

# Strings of St. John's

in concert

Presenting works by  
**DVOŘÁK, ELGAR, SUK, CORIGLIANO** and **WALTERS**

with **MEHDI JAVANFAR**,  
music director and conductor

**SUNDAY, MAY 14<sup>TH</sup>, 2023 AT 2 PM**

St John the Evangelist Anglican Church  
(Elgin St. at Somerset St. – Ottawa)

Admission by donation  
(suggested \$20/adult)

Strings  
of St. John's



The Strings of St. Johns gratefully  
acknowledges the financial support  
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# PROGRAMME

*Serenade for Strings in E major, Op. 22, B52*      Antonin Dvořák  
Moderato      (1841-1904)  
Scherzo  
Larghetto

*Elegy, Op. 58*      Edward Elgar  
(1857-1934)

*Meditation on the old Bohemian Chorale Op. 35*      Josef Suk  
(1874 – 1935)

## INTERMISSION

*Voyage for String Orchestra*      John Corigliano  
(1938 -)

*Divertimento for String Orchestra*      Gareth Walters  
Allegro vivace      (1928 – 2012)  
Lento cantabile  
Presto  
Largo  
Allegro giocoso

# PROGRAMME NOTES

## **Antonin Dvořák (1841-1904)**

*Serenade for Strings in E major, Op. 22, B52*

Antonin Dvořák was a Czech composer and frequently used folk songs from Moravia and his native Bohemia in his music. Dvořák was an accomplished violinist at a very young age and wrote his first composition the ‘Forget-Me-Not Polka’ in 1855 at age 14. After studying organ and playing the violin in many orchestras to supplement an income, he was appointed professor at the Prague Conservatory in 1891. In 1892 he moved to the United States and became the director of the National Conservatory of Music of America in New York City. It was during this time that he composed his 9th Symphony – From the New World – and his cello concerto, one of the most highly regarded of the major cello works.

In 1875 while gaining recognition as a composer, Dvořák was commissioned to write the *Serenade for Strings* and it is said to have written it in just 12 days from May 3 – 14. The piece combines various styles – first movement cantabile, second movement waltz, third movement humorous high spirits, fourth movement lyrical beauty and fifth movement exuberance.

## **Edward Elgar (1857-1934)**

*Elegy, Op. 58*

*Elegy* is a short piece for string orchestra written in 1909 to commemorate deceased members of the “Worshipful Company of Musicians’ and guild for musicians which still exists today supporting musicians and music education, awarding prizes, scholarships and medals to young musicians. *Elegy* was first recorded by the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1933 under the baton of Elgar himself and turned out to be the last piece Elgar ever conducted. While only between 3 and 4 minutes long, *Elegy* was premiered privately in London on July 13, 1909 and was first performed in public at St. Paul’s Cathedral in November 1914.

## **Josef Suk (1874 – 1935)**

*Meditation on the old Bohemian Chorale Op. 35*

Josef Suk was a Czech composer and violinist. He learned organ, violin and piano from his father but his greatest inspiration came from Antonin Dvořák whose daughter he later married.

Suk was a founding member of the Bohemian String Quartet (known as the Czech Quartet after 1918) with three fellow students. The ensemble was

obliged to perform the Austrian national anthem at the start of every concert so Suk, second violin in the quartet, decided to supplement the obligatory piece with a work inspired by the sacred Bohemian “St. Wenceslas’ hymn. The hymn’s message of peace for the Czech people was immediately understood by all who heard it.

### **John Corigliano (1938 - )**

#### *Voyage for String Orchestra*

John Corigliano is an American composer of contemporary classical music. His compositions numbering over 100 have won him several awards including 5 Grammys and an Oscar for the film score *‘The Red Violin’*.

Corigliano’s notes on the piece are as follows: *‘Voyage for string Orchestra’* (1976) is an instrumental version of a 1971 a cappella choral work that was a setting of Richard Wilbur’s translation of Baudelaire’s famous *L’Invitation au voyage*. Wilbur’s poignant setting pictures a world of obsessive imagination – a drugged version of heaven full of sensual imagery. The music echoes the quality of the repeated refrain found in this lush translation: “There, there is nothing else but grace and measure, richness, quietness and pleasure.”

Source [www.johncorigliano.com](http://www.johncorigliano.com)

### **Gareth Walters (1928 – 2012)**

#### *Divertimento for String Orchestra*

Gareth Walters was born in Swansea, South Wales and completed his early education there. He began to compose as a very young boy and received encouragement from the composer Benjamin Britten who was a family friend. After studies in London and Paris, Walters returned to Britain to join the teaching staff of the Royal Academy of Music, and, two years later, in 1956, he was appointed as a Producer in the Music Department of the BBC in London. *Divertimento for String Orchestra* was commissioned by the BBC for its orchestra in Cardiff. It was composed in 1960 and in 1970 was the first of Walters works to be recorded. The commission for the work specified that it be based on Welsh folk tunes. However, rather than include entire tunes, Walters decided to use short rhythmic or melodic elements from the folk tunes. Only two traditional melodies appear in the work – a short quotation is used in the second movement and the melody in the fourth movement is an embellishment of ‘Lisa Lan.’

# MEHDI JAVANFAR

## MUSIC DIRECTOR & CONDUCTOR



Mehdi Javanfar is an active conductor and educator. He is a two-time recipient of the Graduate Merit Awards in Conducting at the University of Michigan, where he studied with Maestro Kenneth Kiesler. His other conducting mentor includes the late Gustav Meier. Mehdi has conducted the London Ontario Symphony Orchestra, Windsor Symphony Orchestra, Hamilton Symphonic Band, University of Michigan various orchestras, Hart house Strings, the Composers' Orchestra consisting of the members of the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, Kharkiv Philharmonic Orchestra in Ukraine, and the Toronto Sinfonia of Nations, which he founded. Also, he has held the position of the Music Director of the Pembroke Symphony Orchestra since 2017.

Mehdi began his musical career as a violinist in Tehran Symphony Orchestra. Following immigration to Canada in 1994, while studying at the University of Toronto, he joined the Scarborough Philharmonic Orchestra where he served as the Principal Second Violin. As a conductor, his first concert at the Faculty of Music, University of Toronto, in 1997, featuring Dvořák's Serenade in D minor, and Stravinsky's Histoire du Soldat was recorded and broadcast by CJRT FM. His conducting repertoire is varied and includes more than a hundred forty pieces from the standard repertoire, as well as pieces by contemporary composers of various nationalities, such as Behzad Ranjbaran, Arsalan Kamkar, Shahin Farhat, Reza Vali, Suad Bushnaq, Fikret Amirov, Vladimir Solyanikov, and Goulak Artemovsky. As an advocate for Canadian music, Mehdi has performed pieces by Gary Kulesha, Marjan Mozetich, Larysa Kuzmenko, Abigail Richardson-Schulte, Murray Schafer, Tawnie Olson, Maya Badian, Andrew Ager, Carmen Braden, Elizabeth Raum, André Gagnon, and John Weinzwieg to name a few.

As an educator, Mehdi is a senior member of the College of Examiners at the Royal Conservatory of Music. He has taught and prepared countless students for RCM examinations in various subjects of Theory,

History, as well as Violin, and Piano, from elementary to advanced levels. As a music writer, Mehdi's activities include participation in writing a textbook of fundamentals of music for the University of Tehran, Iran; translation of "The Story of Music" by Geoffrey Brace (Ladybird Books) into Persian; biographical writings on Tchaikovsky, Bartok, Prokofiev, and Mahler; correction of the list of errata published in the journal of the Conductors' Guild, for "Rite of Spring" by Stravinsky; essays on Iranian Traditional Music, and a variety of other subjects, published in various magazines.

A graduate of the University of Toronto with a Bachelor of Music Education, the University of Michigan with a Master's degree in Orchestral Conducting, and the University of Ottawa with a Master of Arts in Music Research, Mehdi is currently pursuing his Doctorate in Philosophy Interdisciplinary Research in Music at the University of Ottawa.



# THE STRINGS OF ST. JOHN'S

## **Violin I**

Mira Negovora,  
*Concertmaster*  
Rosalind Spencer  
Carolyn Phillips  
Marg Macpherson  
Carol Deaville  
Lauren Phillips  
Marko Yaniskevsky

## **Violin II**

Margot Lange,  
*Principal*  
Jennifer Arrigo  
Katherine Tinkler  
Gabriella Csoti  
Alessandra Kempson  
Serena Seymour

## **Viola**

Mary Young,  
*Principal*  
Laura Mennill  
Shalva Chabukiani  
Stephen Rouble

## **Cello**

Sandra Allan,  
*Principal*  
Catherine Campbell  
Andrew Deaville  
Gary McMillan  
**Bass**  
Patrick Kline,  
*Principal*  
Arianna Verbree

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