rococo Variations</i> | ©Studio Music | <i>Edward Gregson</i> | 18.11 |

Total CD Playing Time 65.51

Tracks 1, 2 & 4 conducted by Garry Cutt, Track 3 conducted by Bramwell Tovey

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SFZ 148 CD

ROCOCO VARIATIONS

FODEN'S BAND

CONDUCTED BY
GARRY CUTT & BRAMWELL TOVEY



Programme Notes

Variations on a Ninth

If anybody could be said to have almost single-handedly revitalised brass band music, it was Gilbert Vinter, whose works in the medium introduced adventurous harmony and new ideas in scoring. He was a superb musical craftsman and his *Variations on a Ninth*, commissioned for the 1964 National Brass Band Championships Final at the Royal Albert Hall, represents a prime example of his skill in taking a very simple idea and doing an enormous amount with it. The piece consists of a set of nine variations based on the musical interval of the ninth and the harmonic and melodic ideas which may be derived from it.

At the very opening of the work, Gilbert Vinter introduces the interval in both closed and broken harmony, with repeated triple-tongued semiquavers in the cornets, followed by a playful and quirky variation with 'horses hooves' temple blocks sounding from the percussion. A cheerful waltz follows, which swings giddily along until it leads into the next variation in which time seems to stand still as the band's soloists rhapsodise in broken harmony. This leads to a gentle, rather wistful variation with a song-like character and a great, warm-hearted tutti, whilst the next variant skips along gingerly on tiptoe as it were. This is followed in turn by a somewhat sentimental duo for euphonium and solo cornet, before a playful and mischievous variation, sounding almost like something from Malcolm Arnold, lightens the mood. The final variation is contrapuntal, as the various sections of the band enter in canon, and build to a warm melody with which the work ends.

2007 included victories at the North West Area Championship for a record breaking 14th time, being crowned the International Masters Champions and victory at the Tameside Whit Friday March Contests for a sixth consecutive year. Foden's were runners up at the National Finals, at Brass in Concert, held at the Sage, Gateshead, as well as receiving 3rd prize at the British Open.

2008 proved another successful year with victories at the North West Area Contest, Tameside Whit Friday March Contest, the British Open Championship and runners up at the National Finals at the Royal Albert Hall, London.

2009 has seen victory at the North West Area Contest for a record breaking 16th time, victory at the International Masters as well as winning the Tameside Whit Friday for the 8th consecutive year.



Fodens' Band

The origins of the band go back to 1900 when the village of Elworth, near Sandbach in Cheshire, formed its own band having been let down by its attempt to secure the services of the nearby town band to feature in the celebrations marking the relief of Mafeking in the Boer War.

After a couple of years the village band was wound up, but from that base local industrialist Edwin Foden formed the Fodens' Motor Works Band. For a few years the new band had modest ambitions, but in 1908 a fundamental reorganization took place and, by the following year, it had achieved Championship Section status, a prestigious position that has been maintained ever since.

32 times the band has been a prize winner at the coveted British Open Championships, winning nine times outright - including a hat trick in 1926, '27 and '28. The band has also been a prize winner 37 times at the National Championships of Great Britain, 12 times as winner, including an unparalleled double hat trick in 1932, '33 and '34 and 1936, '37 and '38.

Under its former title, the band was ordered to play by Royal Command on three occasions: in 1913 for King George V and Queen Mary, in 1938 at Windsor Castle for King George VI and Queen Elizabeth, and most recently in 1983 where the band had the honour of playing for Her Majesty Queen Elizabeth II at Buckingham Palace. In wartime, the band toured Europe for ENSA and in peacetime it toured Canada, South Africa and Israel.

In July 1986 the band accepted sponsorship from the Britannia Building Society. The band maintained its position as one of the country's leading bands, becoming BBC Band of the Year in 1990 and 1992, and European Champions in 1992.

Becoming All England Masters Champions in 1990, 1991, 1994 and 1995, the band emerged as the most consistent band in this field, and in 1993 it became the first British band to win the Swiss Open Championships. In March 2006, Fodens' became the North West Area Champions and in July of that year made history by becoming the inaugural English National Champions.

In Memoriam R.K.

In Memoriam R.K. was written as a tribute to the great conductor, Rudolf Kempe, who died suddenly in 1976 and for whom Elgar Howarth played principal trumpet in the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. The work is in five continuous sections and pastiches the styles of the composers in whom Kempe specialised.

The work opens in slightly apprehensive mood with a tiny semi-quaver figuration, described by the composer as an *idée fixe*. It was taken from an earlier work and is ever-present throughout. The first section, which represents the young Rudolf Kempe, is relaxed and features a graceful melody. However, in the next section, there are shadowy hints of the Nazi regime which was to plunge Europe into turmoil. This gives way to a more relaxed, lyrical section, reminiscent of late Strauss, intended to mirror Kempe's qualities as a musician, before the peace is shattered by a strident quote from the last movement of Mahler's Symphony No. 1, answered by the *idée fixe*, reflecting the upheaval of World War II.

At the climax, the timpanist hammers out the *idée fixe* and the basses respond with a solemn quotation of the funeral music from Wagner's *Götterdämmerung*, intended to represent both the ruination of the German nation and Rudolf Kempe's untimely death. The mood of the final section, however, is one of calm resignation, with a reprise of earlier material and the little *idée fixe* still present, but now lacking menace. The work ends in a rich, Straussian D major sunset, with a hint of the final phrase of one of the greatest farewells in music, Mahler's 9th Symphony.

Paganini Variations

Philip Wilby wrote his *Paganini Variations* in 1990. A commission from the BBC for Grimethorpe Colliery Band, the work made a great impression when first heard in 1991 and was chosen as the test-piece for that year's British Open Brass Band Championships. Based on Paganini's 24th Caprice for solo violin, it is considered by many to be one of its composer's finest works and remains one of his most played.

In his performance notes the composer states, 'The intention was to compose a piece that would use more of Paganini than his time-honoured melody, but would also attempt to recreate, in modern terms, something of the wild and romantic spirit of his times.' There are 16 variations, prefaced by a bravura introduction for the full band, after which Paganini's theme is presented by a solo euphonium and repeated by the solo cornets. The variations cover a wide range of expression and emotion, including sinuous versions of theme, a solemn trombone solo, frantically animated *tours de force*, a short, somewhat chaotic march, rapid passage-work for the cornets, bell-effects in the trombones, a canon, a bracing bolero, mysterious murmuring from the basses, a hushed elegy with a tolling funeral bell, a *Romanza* involving cadenzas for the solo horn, solo cornet, soprano cornet and flugel horn which culminates in an emotional climax, a rather sinister bridge passage leading to a virtuoso display involving the full band and a final variation, marked *Plene Voce (Full Voice)*, in which Paganini's theme is presented in a triumphal manner, ending in a blazing chord of B \flat major.

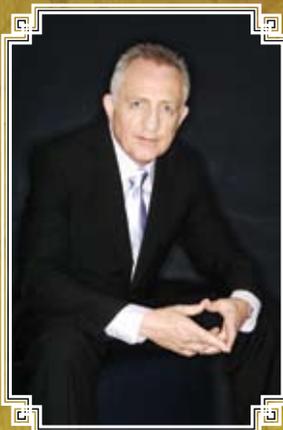
Baltimore, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Detroit, Seattle, Montreal as well as ongoing performances with Toronto.

Recently branded '...the hottest hot-weather conductor in America right now...' by The Baltimore Sun, Tovey continues as Principal Guest Conductor of the Los Angeles Philharmonic at the Hollywood Bowl, and both as founding host and conductor of the New York Philharmonic's Summertime Classics series at Avery Fisher Hall in summer 2009.

As music director of the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, they won a Grammy in 2008 with violinist James Ehnes for 'Best Instrumental Recording with Orchestra'. Prior to his music directorship in Vancouver, Tovey spent 12 years as music director of the Winnipeg Symphony Orchestra, where he founded its highly regarded New Music Festival.

Tovey has established himself as a formidable composer and is the first artist to win a Juno Award in both conducting and composing. He has been commissioned by Calgary Opera to compose the company's third original full-length opera. Tovey's other accomplishments as a composer include receiving the 'Best Canadian Classical Composition' 2003 Juno Award for his *Requiem for a Charred Skull*.

Despite all the acclaim for his orchestral and classical work, Tovey continues to be heavily involved in the brass band scene. From his student days conducting Hanwell Band, he has built significant partnerships with Rigid Containers Band (now GUS), Foden's Band and through his current tenure as Artistic Director of the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain. He cites his work with the National Youth Brass Band as hugely rewarding and stimulating. His enduring partnership with Foden's has proved fruitful in every way. Concerts, appearances at major music festivals, competitions and recordings have all received critical and award winning acclaim and reinforce this idyllic and exciting marriage between a wonderful band and the maestro, Bramwell Tovey.



Bramwell Tovey
Conductor

A musician of striking versatility, Bramwell Tovey is acknowledged around the world for his artistic depth and his warm, charismatic personality on the podium. Tovey's career as a conductor is uniquely enhanced by his work as a composer and pianist, lending him a remarkable musical perspective. His tenures as music director with the Vancouver Symphony, Luxembourg Philharmonic and Winnipeg Symphony Orchestras have been characterized by his expertise in operatic, choral, British and contemporary repertoire.

However, Bramwell's roots were in The Salvation Army at Ilford in London. He is proud to be a fifth generation Salvationist and acknowledges the influence of his relatives, many of whom were highly active in Salvation Army music making. The opportunity to play and sing in junior bands and at music camps, meeting Army music personalities and like-minded young people, was almost as important as his formal music education.

After studying at the Royal Academy of Music, his career as an esteemed conductor blossomed and developed working with numerous renowned orchestras in Europe and the UK. He made his Australian debut in 2008 with the Melbourne Symphony Orchestra and guest artist Christian Tetzlaff. In North America, along with his work with the New York and Los Angeles Philharmonics, Tovey has made guest appearances with the orchestras of

Rococo Variations

Rococo Variations, written for the 2008 British Open Brass Band Championships, marked the return to the world of brass band contests by Edward Gregson, who began as a brass band composer before directing his attention elsewhere, such as writing concertos for clarinet, violin and saxophone and directing the Royal Northern College of Music.

Taking its title from the 18th century French style of highly ornate decoration, the work consists of six variations played without a break, with each variation dedicated to a prominent composer of brass band music, with an overall dedication to Edward Gregson's brother, Bram. Following two introductory bars, the theme is announced, shared between solo cornets, soprano cornet and tenor horn, followed by a *Toccata* (dedicated to Elgar Howarth), which certainly lives up to its name. Then comes a gently-flowing *Siciliana* (dedicated to Ray Steadman-Allen), with solos for solo cornet, euphonium, soprano cornet and flugel horn. A *Waltz* (dedicated to the memory of Eric Ball), follows, which harks back to an earlier style of writing and the air-varie format. The next variation, a furious *Moto Perpetuo*, is a technical showpiece dedicated to John McCabe, whilst the ensuing *Lament* (dedicated to the memory of Wilfred Heaton) is a chaconne in which variations are played over a repeated bass line and which includes a poignant quote from Heaton's *Contest Music*. The final *Fugal Scherzo* (dedicated to Philip Wilby) includes references to the previous variations and a statement of the old Spanish melody, *La Folla*, before the final section is upon us, the work ending on a resounding chord of C major.

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Garry Cutt
Conductor

Garry Cutt has developed a reputation as one of the banding world's most successful conductors.

His 17-year relationship with the Marple Band resulted in many of Garry's early contest successes, the pinnacle of which was their British Open victory of 1996. This was Garry's second 'Open' title, having previously won with Kennedy's Swinton Band in 1989, becoming the youngest winning conductor in the contest's entire history and the very first recipient of The Mortimer Maestro Award.

He became Musical Director to the Grimethorpe Colliery Band in 1991, a position he held for 12 years. The impact of the film *Brassed Off* resulted in Garry leading the band on several sell-out tours, most notably to Australia, New Zealand, Japan, Hong Kong and, in April 2003, Garry and the band made their debut in New York's Carnegie Hall!



Regarded as the 'Kings of Entertainment', Garry and Grimethorpe notched up six victories at the Brass in Concert competition.

In 2003, he was awarded the Iles Medal by The Worshipful Company of Musicians for his services brass bands.

From 2000 to 2005 Garry was proud to take on the role of Associate Conductor to the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain, working closely with his mentor, Elgar Howarth.

In September 2004, the history books of the famous Foden's Band were dramatically rewritten when Garry led them to their first British Open victory since 1964 - securing his third Mortimer Maestro Award in the process! Garry went on to become the permanent Professional Conductor of the Foden's Band in January 2005 and together they have continued to flourish as one of the most successful partnerships in banding - having won a hat-trick of North West Area contests, the All England Masters International Championships and the inaugural English National Brass Band Championships. Garry led the Foden's Band to another British Open Victory in September 2008 to claim his fourth win at the competition.

He is very much in demand as a guest conductor - having visited countries such as Australia, the USA, Japan, Denmark, Norway, Holland and Sweden in recent years.