



The Cathedral
Church of **Saint John**
the Divine

RELEASE

For further information

Alena Myerovich/212-843-9273/ ameyerovich@rubenstein.com

Robin Verves/212-843-8075 / rverges@rubenstein.com

Isadora Wilkenfeld, Cathedral of St. John the Divine
(212) 316-7468 / iwilkenfeld@stjohndivine.org

**THE CATHEDRAL OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE PRESENTS
THE U.S. PREMIERE OF DAVID BRIGGS' TRANSCRIPTION OF
EDWARD ELGAR'S SYMPHONY NO. 1**



Photo: Courtesy david-briggs.org

New York (October XX, 2017) International concert organist and composer David Briggs will perform his transcription of Elgar's deeply moving *First Symphony* (1908) on **Friday, November 3 at 7:30 p.m., at the Cathedral of St. John the Divine, 1047 Amsterdam Avenue (at 112th Street), Manhattan.** This concert opens *Great Organ: A Recital Series*, part of the 2017–2018 season of *Great Music in a Great Space*.

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine recently appointed Mr. Briggs, known worldwide as an outstanding and innovative musician, as Artist in Residence. David Briggs said, "For me, the Great Organ of St. John the Divine is one of the very finest organs in the world. It will be a real privilege to be closely associated with it." Regarding his relationship to the music of Edward Elgar and his own interest in transcription for the organ, the English-born Briggs says, "Elgar's symphonies are pieces which have been in my spirit for three decades. I felt they would be ideal

candidates for transcription... in a transcription of this nature, the organ wins over the piano in terms of sustaining the great melodies, creating huge, surging crescendos, and also sheer variety and choice of coloristic opportunity.”

Elgar’s *First Symphony* (1908) underwent a long gestation—Elgar was 51 when he wrote it, and the piece offers a long look into the composer’s character: by turns aristocratic, volatile, nature-loving, wistful, and passionately romantic.

The Cathedral’s Great Organ, built in 1911 by Ernest M. Skinner and enlarged and rebuilt in 1954 by G. Donald Harrison of the Aeolian-Skinner Organ Company, stands as a remarkable example of America’s premier organ craftsmanship.

The 2017-2018 season of Great Music in a Great Space continues with a broad spectrum of choral and instrumental music in the Cathedral’s grand and inspiring Gothic interior. *Great Organ: A Recital Series* will return to the Cathedral in January 2018, with concerts by Mr. Briggs; Kent Tritle, Director of Cathedral Music and Organist; and Raymond Nagem, Associate Director of Music.

Tickets are \$25. For more information, please visit this website.

PROGRAM

All pieces by Edward Elgar

Pomp and Circumstance, Op. 39, March No. 4 (transcribed by Herbert Brewer)

Nimrod from Variations on an Original Theme, Op. 36 (transcribed by Sir William Harris)

Symphony No. 1, Op. 55 (transcribed by David Briggs)

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About Great Music in a Great Space

Revived in 2011 under the leadership of Kent Tritle, *Great Music in a Great Space* reprises the legendary concert series first held at the Cathedral in the 1980s. Highlights of the 2016–2017 season included choral/orchestral concerts, organ recitals and the Cathedral’s signature holiday concerts. Most recently, the acclaimed Cathedral Choir and Choristers were joined by the Manhattan School of Music Symphony and Symphonic Chorus and the Oratorio Society of New York for an epic performance of the War Requiem, Benjamin Britten’s musical invocation of the perils of war.

About David Briggs

David Briggs is an internationally celebrated organist whose performances are acclaimed for their musicality, virtuosity, and ability to excite and engage audiences of all ages. Master of an extensive repertoire spanning five centuries, he is known across the globe for his brilliant organ transcriptions of symphonic music by composers such as Mahler, Schubert, Tchaikovsky, Elgar,

Bruckner, Ravel, and Bach. Briggs has been fascinated by the art of improvisation since childhood, and frequently performs improvisations to silent films such as *Phantom of the Opera*, *The Hunchback of Notre-Dame* and *Nosferatu*, as well as a variety of Charlie Chaplin films.

At the age of 17, Briggs obtained his FRCO (Fellow of the Royal College of Organists) diploma, winning all the prizes and the Silver Medal of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. From 1981–84 he was the Organ Scholar at King’s College, Cambridge University, during which time he studied organ with Jean Langlais in Paris. The first British winner of the Tournemire Prize at the St. Albans International Improvisation Competition, he also won the first prize in the International Improvisation Competition at Paisley. Briggs has held positions at Hereford, Truro and Gloucester Cathedrals. He has been Artist-in-Residence at St James Cathedral, Toronto since 2012, and will continue as consultant for the forthcoming organ restoration and play several celebrity concerts per annum. He has recorded two DVDs, and 35 CDs, many of which include his own compositions and transcriptions.

About The Cathedral

The Cathedral of St. John the Divine is the Cathedral of the Episcopal Diocese of New York. It is chartered as a house of prayer for all people and a unifying center of intellectual light and leadership. People from many faiths and communities worship together in services held more than 30 times a week; the soup kitchen serves roughly 25,000 meals annually; social service outreach has an increasingly varied roster of programs; the distinguished Cathedral School prepares young students to be future leaders; Adults and Children in Trust, the renowned preschool, afterschool and summer program, offers diverse educational and nurturing experiences; the outstanding Textile Conservation Lab preserves world treasures; concerts, exhibitions, performances and civic gatherings allow conversation, celebration, reflection and remembrance—such is the joyfully busy life of this beloved and venerated Cathedral.