

Zukerman Plays Elgar

October 16, 2026

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Yaniv Dinur, *Conductor*
Pinchas Zukerman, *Violin*

Paul BEN-HAIM
(1897–1984)

Symphony No. 1
Allegro energico
Molto calmo e cantabile
Presto con fuoco

INTERMISSION

Edward ELGAR
(1857–1934)

Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 61
Allegro
Andante
Allegro molto

Mr. Zukerman has recorded for Decca, Analekta, CBS Masterworks, Philips, Angel, Deutsche Grammophon, CBC Records, Altara, Biddulph Recordings, Sony, and BMG Classics/RCA Victor Red Seal.

Pinchas Zukerman exclusive representation: Kirshbaum Associates Inc., 307 Seventh Avenue, Suite 506, New York, NY 10001, www.kirshbaumassociates.com

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German-born **Paul Frankenger** (1897–1984) Hebraized his name to **Paul Ben-Haim** after leaving Nazi Germany for British Mandate Palestine in 1933. In his early years he was a conductor and assistant to Bruno Walter (1920–24) and a conductor in Augsburg (1924–31). In Tel Aviv he taught at the Shulamit Conservatory and served as the president of the Israeli Composers' Association. Ben-Haim also directed the Jerusalem Academy of Music. He became an Israeli citizen when the country received its independence in 1948. "Mediterraneanism," a term some musicologists are using for the integration of Middle Eastern modalities and rhythms into Western art and music, accurately describes Ben-Haim's compositional style, with his merger of Jewish and Arab folk music and Western classical traditions. His two symphonies, composed in 1939–40 and 1942–45 respectively, are considered his "war symphonies." Other works include concertos for cello and violin, a clarinet quintet, *Songs Without Words*, and his popular orchestral *Fanfare to Israel* (1950). In 1957 he received the Israel Prize for Music. Ben-Haim's **Symphony No. 1**, considered the first work in that genre to be written in Israel, premiered in 1941 by the Palestine Orchestra, now the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra. It begins with an energetic fast movement, **Allegro energico**. Writing at the beginning of World War II with the Nazis on the march in Europe, Ben-Haim suggests the anxiety of the time with scurrying strings which are offset by low brass. One hears the influence of several German composers, including Mahler and film writers such as Max Steiner. In his program notes for the January 1941 premiere, Ben-Haim wrote, "It is self-evident that this work... is not free from the influence of contemporary events: the horrible terror of the forces of evil has certainly left its mark on my work." A lyrical

folksong informs the melodic framework of the poignant central movement, **Molto calmo e cantabile** (very calm, singing). According to Israeli musicologist Liran Gurkiewicz, Ben-Haim had arranged the Persian tune, "I will lift mine eyes to the mountains," for vocalist Bracha Zefira in 1940. Inclusion of the folk tune in his first symphony indicates the high regard the composer had for the traditional music of the region. The third movement, **Presto con fuoco**, is indeed "fast and fiery." Rhythm is the heart of this finale, beginning with the opening timpani solo. The heritage of the new Israeli nation is celebrated with folk dance rhythms. "By elevating a simple folk dance [the hora] to a sophisticated contrapuntal structure, Ben-Haim provided the early Yishuv (Jewish community in the Land of Israel, 1880s to 1948) with a symbol of heroic collective identity." [Liran Gurkiewicz, Israeli musicologist who wrote his Ph. D. dissertation on Ben-Haim]

DID YOU KNOW?

In tribute to the victims of the 7 October 2023 attacks on Israeli soil, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra led by Lahav Shani performed Symphonies 1 and 2 by Ben-Haim in Carnegie Hall

Edward Elgar (1857–1934) was born in a small town near Worcester, England, where his father tuned pianos and had a music shop. Young Elgar, who taught himself to play numerous instruments, had to quit school at fifteen to help the family, and his lack of formal education caused the musical establishment to dismiss him. Nevertheless, Elgar composed, conducted local music groups, taught violin and piano, and played organ at the Catholic Church. At age 22 he also became bandmaster for the "attendants' orchestra" at the

Worcester and County Lunatic Asylum, where he composed polkas for the patients' dances because the mental health administrators thought music might be therapeutic. His 1889 marriage to one of his students was discouraged by her family and frowned upon by the class-conscious British society; the two were of differing economic status and religions, and she was nine years his senior. Ten years later, however, Elgar's *Enigma Variations* finally brought him acclaim. In 1901 the first two of five *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* were written (No. 1 still widely performed today as a graduation procession-al), and three years later he was knighted by King Edward VII. (Lady Elgar had the last laugh.) The **Violin Concerto** was composed primarily in 1909–10, and Elgar conducted the November 1910 premiere with soloist Fritz Kreisler, to whom the work is dedicated. This is a long concerto requiring great technical skill, expressive interpretation, and especially stamina for both the physical and emotional challenges. The **Allegro** is in sonata form, starting with a lengthy orchestral exposition that presents three main themes, one of which is particularly haunting. When the soloist finally enters, it is not with the typical energetic allegro melody but rather a poignant and thoughtful mus-ing. This sets the pattern for much of the concerto with its episodic nature and extensive *rubato* (liberty with the tempo). A lilting, lyrical tune announces the **Andante** movement. Dialogues between the violinist and orchestra are deeply personal. This is such an emotional work, intimate throughout, not just in "the slow movement." **Allegro molto** begins playfully, and themes from the two earlier movements return. While the soloist highlights one of the first-movement themes, muted violins "thrum" (move 3–4 fingers gently over the strings) in the background. Another note-

worthy element is the uncommon “accompanied cadenza.” Concertos generally have a section in the first- and/or third movements in which the orchestra stops playing while the soloist exhibits his virtuosity. Here, Elgar never completely silences the orchestra while the violinist plays the cadenza. The concerto demands much from its listeners as well as its performers, but if you immerse yourself, you will find it richly satisfying.

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Dr. Akers has a Master of Music degree in Piano Performance from Indiana University and a Ph.D. in Historical Musicology from Florida State University

DID YOU KNOW?

Composer Edward Elgar received an honorary doctorate from Yale University in 1905.



With a celebrated career encompassing five decades, **Pinchas Zukerman** reigns as one of today's most sought after and versatile musicians – violin and viola soloist, conductor, and chamber musician. He is renowned as a virtuoso, admired for the expressive lyricism of his playing, singular beauty of tone, and impeccable musicianship, heard throughout his discography of over 100 albums for

which he has earned two Grammy® awards and 21 nominations.

In the 2026–2027 season, Pinchas Zukerman performs with the Berlin Philharmonic under Zubin Mehta, at the Tsinandali Festival under Gianandrea Noseda, and returns to Japan with the Tokyo Philharmonic, Mito Chamber Orchestra, and Miyazaki International Music Festival. He also appears with Zurich Chamber Orchestra, Sinfonia Varsovia in Warsaw and Katowice, Palm Beach Symphony under Gerard Schwarz, Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra, Verbier Festival Chamber Orchestra in China, Athens International Music Festival, and a special New Year's concert in Wuxi, China. Recitals with esteemed pianist Shai Wosner take him to Colorado, Connecticut, North Carolina, and New York. A South American tour includes trio performances, master classes and an orchestral appearance at Buenos Aires' Teatro Colón. Additional highlights include chamber performances with members of the Berlin Philharmonic, concerts celebrating the Israel Philharmonic's 90th Anniversary, and a performance of Strauss's *Don Quixote* with Amanda Forsyth and the Sofia Philharmonic.

Recent highlights include performances with the Vienna Philharmonic in Vienna and Paris, the Belgrade Philharmonic, the Israel Philharmonic with Lahav Shani, Colorado Symphony with Peter Oundjian, Orquestra de Valência, Euskadiko Orkestra, KG Philharmonic in Seoul, KNN Broadcasting Orchestra in Busan, the Hangzhou Philharmonic, and a tour of Japan with the ARK Philharmonic. Chamber highlights included recitals with pianist Shai Wosner in Philadelphia and San Francisco, appearances with the Zukerman Trio across the United States, performances with the Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, and a return

to the Rhode Island Philharmonic.

A devoted teacher and champion of young musicians, he has served as chair of the Pinchas Zukerman Performance Program at the Manhattan School of Music for over 30 years, and has taught at prominent institutions throughout the United Kingdom, Israel, China and Canada, among others. He served as the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's Artistic and Principal Education Partner from 2021–2024, collaborating with DSO in partnership with Southern Methodist University's Meadows School of the Arts to provide intensive coaching and tutoring sessions for its music students.

As a mentor he has inspired generations of young musicians who have achieved prominence in performing, teaching, and leading roles with music festivals around the globe. Mr. Zukerman has received honorary doctorates from Brown University, Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario, and the University of Calgary, as well as the National Medal of Arts from President Ronald Reagan. He is a recipient of the Isaac Stern Award for Artistic Excellence in Classical Music.