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The Elgar Society **Journal**



NOVEMBER 2004

Vol.13, No.6

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The Elgar Society Journal

1 Matthews Close, Aylesbury HP20 2UZ

Telephone & Fax: 01296 422367

Email: journal@elgar.org

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nor does the Elgar Society accept responsibility for such views.*

Front cover: Horse-play at Hasfield with Elgar in the role of Nanty Ewart, the colourful sea-captain in Walter Scott's novel Redgauntlet. Ernest Parkin traces the influence of literature in Elgar's life and music in his feature article.

Next page: Elgar in another pose as Nanty Ewart.

[Both photos courtesy of the Elgar Birthplace Museum]



Elgar and Literature

Ernest Parkin

A great deal of detailed and scholarly work has already been devoted to the role of literature in Elgar's life and music. This article, based on a recent branch presentation by the author, offers along with its own new insights an effective summary of Elgar's literary influences.

I plunge into my subject at its deep end in order to dispose of a controversy. In his *Portrait of Elgar* (second edition, p. 317), Michael Kennedy writes: '...Elgar was probably one of the most widely read men of his time, with a brilliantly retentive memory. The literary allusions and quotations in his Birmingham lectures would do credit to a professor of English literature.'

He writes this in the context of the article by Edward J. Dent, professor of music at Cambridge, published in German in Adler's *Handbuch der Musikgeschichte* (second edition, 1930), and is a riposte to a statement translated from that article to the effect that Elgar 'possessed little of the literary culture of Parry and Stanford'. Ever sensitive to such remarks, it became current when Elgar's morale was, for a cluster of reasons, at a particularly low ebb. Principal among these reasons was that he thought public interest in his music was in decline. The Dent article, with its meagre assessment of Elgar's output and its comment that it was 'over-emotional and not entirely free from vulgarity' (with the implication that neither was the composer) seemed to confirm the decline as fact. The critical artillery has rumbled ever since, rallying the pro-Elgar camp in support (Michael Kennedy among them) and emboldening the anti-Elgar camp in attack.

Although I would never agree that Dent was either fair or courteous in his article, the controversy has been aggravated unnecessarily by a confusion of German vocabulary. Brian Trowell, in his major contribution to the book of essays edited by Raymond Monk under the title *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature* (Scolar Press, 1993)—a book to which I am enormously indebted—points out that 'Bildung' not 'Kultur' is the word used in the German original, and 'Bildung' should be translated as 'instruction', 'schooling' or 'education'. That he lacked 'schooling' or 'education' Elgar himself admitted in his speech on 6 April 1931 when his friend from boyhood, Hubert Leicester, was made a freeman of Worcester:

What was done for us? Scarcely anything. Hubert Leicester and myself only had three years at a preparatory school. Think of that... I will tell you this: that on the whole of my musical and general education only £60 was spent... We must not forget that home influences were at work to make us, if I may say so, the men we are. Somehow we won through. That is owing simply to the home influence, not to any help from scholarships or anything like that, by simply having the desire to do as well as we could.

How that £60 was spent was itemized by Elgar, and Michael Kennedy prints the list on pages 24 and 25 of his book.

The truth is that Elgar was a model of self-education, with all the touchiness and vulnerability that often mark the self-educated. But no one should accuse him of lacking culture. In fact, he was an embodiment of it; so much so that he has become an expression of our national culture.

Now, two extracts to establish the lifelong relationship between Elgar and literature. The first comes from an interview by Robert Buckley, published on 31 July 1896 when the Elgars were living at 'Forli' in Malvern:

...the composer revealed himself as a book enthusiast... a haunter of the remoter shelves of the second-hand shop, with a leaning to the rich and rare. In the sitting room was a grand piano, in the study a smaller instrument, surrounded by books, and books, and more books...

Note the hints of Elgar's eccentric taste in 'the remoter shelves of the second-hand shop', and 'a leaning to the rich and rare'. This tendency to the eccentric is consistent with the reading habits of the self-taught, where choice and preference are not directed by academic tradition or institutional curriculum.

The second extract comes from a letter he wrote in 1932 to Frances Colvin, wife of Sir Sidney Colvin. The Colvins were the dedicatees of the Cello Concerto, and Sir Sidney, as well as being the biographer of Keats, was the friend of a whole gallery of nineteenth-century writers and poets which included Ruskin, Rossetti, Browning, Meredith, George Eliot, Henry James, Robert Louis Stevenson and Joseph Conrad.

When I write a big serious work e.g. *Gerontius* we have had to starve and go without fires for twelve months as a reward: this small effort [*So many true princesses*, a memorial ode to Queen Alexandra, words by John Masefield] allows me to buy scientific books I have yearned for and spend my time between the Coliseum and the old bookshops...

There is an echo in this letter of the familiar Elgarian cry of the burden of genius and its poor financial reward; also the escape books and other interests provided from his destiny in music. But literature was more than that. It could be a direct inspiration for his music, and furnish a commentary on the inner and outer events of his own life. There are four ways in which this can be observed:

1. In the texts he actually set, prominent among which is Newman's *The Dream of Gerontius*, and the New Testament oratorios (these constitute subjects in their own right, and I propose to make only passing reference to them);
2. In the quotations he applied to scores at the manuscript stage or their published form;
3. In the literary quotations that appear in Elgar's letters (and let me say here that I regard his letters as a contribution to our national literature in their own right);
4. In the texts he considered setting, but which for various reasons remained unrealized, works such as an opera based on Bunyan's *The Pilgrim's Progress*, and an opera for Chaliapin based on *King Lear*.

The texts in these categories have, generally speaking, this in common: they bear on the life and music in an autobiographical way. However, as mystery, enigma and ambiguity are characteristic of this artist, they can act obliquely as clues that part-reveal, part-conceal events of his inner life.

There is a more practical consideration I should mention: the musical opportunities available when Elgar was trying to make his name. Professionally, he graduated from the English provincial choral tradition. If orchestral music was his goal, it had to be attained through that tradition. This obviously exerted some pressure on his choice of subjects in the early years. On a more bread-and-butter level, salon pieces and part-songs were in demand and, where music publishers would balk at a symphony, they would buy a piece like *Salut d'amour* outright. A composer had to live.

There is no doubt how Elgar came by his interest in books and literature: it was nurtured by his mother. In 1905, when Elgar became a freeman of Worcester, he paid her this tribute: 'Many of the things which my mother told me I have tried to carry out in my music.' You recall how he stressed the importance of the home influence in the speech he gave when his friend Hubert Leicester was made a freeman.

His mother imbued him with a love of poetry, notably a love of the works of Longfellow. As an example of many similar literary threads running through Elgar's life, I would like to trace a chronology. There is his mother's copy of Longfellow's *Hyperion* (actually a prose work), which Elgar gave to his last muse, Vera

Hockman.

The hero of *Hyperion* is Paul Flemming who, like Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, embarks on a *wanderjahr* through Europe. The Elgars followed Paul Flemming's route on their Bavarian holidays in the 1890s. In 1894 they were in Innsbruck visiting the tomb of Maximilian I (1508–19). His tomb is surrounded by life-size figures, one of which is King Arthur.

Arthur acts as a leitmotif through the composition of the Second Symphony, the incidental music Elgar wrote for Binyon's play *Arthur* of 1923, and the sketches for the Third Symphony. He advertises, too, a connection with the works of Tennyson, whose first Arthurian poem, *The Lady of Shalott* was published in 1833, to be followed in 1842 by *Morte d'Arthur* and *Idylls of the King* (1859–85). His mother not only instilled a love of poetry, but of the romantic ideal of chivalry implicit in these works, and the novels of Sir Walter Scott. Elgar's interest in heraldry grew out of such influences, and manifested itself in the coats of arms he painted to line the billiards room at 'Severn House', Hampstead.

Linked to Walter Scott is Jean Froissart (c.1337–1410) whose chronicles of medieval knighthood feature in the notes Scott wrote to accompany *The Lay of the Last Minstrel* (1805). This absorption in a romantic conception of the Middle Ages, its chivalric code and its heraldry led to Elgar passing his first significant orchestral milestone, the *Froissart* overture of 1890. The score carries as its motto the line from Keats, 'When Chivalry lifted up her lance on high'.

Already it is apparent with Elgar how one interest grows out of another, and then merges with yet another—a pattern replicated in his music. The *Froissart* overture had a possible origin in Scott's novel *Old Mortality*, where, to quote Michael Kennedy, 'John Graham of Claverhouse speaks of his enthusiasm for Froissart's historical romances with their loyalty to kingship, pure faith towards religion, hardihood to the enemy, and fidelity to woman.' (*Portrait of Elgar*, p. 48)

Further confirmation of Elgar's fondness for Scott's novels is contained in his letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* dated 21 July 1921, where, in relation to Scott's use of Shakespeare, he refers to five of them: *Waverley*, *Ivanhoe*, *Kenilworth*, *St Ronan's Well* and *The Antiquary*.

During the Birmingham Festival of 1912, at which *The Music Makers* was premiered on 1 October, Elgar visited Kenilworth Castle twice, thus forging another personal link between a work of literature and an actual place. *The Music Makers* is a work of retrospection and self-quotation; it re-visits old themes in a questioning mood.

Scott's novels exerted an effect on Elgar in other ways. During the Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester in 1901 the Elgars were house guests at Hasfield Court, home of the Baker family. Here, Elgar played out an elaborate charade with the Baker boys, in which he assumed the role of Nanty Ewart, the roguish pirate in Scott's *Redgauntlet*. Letters and the camera commemorate this role (see p. 2). William Meath Baker, his host, is commemorated as 'W.M.B.', Variation IV of the *Enigma Variations*.

Dogs figure in Scott. There is the hound Roswal in *The Talisman*, and Bevis in *Woodstock*. In Elgar's life there is a canine line of succession from his first dog, Scap (Aesculapius) given to him by his Yorkshire friend, Dr Buck of Settle, down to Marco and Mina of the final years. Not to be forgotten in this canine roll-call is G. R. Sinclair's bulldog, Dan, immortalised in Variation XI of the *Enigma*. Dan's 'moods' were musically depicted by Elgar in Sinclair's visitors' book at Hereford and eventually found their way into *Gerontius*, *The Apostles* and *In the South*. This illustrates the migratory aspect of his themes, their ability to take wing and combine aptly with material far removed from their point of origin.

In general, there is a tendency for a literary source or association to act on Elgar's imagination in conjunction with a particular person and/or a particular place. Hence scores regularly record the places associated with their composition—Careggi, Venice and Tintagel in the case of the Second Symphony, for instance. It is the interaction of these elements—literary source, person, place—that produces his finest music. It also explains why his imagination is retrospective and mainly rueful; why the music has the habit of memory and constantly reminisces about itself. I refer these remarks to those who want to see Elgar's reliance on early sketchbooks as

a sign of flagging or absent inspiration. It is not proof of a spent creativity, but a reference back to the vital source of it.

The importance of a particular place, of books, and a particular person is movingly expressed in this letter of 13 November 1914 addressed to Alice Stuart-Wortley:

Yesterday I went to Worcester & had the joy of sitting in the old Library in the Cathedral amongst the MSS. I have often told you of the view down the river across to the hills just as the monks saw it and as I have seen it for so many years—it seems so curious dear, to feel that I played about among the tombs & in the cloisters when I cd scarcely walk & now the Deans and Canons show me everything new—alterations, discoveries &c &c. It is a sweet old place—especially to me, the library into which so few go. I will take you in one day...

The happy conjunction is there, together with the medieval and antiquarian atmosphere Elgar found so congenial, as Sir Walter Scott would doubtless have done.

Which reminds me: I left the Elgars in Innsbruck, following in the footsteps of Longfellow's hero Paul Flemming and visiting Maximilian's tomb in the Hofkirche. They remark the guardian figure of Arthur, and adjacent to him the figure of Charles the Bold, who features in Scott's novel *Quentin Durward*. Already the threads that comprise the life of that complex individual called Edward Elgar begin to unwind towards their end.

As a further comment on Elgar's reading habits, and endorsing what Buckley says in his 1896 interview, Robert Anderson in his *Elgar and Chivalry* (Elgar Editions, 2002) quotes Scott on those of Edward Waverley: '...he had read and stored in a memory of uncommon tenacity, much curious, though ill-arranged and miscellaneous information...' (p.67).

It is, however, undeniable that the love of Longfellow he inherited from his mother laid the foundation of his early career. One of the three songs of Op. 16 is *Rondel*, translated by Longfellow from *Froissart*. Op. 23, the part-song with orchestral accompaniment *Spanish Serenade* ('Stars of the summer night') is to words by Longfellow. Op. 24, *The Black Knight*, a symphony for chorus and orchestra, is from the German by A. H. Uhland translated by Longfellow. Incidentally, *The Black Knight* was Paul Flemming's favourite poem. Op. 30, the cantata *King Olaf* has a libretto taken from Longfellow's *Tales from a Wayside Inn*, and the same poet's *The Divine Tragedy* helped give form to *The Apostles*. Elgar adopted Longfellow's practice of combining in a single scene New Testament events that happened at a different time and place.

Next, I want to comment on a work of comparatively minor proportions, but of some significance to my theme. It was a work composed between two major masterpieces, *Gerontius* and *The Apostles: Dream Children*, Op. 43. These two sketches for orchestra are based on Charles Lamb's 'Reverie' of the same title in *Essays of Elia*. The piece is appropriate because it results from literary prompting and effectively demonstrates Elgar's musical procedure.

During the nineteenth century and the first decade of the twentieth, the number of works of literature with the child as hero or heroine multiplied: Jane Eyre, David Copperfield, Amy Dorrit, Jim Hawkins, Lewis Carroll's Alice, J. M. Barrie's Peter Pan. And it is possible to trace through this list a decline from a robustness of imagination to a progressive enfeeblement. This is contentious but has some relevance to Lamb's essay, and applies to a greater degree to a later collaboration of Elgar's which had a literary source, *The Starlight Express*. Those who wish to pursue the argument are recommended to read Peter Coveney's *The Image of Childhood* (Penguin Books, 1967).

Children, then, are the focus of Lamb's essay, and 'dream' children at that, i.e. ghosts. Their names are John and Alice. The resonance of the name Alice will not be lost on Elgarians: his wife's name; the name of Mrs Stuart Wortley. Thinly veiled behind the Alice of *Dream Children* is Helen Weaver, Elgar's lost love, who married in 1890 and had two children, a boy and a girl.

In Lamb's essay, his John and Alice are the children of 'Alice W—n', a girl once courted by Elia. Lamb writes:

...suddenly, turning to Alice, the soul of the first Alice looked out of her eyes with such a reality of re-presentation that I became in doubt which of them stood there before me, or whose bright hair was; and, while I stood gazing, both the children gradually grew fainter to my view, receding and still receding till nothing at last but two mournful features were seen in the uttermost distance, which, without speech, strangely impressed upon me the effects of speech: 'We are not of Alice, nor of thee, nor are we children at all. The children of Alice called Bartrum father. We are nothing; less than nothing, and dreams. We are only what might have been...'

What the children say as they fade into the distance is strongly reminiscent of Prospero's lines in Act IV, Scene i of *The Tempest*:

We are such stuff
As dreams are made on, and our little life
Is rounded with a sleep.

I shall return to parallels with *The Tempest* later.

In Lamb's narrative structure, the past and present tenses alternate and merge. Elgar incorporates this process in his musical structure. The music moves restlessly from major to minor, between keys as Lamb moves between tenses, and between fantasy and reality.

Recapitulation and re-statement are standard compositional techniques not exclusive to Elgar, but they are salient in his work. Themes return to be reflected upon as at the end of both movements of *Dream Children*. However, at the end of the second movement, only the final few measures of the theme are repeated in representation of Elia's vision of the receding children. The theme disintegrates as the vision disintegrates.

There is a deliberate 'dream' link between this work and *Falstaff*, Op. 68. In connection with the passage of that work dealing with Falstaff's boyhood as page to Sir Thomas Mowbray, Elgar writes:

This, a dream picture, is scored for small orchestra; simple in form and somewhat antiquated in mood, it suggests in its strong contrast to the immediately preceding riot, 'what might have been'.

'What might have been' is the predominant theme in Elgar, and Lamb's line in context with its four preceding lines is quoted at the beginning of the score of *Dream Children*.

The fact that Elgar is prone to recollection in his music, to musing and dreaming, is more than habit; it is a cast of mind, a key aesthetic, a creative principle. This couldn't be more evident than in *The Music Makers*, his setting of O'Shaughnessy's poem which begins:

We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;—
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

The poem has the title 'Ode', and this is the first of its nine stanzas. It is clear why Elgar chose to set it. It has a direct autobiographical address to him as a composer, and to one who as a boy sat alone by streams trying to note what the reeds were saying. Its conception of the artist's role is romantic and idealistic, in accord with Shelley's elevated view of poets as 'the unofficial legislators of mankind'. To O'Shaughnessy they are equally men of destiny, 'the movers and shakers of the world'. There is the sea imagery which permeates Op. 37 *Sea Pictures*, and provides another link with *The Tempest*.

On 3 August 1900, the day Elgar put the final note to the *Gerontius* score, Alice wrote to Mrs Kilburn, wife of Nicholas Kilburn, early northern champion of Elgar's work:

It seems to me that E. has given a real message of consolation to the world & that dread & terrors are soothed by the infinite sweetness & mercy which penetrates one's soul with intense emotion. I think human hearts will owe him a deep debt of gratitude. I cannot help writing this because I feel it so intensely & as if a new path opened out...

E. loves orchestrating here in the deep quiet hearing the 'sound of summer winds amidst the lofty pines'. I wish you and Mr Kilburn cd. see the lovely scenery here. It is a nice little cottage on the edge of woods.

The reference to 'lofty pines' is a quotation from the poem her husband had just set, and the place identified with its composition is 'Birchwood'. More of the lofty pines later, for the reason I selected this extract was to prove that Elgar felt his art had a mission to fulfil: to serve as 'a real message of consolation to the world', as Alice expressed it. Which explains why the completion of *The Music Makers* was attended not by a feeling of elation and accomplishment, but of depression and despair. He believed he had failed in that mission. Hence, when in 1932 Vera Hockman was presented with a copy of the vocal and piano score of *The Music Makers*, she opened it to find the last line of the poem underlined, 'A singer who sings no more'.

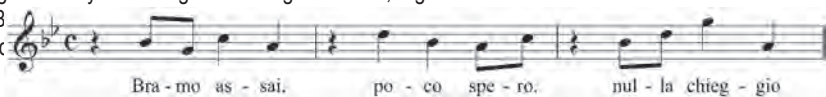
A published note on *The Music Makers* invokes another literary source. Elgar writes:

at the end of the full score of the Variations I wrote: 'Bramo assai, poco spero, nulla chieggio'; this was true in 1898 and might be written with equal truth at the end of this work in 1912, because it expressed when written my sense of the loneliness of the artist as described in the first six lines of O'Shaughnessy's Ode.

The quotation is from Torquato Tasso's *Gerusalemme Liberata*, Book II, Stanza 16 (1595), though Elgar changed it from third to first person. Translated, it means, 'I long for much, I hope for little, I ask nothing'. There is ambiguity attaching to the translation of 'Bramo', which can mean I 'desire', 'yearn for', 'essay', 'attempt'; and 'chieggio' which can mean 'demand'.

Brian Trowell, in his indispensable essay, 'Elgar's Use of Literature' in Raymond Monk's *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*, has examined the surviving drafts of Elgar's note on *The Music Makers* and made a revealing discovery. Referring to the 'Enigma' theme, Elgar first said: '...under this theme of the Variations I wrote, "B

But—anc



I draw your attention to the rising and falling sequences of notes so characteristic of Elgar's music. It has even been said, not too fancifully, that they trace the contours of the Malvern Hills. The *tenuto* in the second bar corresponds with the first syllable of 'poco'. This gives rise to the intriguing question: Is the unheard theme of the *Variations* verbal rather than musical? Not only verbal, but literary? Or is Elgar teasing us into more mystery and speculation?

While on the subject of the *Variations*, another Longfellow quotation was copied at the close of the full score of the revised coda—the revision was at Jaeger's insistence. It comes from *Elegiac Verse*, No. XIV, and is very apt. It runs, 'Great is the art of beginning, but greater the art is of ending'.

The programme note for the first performance of the *Variations* contains references to two one-act plays by the Belgian poet and dramatist, Maurice Maeterlinck, *The Intruder* and *The Seven Princesses*. In both of these the chief character, Death, never appears on stage. These are mentioned in support of the non-appearance of the principal theme in the *Variations*.

Jerrold Northrop Moore makes an interesting observation about the recurrence of keys in Elgar's work. Acting as part of his musical memory, his method of recall, the keys of G major and G minor tend to return at intervals of three years. Thus:

The Black Knight, Op. 25 (1893)
Organ Sonata in G, Op. 28 (1895)
Enigma Variations, Op. 36 (1899)
Dream Children, Op. 43 (1902)

Through the works so far examined, I think I have demonstrated what I claimed at the outset was Elgar's use of literature for the purpose of self-revelation and self-concealment. Through literary texts and allusions he communicates something he feels about himself or his art. Sometimes the allusion is an ironic counterpoint to what the music is expressing.

For example, on 12 November 1897 he obtained a copy of William Langland's *The Vision of Piers Plowman*, another 'dream' work, this one from the fourteenth century. He took to it immediately, having no difficulty identifying with the author, the poet/priest and poor man whose creation, Piers, dreamt his dream in Elgar's locality, and awoke from his dream, 'Metelees and monelees on Maluernes hulls'. Langland, like Elgar, is also fond of puns and linguistic games. The word 'meteleees' (without meat) is followed in the next line of the poem by the word 'meteles', meaning 'dream'.

In 1901, at the end of the full score of *Cockaigne* ('*In London Town*'), Elgar added the line from Langland. Unlike the good humour and optimism of the overture, Langland describes a fallen and corrupt London. It was, perhaps, this side of London that attracted Elgar to the idea of a *Cockaigne II* based on *The City of Dreadful Night* by the Victorian poet, atheist and dipsomaniac, James Thomson, a work considered in a period of disillusionment and never realized.

Before we leave Langland, I think his spirit and Elgar's unite in the love of place in this letter Elgar wrote to Ivor Atkins on 26 October 1914 from London:

If it is sunshiny just go round the W end (of the Cathedral) and look over the valley towards Malvern—bless my beloved country for me—and send me a pc saying you have done so.

From a medieval poet, let me move forward four centuries to a Romantic one, Shelley. Shelley, of course, supplied the motto for the Second Symphony, a work which also looks back: 'Rarely, rarely comest thou, / Spirit of Delight!' from *Song*. The lines establish the mood that prevails in this work.

Tennyson provides lines from *Maud* to illustrate the intentions of the third movement rondo:

Dead, long dead,
Long dead:
And my heart is a handful of dust,
And the wheels go over my head,
And my bones are shaken with pain,
For into a shallow grave they are thrust,
Only a yard beneath the street,
And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,
The hoofs of the horses beat,
Beat into my scalp and my brain...

These lines evoke suicide and madness, and madness was a subject which seems to have been much on Elgar's mind during the composition of the symphony. In a letter to Frances Colvin, written on 1 February 1911, he quoted more lines from Shelley:

I do but hide
Under these notes, like embers, every spark
of that which has consumed me.

In the second line, 'notes' replaces 'words' in the original. These three lines come from Shelley's poem, *Julian and Maddalo: a conversation*: 'Julian' is the name Shelley lends himself, and 'Count Maddalo' is Byron. They meet in Venice and travel the lagoon by gondola. In their conversation Julian maintains that man through his own free will and efforts can improve his lot without recourse to religion. Maddalo holds that man will always be subject to fate and circumstance. As an example of this he refers to a man he knows, cultured and sensitive, once wealthy but now mad. A man who was also a musician and idealist. The correspondences with Elgar's temperament are striking, aren't they?

Maddalo has had this man confined in a lunatic asylum on an island in the Venetian lagoon, the island of San Clemente. He and Julian visit him and find that, though his talk is disjointed and he harps on about the miseries he has suffered because of women, his music brings solace to the other inmates. More correspondences with Elgar insist on being noticed: the fact that Venice is the setting of the poem and is the source of musical allusions in the Second Symphony; the fact that while musical director at the Powick Asylum he had contact with the insane ('I fear my tunes did little to ameliorate the condition of the unfortunate inmates'); his fears for his own sanity during bouts of extreme depression. The conversation between Julian and Maddalo about free will versus fate must have reminded him of his religion's injunction against suicide when the moods of depression descended.

Although he is writing of the First Symphony, what Northrop Moore says about it applies with equal relevance to the Second: 'the symphony would succeed where *The Apostles* had failed for one reason: the symphony traced not some other story, but precisely his own.' (*A Creative Life*, p. 537)

The symphonies are, apparently, abstract music, yet so much of their content derives from an autobiographical source, as the quotations and allusions applied to them indicate. Elgar himself confirms this in a letter he wrote to the critic Ernest Newman on 4 November 1908:

As to the intention (of the First Symphony) I have no tangible poetical or other basis. I feel that unless a man sets out to depict or illustrate some definite thing, all music—absolute music I think it is called—must be (even if he does not know it himself) a reflex, or picture, or elucidation of his own life, or, at least, the music is necessarily coloured by the life.

Hence the music 'like something you hear down by the river' in the second movement of the First Symphony, and this recollection of the rondo of the Second Symphony in a letter to Alfred Lyttleton on 13 April 1911:

The Rondo was sketched on the Piazza of S. Mark, Venice. I took down the opening bars of some itinerant musicians who seemed to take grave satisfaction in the broken accents of the first four bars.

The Elgars were in Venice on Independence Day, 6 June 1909, and this event, too, is noted in the Second Symphony. Professor Sanford Terry, the musicologist, recalled:

I remember that in October (1910) it was in his mind to use in close context the present opening subject of the (Rondo) & slow movement, and he explained that they represented the contrast between the interior of St Mark's at Venice, & the sunlit and lively Piazza outside.

Consequently, Venice is one of the places named on the final score. Another is Tintagel, and this place gathers together several strands relevant to this essay. It unites person, association, literature and music.

Elgar visited Tintagel for two days in 1910 with Frank Schuster. They stayed with the Stuart-Wortleys, whose home was nearby. The weather was initially bad, but improved on the afternoon of the second day. 'The austere yet lyrical beauty of the Tintagel country showed itself to Sir Edward at last,' records Clare Stuart-Wortley, Alice's daughter.

The legendary association with the place is, of course, King Arthur, who attracts the theme of chivalry and the music of Wagner, which had so impressed Elgar in Bayreuth. *Tristan and Isolde* is the work specific to

Tintagel and Cornwall. Tristan, or Sir Tristram, King Mark, and Isolt are characters in the Arthurian cycle, and at the end of the last movement of the Second Symphony, Elgar pays Wagner homage with two chords evoking *Tristan* and Tintagel.

For his birthday in 1893, Alice gave her husband the vocal score of *Tristan*, and he wrote this inscription at the start of the Prelude:

This Book contains the Height,—the Depth,—the Breadth,—the Sweetness,—the Sorrow, the Best and the Whole of the Best of this World and the Next.

Compare that with this from a letter to Alfred Littleton on 13 April 1911 about the finale of the Second Symphony:

...the whole of the sorrow is smoothed out & ennobled in the last movement which ends in a calm & *I hope & intend* elevated mood.

Other nineteenth-century poets who were set by Elgar and who, besides Tennyson, took the Arthurian legends as their subject, include Matthew Arnold whose *Tristram and Iseult* appeared in 1852, Swinburne (*Tristram of Lyonesse*, 1882), and Laurence Binyon, whose summer holiday in Cornwall in 1899 produced *Tristram's End*. Here, a reminder that Elgar's collaboration with Binyon extends through three decades: the setting of Binyon's First World War poems in *The Spirit of England*, Op. 80 (1916), the incidental music for his play *Arthur* (1923), and the re-appearance of themes from this music in the sketches for the Third Symphony.

Returning to Shelley, his lyric *O Wild West Wind* provided the words for one of the part-songs in Elgar's Op. 53, and the poet's work also features in his list of unrealized projects. He made two attempts to set *Ozymandias*; the first in 1905 for bass; the second in 1917 for mezzo-soprano.

In 1928, in response to promptings by Ivor Atkins, Elgar proposed setting Shelley's atheistical *The Daemon of the World* and *Adonais* (his threnody for Keats, the genius abused by a callous world) for the 1929 Worcester Festival. Neither proposal met with the approval of the dean of the cathedral: 'Can Sir Edward not find some poem suitable?' was his exasperated question. No, was the reply.

The reason, in all probability, lies in his loss of idealism in these years and uncertainty over the motive and direction of his music. His choice of subjects on this occasion certainly reflects it. Contrast the mood of seventeen years earlier when he wrote to Alice Stuart-Wortley on 29 January, *à propos* the first movement of the Second Symphony:

I have recorded last year in the first movement to which I put the last note in the score a moment ago & I must tell you this: I have worked at fever heat & the thing is tremendous in energy.

This is Elgar full of inspirational fire and sure of his direction—super-charged, one might say—and, noting the cryptic reference to 'last year', isn't Alice Stuart-Wortley again his muse, in addition to Tintagel?

The creative limbo which could occur between major works explains to me his choice of two authors for a possible pantomime-ballet at Covent Garden: Boccaccio in 1902, replaced the following year by Rabelais. Is it conceivable that works based on *The Decameron* or *Gargantua and Pantagruel* could progress beyond the discussion stage? What did emerge in this genre was *The Sanguine Fan* (1917), based on themes recovered from the sketchbooks.

As I have said, inspiration lay in an ideal past, a past revived by some reminder in the present. Out of this combination might come a hope for the future; a hope on which to base affirmation and re-dedication. If not on this basis, then on what? Nihilism, despair, self-extinction?

Elgar's thoughts were drawn in this direction by Matthew Arnold's poetic drama, *Empedocles on Etna*. Empedocles, the philosopher, rejects the consolations of religion and philosophy, as well as the attempts of his companions, Pausanius the physician and Calicles the harper, to cheer him. Finally, he leaps into the crater of Mount Etna. The musician cannot dissuade the philosopher; his music lacks that power. The parallel with

Elgar's doubts about the redemptive power of his art, palpably expressed in *The Music Makers*, is unmistakable. Work on the setting of Arnold's drama did not progress, though music written for it followed the migratory route customary in his compositional practice. Fragments were reserved for the final part of the New Testament trilogy, then considered for a *Callicles* scena for Muriel Foster in 1913, and finally incorporated in the sketches for the Third Symphony.

I should say at this stage that composition for Elgar was a concurrent process rather than a consecutive one. It was also a prolonged process. Years elapsed between a work's gestation and its completion. For instance, *The Music Makers* was first contemplated in about 1903, then to be known as *The Dreamers*, but it wasn't completed until nine years later. Work on the New Testament oratorios was concurrent, as was work on the First Symphony and the *Introduction and Allegro for Strings*, the Violin Concerto and the Second Symphony, the chamber music and the Cello Concerto.

Sombre thoughts engendered by Matthew Arnold take me to a Pre-Raphaelite contemporary, Dante Gabriel Rossetti. In 1909, the year of Jaeger's death, Elgar set as Op. 57, Rossetti's *Go, Song of Mine*. This part-song, composed in Italy, is based on a translation of a poem by the medieval poet, Cavalcanti. Here is how it begins:

Dishevelled and in tears, go, song of mine,
To break the hardness of the heart of man:
Say how his life began
From dust, and in that dust doth sink supine:
Yet, say, the unerring spirit of grief shall guide
His soul, being purified,
To seek its Maker at the heavenly shrine.

These lines not only serve as an elegy for Jaeger, but epitomize the soul's journey of *Gerontius*. Another echo of the past.

Continuing in sombre vein on the subject of religion and suicide, I think it is illuminating to quote Elgar on that tormented character, Judas. This is from a letter to Canon Gorton, dated 17 July 1903:

To my mind *Judas'* crime & sin was *despair*... In these days, when every 'modern' person seems to think 'suicide' is the actual way out of everything my plan [for the trilogy], if explained, may do some good: I end Part I with 'Turn ye to the stronghold'—including 'Blessed is he who is not *fallen from his hope in the Lord*'. This has much point in connection with the subsequent Judas scene.

And contrast Judas's nihilism and despair with the basis for affirmation Elgar found in works prior to and following *The Apostles*. In the *Variations* that basis was friendship; in the First Symphony it was 'a wide experience of human life with a great charity (love) and a *massive* hope in the future'.

Before moving on, I must return to Matthew Arnold and his *Empedocles on Etna*. Callicles the harper sings of the beauty of the earth:

The sun
Is shining on the brilliant mountain crests,
And on the highest pines...

There is a corresponding allusion to pine trees in Newman's poem:

The sound is like the rushing of the wind—
The summer wind among the lofty pines.

These lines occur at the point of Gerontius' approach to God, and when Elgar set them they stirred a memory of

the pines in Spetchley Park which he could see through the window of the school where he was taught as a child by the Sisters of St Paul. Half a century later, returning as a distinguished composer to the school, he inscribed in the visitors' book that extract from the score, and wrote under it, 'In Spetchley Park 1869'.

A further connection is that Arnold and Newman were acquainted, and knew one another's work. Yet another, that Variation V of the *Enigma* is dedicated to 'R.P.A.', Matthew Arnold's son. Interlocking connections through the medium of literature abound.

Take this one, also relating to Newman's poem. General Gordon had a copy, which he had annotated, with him in Khartoum. He presented this copy to Frank Power, the *Times* correspondent. Through members of Power's family, this copy was sent to Newman. The outcome was a small edition of *The Dream of Gerontius* reproducing Gordon's annotations. Elgar owned a copy of this edition, and Gordon, one of Imperialism's martyrs, was in 1898 to have been the subject of the First Symphony, a work that was ten years in the making.

Appearing in the category of unrealized projects, is the Victorian poetess, Jean Ingelow. The poem for which she is best known, *The High Tide on the Coast of Lincolnshire, 1571* (published in 1863) was one that Elgar thought of setting in 1892, and he revived the idea on two occasions after this, in 1893 and 1901, as a possible work for the Norwich Festival. It was overtaken by *The Apostles*.

Two major Victorian authors who were the source of epigraphs and inscriptions on Elgar scores were John Ruskin and William Morris. Both wrote on social issues and, in contrast to Elgar's Conservatism in politics, can be considered left-wing; William Morris unquestionably was. Nevertheless, these lines from Morris's *The Earthly Paradise* appear on the full score of *The Apostles* (1903):

To what a heaven the earth might grow
If fear beneath the earth were laid,
If hope failed not, nor love decayed.

When Elgar finished the full score of *Gerontius* at Birchwood on 3 August 1900, he wrote this quotation from John Ruskin's *Sesame & Lilies* on the manuscript to confirm the completion of a masterpiece:

This is the best of me; for the rest, I ate, and drank, and slept, loved and hated, like another; my life was as a vapour, and is not; but this I saw and knew; this, if anything of mine is worth your memory.

The quotation is familiar enough, but is it fully understood? What it says is that the outer, mundane existence is the illusion, offering only occasional glimpses of the ideal world beyond appearances. Vision and revelation, artistic and spiritual, arise from within and set the dreamer apart. Elgar was such a man, granted his own vision, and not at ease in everyday reality. In this regard, he is the counterpart of Longfellow's Paul Flemming in *Hyperion*, of whom Longfellow writes:

Imagination was the ruling power of his mind. His thoughts were twin-born; the thought itself, and its figurative semblance in the outer world. Thus, through the still waters of his soul each image floated double, 'swan and shadow'.

Before I leave the subject of epigraphs on scores, let me deal with the one that appears on the Violin Concerto. It is as well-known as the Ruskin one on *Gerontius*, and it comes from Alain René Le Sage's novel *Gil Blas*. It is given in Spanish—actually, Castilian—and is followed by the enigmatic five dots: 'Aquí esta encerrada el alma de.....' signifying... who? Might I venture a solution to add to those already extant, and in doing so give the quotation its full context?

It is to be found in Le Sage's address to the Reader, and is accompanied by a moral tale:

Before reading the history of my life, listen, friendly reader, to a tale I am about to tell thee. Two students are travelling together from Pennafiel to Salamanca. Being thirsty and fatigued, they sat down by a spring they met with on the road. There, while they rested themselves, after having quenched their thirst, they perceived, by chance,

near them, upon a stone that lay even with the surface of the earth, some letters, already half effaced by time, and by the feet of flocks that came to water at the fountain. They threw water over the stone and washed it, and then read these words in the Castilian tongue: *Aquí esta encerrada el alma del Licenciado Pedro Garcias*: 'Here is interred the soul of Licenciate Peter Garcias'. The younger of the two students, being lively and thoughtless, had not quite finished this inscription, before he cried with a loud laugh, 'A good joke: here is interred the soul—a soul interred: I should like to know what original has been capable of writing this ridiculous epitaph.' So saying, he rose to go away.

His companion, more judicious, said to himself, 'There is certainly some mystery in this affair: I will stay here in order to un-riddle it.' He allowed the other to depart therefore, and then, without loss of time, he began to dig with his knife all around the stone. He succeeded so well that he raised it up, and found beneath a leather purse, containing a hundred ducats, and a card, on which was written the following in Latin, 'Thou who hast had wit enough to discover the meaning of the inscription, inherit the money, and make better use of it than I have.' The student rejoiced at his good fortune, replaced the stone in its former situation, and resumed his route to Salamanca with the soul of the licentiate. Whoever thou art, friendly reader, thou art to resemble one or other of these two students. If thou perusest my adventures without perceiving the moral instructions they contain, thou wilt reap no harvest from thy labour, but if thou readeest with attention, thou wilt find in them, according to the precept of Horace, profit mingled with pleasure.

So what do the five dots stand for? In such an intensely emotional work, whose soul is enshrined? Is it that of Helen Weaver, Elgar himself, or 'Windflower', Alice Stuart-Wortley? The current consensus plumps for the latter. But couldn't Elgar, playful, tongue-in-cheek, maybe even cynically, have meant the dots to stand in lieu of the word 'money'? It is consistent with the moral of Le Sage's tale, and Elgar complained constantly about how little financial return, compared with the mental and emotional investment, he derived from his works. The motto is a clue consciously veiled in mystery and ambiguity. It may be that Elgar simply used it and divorced it completely from its context. One thing I'm sure we can agree on is that it points to the treasure buried within the work. For that it doesn't need to be related to its literary context.

In 1899, during the Boer War, Elgar suggested to Sir Walter Parratt, then Master of the Queen's Music, that he (Elgar) set Rudyard Kipling's Diamond Jubilee poem, *Recessional*, which begins:

God of our fathers, known of old,
Lord of our far-flung battle-line,
Beneath whose awful Hand we hold
Dominion over palm and pine—
Lord God of Hosts, be with us yet,
Lest we forget—lest we forget!

Parratt urged him to do it, 'and soon... This is the psychological moment,' he wrote, '—the end of the century and we hope the end of the war.'

To those more prejudiced than perceptive about Elgar's patriotic music, it might seem an inevitability that the Empire's laureate should be set by the Empire's bandmaster, except that it didn't happen. What did happen, two years later, was the first two of the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, No. 1 in D major and No. 2 in A minor. Of the one in D major, Elgar wrote to Jaeger in high excitement on 12 January 1901, 'Gosh: man I've got a tune in my head'. He had. When Benson's words were added, one might say it out-Kiplinged Kipling. *Land of Hope and Glory* is the alternative national anthem, and the set of six marches, Op. 39, carries this motto from Lord de Tabley:

Like a proud music that draws men on to die
Madly upon the spears in martial ecstasy.
A measure that sets heaven in their veins
And iron in their hands,

I hear the Nation march
Beneath her ensign as an eagle's wing;
O'er shield and targe
The banners of my faith most gaily swing,
Moving to victory with solemn noise...

As a contrast to these sentiments, the title, *Pomp and Circumstance* is taken from Act III, Scene iii of *Othello*:

Farewell the tranquil mind; farewell content!
Farewell the plumed troop and the big wars
That make ambition virtue! O, farewell!
Farewell the neighing steed, and the shrill trump,
The spirit-stirring drum, the ear-piercing fife,
The royal banner, and all quality,
Pride, pomp, and circumstance of glorious war!

Turning from these patriotic pieces, I will now survey, briefly, his music for the theatre. Here one finds an Irish connection. In 1901, he wrote the incidental music for a play produced at the Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. It was *Grania and Diarmid* by W. B. Yeats and George Moore. As the first of the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches coincided with a new phase of British nationalism, so this play, based on Irish legend, coincided with an upsurge of Irish nationalism in politics and art known as the Celtic Revival. Elgar's music is haunting and of a gossamer beauty. George Moore was so enthusiastic about it that for years he importuned the composer to write a full-scale opera based on the Grania subject. Not until 1914 did he finally give up trying to persuade Elgar.

The Irish connection ends with the development, from 1929 on, of Elgar's friendship with George Bernard Shaw. Shaw was approached in Elgar's quest for an opera subject, but rejected the idea of his plays being set by saying 'they were music already'—verbal music.

Elgar made a very late start on the composition of an opera, but his intention to write one dates back to at least 1897. In 1909, while on holiday in Careggi, he began a new sketchbook with the title, 'Opera in 3 Acts'. The opera, however, failed to materialise at that time, though, as was usual with Elgar, sketches made for it went into hibernation and emerged at a later date in other works. Meanwhile, he sought a libretto. Shaw turned him down. Others considered as possible librettists were W. S. Gilbert, Laurence Housman (younger brother of the poet A. E. Housman), Laurence Binyon (pre-*Arthur*), and Thomas Hardy. Sir Sidney Colvin proposed *The Return of the Native*, *The Trumpet-Major*, and the 'One Hundred Days' section of *The Dynasts* as operatic subjects. Elgar's own choice at one stage was Maurice Hewlett's *The Forest Lovers*, but this fell as a contender because he couldn't work with the owner of the dramatic rights.

An opera based on Shakespeare's Forest of Arden comedy *As You Like It* presented a congenial option, and there is a sketch in existence marked 'Touchstone', and that is all. The Shakespeare subject that was realized was not operatic or dramatic, but orchestral, Op. 68, the symphonic study *Falstaff*, based on the two parts of *Henry IV*.

I have saved our greatest writer till last because I am convinced that the relationship between him and our greatest composer is closer than a single work—albeit a major one—and a solitary sketch suggests. Yes, there are Shakespeare quotations in the usual places. The line spoken by Lear in the storm, 'Child Rowland to the dark tower came', appears in one of the sketchbooks to indicate Elgar's mood at that moment; Hamlet's dying words, 'The rest is silence', are added at the end of a short sketch in 1904 which, three years later, developed into the First Symphony—the 'silence' then being broken. There is the allusion to Ophelia and Helen Weaver in the piece, *Rosemary* ('That's for remembrance'), first published in 1882 as *Douce pensée* and revised in 1915 under the new title.

Again, in 1903, when ideas were evolving for the First Symphony, a line from Sonnet 66 is written at the top

of a new full sheet of music paper, to signify, perhaps, so far and no farther: 'Art made tongue-tied by authority'.

In 1924, the music he composed for the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley, included a song, *Shakespeare's Kingdom*, a setting of words by the poet Alfred Noyes. Of this, he wrote to Alice Stuart-Wortley on 10 January:

I have composed five things this week—one about 'Shakespeare' you will love it when I shew it to you: slight and silly.

There was no opera on *King Lear* to rival *Boris Godunov* for Chaliapin. I like to think that Elgar heeded his own advice in this respect, that 'it is better to set the best second-rate poetry to music, for the most immortal verse is music already'.

Notwithstanding his refusal to act as Elgar's librettist, the friendship with Shaw grew; it grew mainly through the medium of the Malvern Festival, founded by Barry Jackson for the production of Shaw's plays. Incidentally, Variation VII of the *Enigma*, Troyte Griffith, designed sets in 1907 for the London productions of two Shaw plays, *You Never Can Tell* and *The Devil's Disciple*—another link in the chain that binds music, friendship and literature.

In spite of their being at opposite poles politically, there was genuine admiration for Elgar on Shaw's part and, unusually for him, humility. We are all indebted to Shaw, of course, for it was his advocacy which led to the BBC commissioning the Third Symphony and thereby re-igniting the composer's creative flame.

At the same time, Elgar was working on the long-delayed opera, *The Spanish Lady*, based on Ben Jonson's play *The Devil is an Ass*. The librettist was Barry Jackson, so although the opera was unfinished at Elgar's death, here was another outcome of the Malvern Festival.

The importance of the incidental music to Binyon's play *King Arthur* (produced at the Old Vic in 1923) has already been stated. Besides the Third Symphony sketches, themes from it feature in Op. 87 *The Severn Suite*. The titles of some of the movements in this late work, 'Worcester Castle', 'Tournament' and 'Cathedral' recall the *Froissart* Overture, his interest in chivalry, and perennial associations with beloved places.

In 1928, he wrote incidental music for a play produced in Birmingham, written by Bertram P. Matthews on the life of Beau Brummel. A minuet survives as an Elgar miniature, but the rest of the score is lost.

By far his most substantial and committed score for the theatre was undoubtedly the one he wrote for Op. 78 *The Starlight Express*, produced at the Kingsway Theatre, London in 1915. Algernon Blackwood's book *A Prisoner in Fairyland* was the basis of the play which, I have to say, is in the Peter Pan vein. J. M. Barrie's work as a whole displays how vital imagination can degenerate to bloodless whimsy, and retrospection to morbid day-dreaming. (In addition to the Peter Coveney book I mentioned earlier, I recommend the essay on this theme by Michael Allis, 'Elgar and the Art of Retrospective Narrative' listed in the bibliography.)

What lifts *The Starlight Express* out of the category of total escapist whimsy and lends it distinction and interest is Elgar's music. It is closely related to the two *Wand of Youth* suites, from which some of its themes come; and the themes from those suites, too, have their origin in the *Wand of Youth* play the Elgar children wrote in 1869 in an attempt to reconcile dissonant parents to the childhood vision of a happy and harmonious world.

The first dated music Elgar wrote was, 'Humoreske, a tune from Broadheath 1867', when he was nine or ten. It can be said that 'Broadheath' remained a state of mind all his life, and there is an essay to be written on the various manifestations of the 'Broadheath' tune in the mature works. I take my leave of *The Starlight Express* with a quotation from Act III. The lines are spoken by Daddy, and Elgar would surely have identified with them because they express that childhood vision:

The source of our life is hid with Beauty very, very far away. Our real continuous life is spiritual. The bodily life uses what it can bring over from this enormous under running sea of universal consciousness where we are all together, splend, free, untamed; where thinking is creation, and where we see and know each other face to face.

In leaving the incidental music for the theatre, I give a wave of parting to Rudyard Kipling, whose *The Fringes of the Fleet* Elgar set in 1916, and successfully toured the following year with four baritones suitably costumed. Charles Mott, one of these baritones, who had sung the role of the Organ-grinder in *The Starlight Express*, died of wounds on the Western Front in May 1917. Those who see only the jingoist in Elgar should study his statements on the First World War in his letters. He was appalled to the depth of his being by the senseless slaughter, and the death of his friend Mott made it immediate and personal to him.

The evidence that Elgar loved the English language is there in his letters, and it follows that to love the language is to love its master-exponent, Shakespeare. I believe that discussing the relationship between Elgar and Shakespeare is like studying icebergs: more lies beneath than shows on the surface. There is definitely more to it than *Falstaff* and the quotations I have listed. As with all things essential to Elgar, it was an interest that was kindled early.

There was the influence of Ned Spiers, the handyman who worked for Elgar's father. How I would have liked to interview Ned Spiers! He had been a stage carpenter and possibly an actor with repertory companies. He used to declaim speeches from the plays to the Elgar children.

Then there was a Mrs Macready, who made periodic visits to Worcester during Elgar's childhood to give Shakespeare readings. These occasions and personalities would register on Elgar's receptive and retentive memory.

In adult life, he was a regular visitor to the Memorial Theatre in Stratford and saw many of its productions: *Troilus and Cressida* in 1915, for instance; *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *Richard III*, *Henry IV (Part I)* and *Julius Caesar* in 1928 when he was living at Tiddington House in Stratford. He also saw Granville Barker's controversial production of *The Winter's Tale* at the Royal Court in 1912.

So knowledgeable about the text was he that he criticised the actor playing Autolycus for delivering the line referring to 'troll-my-dames' with a winking leer as though it alluded to something obscene instead of a board game. Jaeger found himself, at one stage, cast as a Shakespeare character. In the letters he is addressed as 'Corporal Nym'.

There is, I submit, an even closer kinship between these two Englishmen. Both are leading exponents in their respective fields. Both are inseparable from particular parts of England, and those parts happen to be adjacent: Warwickshire and Worcestershire. Both are associated with particular places in those counties: Stratford and the Forest of Arden in Shakespeare's case; Broadheath, Worcester and the Malvern Hills in Elgar's. Significantly, they shared the same religion, and were set apart because of it. Shakespeare's family on his mother's side (the Ardens) suffered persecution and death for their alleged involvement in a popish plot: Edward Arden was hanged, drawn and quartered in 1584, and Shakespeare was driven under cover following the event. Elgar's experience did not reach this extreme, though he did have to endure class prejudice and social ostracism because of his Catholicism.

What else did the two men have in common? Clearly, a love of nature and the English countryside, together with a deep feeling for the past—especially the Middle Ages. And, because it is such a key element in the plays, they shared a common interest in music. The concurrence of imagery between *The Tempest* and the poems set in *Sea Pictures* could not have escaped one so aware of analogies as Elgar.

I have already drawn the comparison between Prospero's Act IV speech and Charles Lamb's *Dream Children*; now compare:

Full fathom five thy father lies;
Of his bones are coral made;
Those are pearls that were his eyes:
Nothing of him that doth fade,
But doth suffer a sea-change

Into something rich and strange.
Sea-nymphs hourly ring his knell:
Hark! Now I hear them,—Ding-dong, bell.

'Ariel's Song', from *The Tempest*, Act I, Scene ii, lines 396–405

The deeps have music soft and low
When winds awake the airy spy,
It lures me, lures me on to go
And see the land where corals lie.

from 'Where Corals Lie'

If Elgar isn't quoting Shakespeare directly, I am convinced that he is indirectly, through Richard Garnett.

For me, the speech in *The Tempest*, where Shakespeare and Elgar meet, is arguably the most moving in the play, and it is spoken by the monster Caliban:

Be not afeard; the isle is full of noises,
Sounds, and sweet airs, that give delight, and hurt not.
Sometimes a thousand twangling instruments
Will hum about mine ears; and sometimes voices,
That, if I then had waked after long sleep,
Will make me sleep again; and then, in dreaming,
The clouds, methought, would open, and show riches
Ready to drop upon me, that, when I waked,
I cried to dream again.

Act III, Scene ii, lines 140–8

The music of the island affects and transforms the monster. Through its power, Caliban is made human. The lines enact the magical process of transformation in which 'dreaming' plays a leading part. 'Noises' are changed into 'sounds and sweet airs' which 'give delight and hurt not'. Doesn't Elgar's music affect us in the same way?

I set next to these lines from *The Tempest* these words of Elgar's taken from the 1905 interview by J. R. Buckley, who I began by quoting at the outset of this journey:

My idea is that there is music in the air, music all around us, the world is full of it and you simply take as much as you require.

For Elgar, as a child, the past was an ideal world which the magic of books and music could unlock. It was a belief that life was to test severely. Nevertheless, on 13 December 1921, with his great works accomplished, he could write to Sidney Colvin, his friend and Sussex neighbour:

I am still at heart the dreamy child who used to be found in the reeds by the Severn side with a sheet of paper trying to fix the sounds & longing for something very great—source, texture & all else unknown. I am still looking for this...

Elgar's words are often as memorable as his music. So, with that as my cue, I conclude with this extract from a preface Elgar wrote to a collection of children's piano pieces. It illustrates my theme, 'Elgar and Literature', and its variations perfectly:

Long ago, when I was a very little boy, smaller than you even, I used to be taken to play on an old piano, in an old house, in an old close, near an old cathedral, to two old ladies...

The drawing room was lined with books, books, books, all leather-bound and faded... all were faded a soft golden brown, as was the piano. When Broadwood sent it by long & weary road fifty years before, its mahogany had surely been a rich red: but time had shaded all the tints to one mellow tone—& I played in a golden-brown room.

The music was old-world too... And as I played the old people looked very happy—I did not know why. I think now the music turned aside their faded lives, & roseate youth... then came up before them transiently. Music has done this magic to many.

And now I am not young. And sometimes, when wearied with great works by greater men than those whose pieces form this book, I play these formal things endeared to me by memories of the gentlest & courtliest of mortals. Long years since, at the opening of the old books, I saw the coloured ribbon still brightly where it had been most hidden. So when I hear these pieces, I forget to be grey & feel most of my heart's best feelings.

I repeat, isn't that the effect Elgar's music has upon us?

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ERNEST PARKIN has been a member of the Elgar Society since 2002, but a lover of Elgar's music since childhood. At the age of seventeen he joined the Writer Branch of the Royal Navy and served until his thirtieth birthday. He left the Navy to take an English degree as a mature student at Wadham College, and taught in further education after qualifying as a teacher.

Early retirement has allowed him to dedicate himself to writing full-time. After early success with BBC Radio, Ernest has written for television, stage and various magazines and periodicals. He has also scripted and directed four films for his local cine club. Researching this article has enabled him to combine three passions: for writing, for literature, and for Elgar's music.

More Sounds that Elgar Heard: a composer, nature and the human condition

Catherine Moody

Continuing her series of illustrated articles exploring the sights and sounds which provided the background to composition during Elgar's residency in Malvern, the author takes us to the environs of Birchwood, where the Elgars kept their country retreat. A long-time Malvern resident herself, Catherine once again includes a number of her own works as illustrations; these, along with those used in her previous article, will be exhibited at the Elgar Birthplace Museum during the course of 2005.

Looking for hints and clues of what it would have been like for Edward Elgar living in Malvern and finding the sounds and sights that made up the background at 'Saetermo' and 'Forli'—the first two houses of Alice and Edward—I now stray to Birchwood Lodge, the rustic retreat north of the Malvern Hills.

The bird hovering high above 'Forli', the house of Edward Elgar when his career as a composer was burgeoning, could turn its eye towards the steep slopes of the NorthHill, perhaps the most dramatic profile of the Malvern Hills. Silhouetted on this profile was a public house—'The Redan'. A 'redan' is a simple form of fortification having two faces which form a salient. The Crimean War—*The Charge of the Light Brigade*—made the Redan of





Above: The Redan, North Malvern (charcoal drawing by the author). Built to reproduce the Redan of Sebastopol soon after the Crimean War. The fortress-like position on the steepest part of the North Hill meant that it had two storeys on the top road and descended three storeys to its back exit on Old Hollow. Icy weather meant that sixty-foot icicles formed from the gutters and were seen by Derrick Tudge with a rainbow effect when the sun shone. It has now been demolished. Alice Elgar must have been aware of its military connotation when travelling past it to 'Birchwood'.

Previous page: Clouds Study: June (pastel by the author, reproduced by kind permission of A. S. Byatt and Peter Duffy). The warm westerly winds coming across Wales make the clouds climb the slopes of the Malvern Hills. They push through their gaps and round the end of the North Hill. Meeting the cool eastern mass of heavier air, they continue to climb over it. In doing so, the clouds sometimes go into contortions of somersaults which we can watch from Malvern town. This one has come over the Wyche Cutting, sailing over Elgar's house, 'Craeg Lea'.

Sebastopol famous. This reproduction of the position of the fortification must have been the reason for the placing of the building and its name, a conclusion drawn by Earl Beauchamp when I was making researches at Madresfield Court.

The situation would have struck a familiar chord with Alice Elgar, daughter of Major-General Henry Gee Roberts of the Army of India, who was described by Sir Charles Napier as 'the best officer in the Bombay Army... capable of commanding any army in the field'. She would have known the conditions of battle in the mountains of the north-west frontier of India.

Alice would also have known that she would be a near neighbour of a man decorated for his part in the Crimean War with the Sebastopol Medal. Old soldiers returning from the Crimea would have been intrigued to find that entering 'The Redan' on the West Malvern Road it seemed to be a two-storey building, but to reach the back exit you had to descend three more storeys to come out on Cowleigh Bank. From Old Hollow and Cowleigh Woods you would be on the way to Leigh and 'Birchwood'.

At Storridge there was a cottage near by Birchwood Hall. It was sometimes known as Birchwood Lodge or Cottage or Farm. The Elgars kept this rustic retreat from about 1897 until 1903 when they moved from their Malvern house to 'Plas Gwyn' in Hereford, and the knighthood then conferred upon Edward meant a new phase was opening in his life.

The bird hovering above 'Forli' might have seen the Elgar family in a pony trap or landau, or one of the other vehicles for hire at Link Top, making their way to 'Birchwood'. In the school holidays in 1897 Carice, their young daughter, was set the task of weeding the garden of Birchwood Lodge. Addressed by her father as 'my man', she was employed with many cautions and finally remunerated with kisses. One can imagine the relief for Elgar of this escape from term-time music teaching, the short journey effected. Scores of private schools were cropping up in Malvern. Small as they were, the structure of petty rules and order marks was there with the constant promotion of the upper-class image in manners and accent on the part of headmasters and headmistresses.

As well as the family expeditions to 'Birchwood', Edward would have made his way by bicycle, for it was in the lanes by Birchwood Hall that Henry Brace Little, squire of the Birchwood estate, taught Elgar to ride a bicycle (pictured in *Elgar the Cyclist* by Kevin Allen).

Whilst his Malvern home was 'Forli' he would have pushed his bike a few steps down Laburnum Walk to the Newtown Engineering Works where Mr H. J. Burston would have done all that was needed to keep his bicycle in good working order. Mr Burston, who had invented the tricycle, the 'Malvern Leader', was an ingenious engineer whose engineering works was situated at the end of Laburnum Walk where Newtown Road leads from Worcester Road. Elgar's interest in these new inventions was as lively as his love of the rural and country life.

A photograph of Birchwood Lodge in the 1900s shows Alice by the porch and Edward by one of the four windows of the cottage's cheerful-looking front where the sash windows are wide open and the curtains blowing in the breeze (see over).

The Son of a Tradesman

When Edward asked for the hand of Alice in marriage, we are told that her family was outraged at this presumption. The starchy snobbery of the ancient and military family made them feel it was a disgrace for Alice to make an alliance with a 'tradesman'. Class distinction was certainly a powerful factor in those days, but was it the whole story? Has it become something of a cliché that records an automatic reaction? Their marriage took place on 9 May 1889 at Brompton Oratory, London.

I feel there were other factors involved, and a complexity which must have needed to be solved. 'Birchwood' may have played a part in enabling Alice and Edward to find answers to some of them.

The range of the Malvern Hills, so conspicuous from the Severn Vale, diminishes to lower undulations, to



Edward and Alice Elgar at Birchwood Lodge. Travelling past 'The Redan', Edward and Alice with their schoolgirl daughter Carice came to this rural retreat at Storridge, north of the Malvern Hills.

[Courtesy of the Elgar Birthplace Museum]

the north in Cowleigh, Birchwood, Storridge and Leigh, and to the south in the Ragged Stone and Holly Bush Hills of Redmarley d'Abitot.

Alice, born in India, spent her youth at 'Hazeldeine' in Redmarley, a country seat built in 1825. It was bought by Major-General Roberts in 1850 for his retirement.

Neighbouring country seats and manor houses were to be found in Pendock, Redmarley and Staunton; 'Haffield', designed by Smirke, the architect of Eastnor Castle, was on the Ledbury side.

Almost unidentified, perhaps as it is on the borders of Gloucestershire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire, it still escapes notice. This remote rural region seems to have nurtured a powerful intellectual life.

It's Too Late Now

The assertion of social distinction on the part of Alice's aunts, based on their historical status, was probably an unthinking reaction to a refusal on the part of Edward to adapt himself to manners he would have considered affected.

When he came to live quite near to 'Forli' in 1934, the episode was recounted of how Elgar had responded when a neighbour who had ignored him and habitually 'cut him dead' in chance meetings, on hearing the news

of Elgar's knighthood had congratulated him effusively when they next passed on the pavement. Elgar's response had been—'As you could not speak to me before, it's too late now.' That kind of upper-class snobbishness was preserved in aspic for half a century in Malvern. Decades later than the Elgar episode, we had first-hand experience of it. When we came to live here, our neighbour 'cut us dead'. We had no live-in or uniformed maid, and so we did not exist and could not be acknowledged.

However, the rules were not infallible. The social fences did not exclude us from those families for whom art had meaning. Our neighbours on the other side decided that I, the author, being of the right age, should be 'brought out' and introduced into Society. Those experiences give me, retrospectively, a taste of that upper-class snobbishness that would have been the mindless reaction of Alice Roberts' family circle.

The Aristocracy of Craftsmanship

Edward Elgar might have been labelled 'the son of a tradesman', but the exclusive individuals would have been quite blind to another aspect. Edward's father was a violin-maker and a highly skilled craftsman, something that would have been recognised elsewhere, and this presents another facet of this difficult passage.

In the Cotswolds, there was a respect for craftsmanship (coming from Stroud, we found the situation was very different in Malvern). The outlook fostered by William Morris was alive. The Guild of Handicrafts in Chipping

Elgar Brothers: Music Warehouse. Edward Elgar, born 1857, was about seven years old when this full-page advertisement appeared in Cross's Hand Book to Malvern. On the opposite page was the advertisement for Malvern College, '...founded in the model of the great Public Schools... for the education of the Sons of Gentlemen'. Elgar grew up with a wide knowledge of the musical world and the creation of music. These two pages indicate how education was beginning to take the place of the water cure early in Edward's life.

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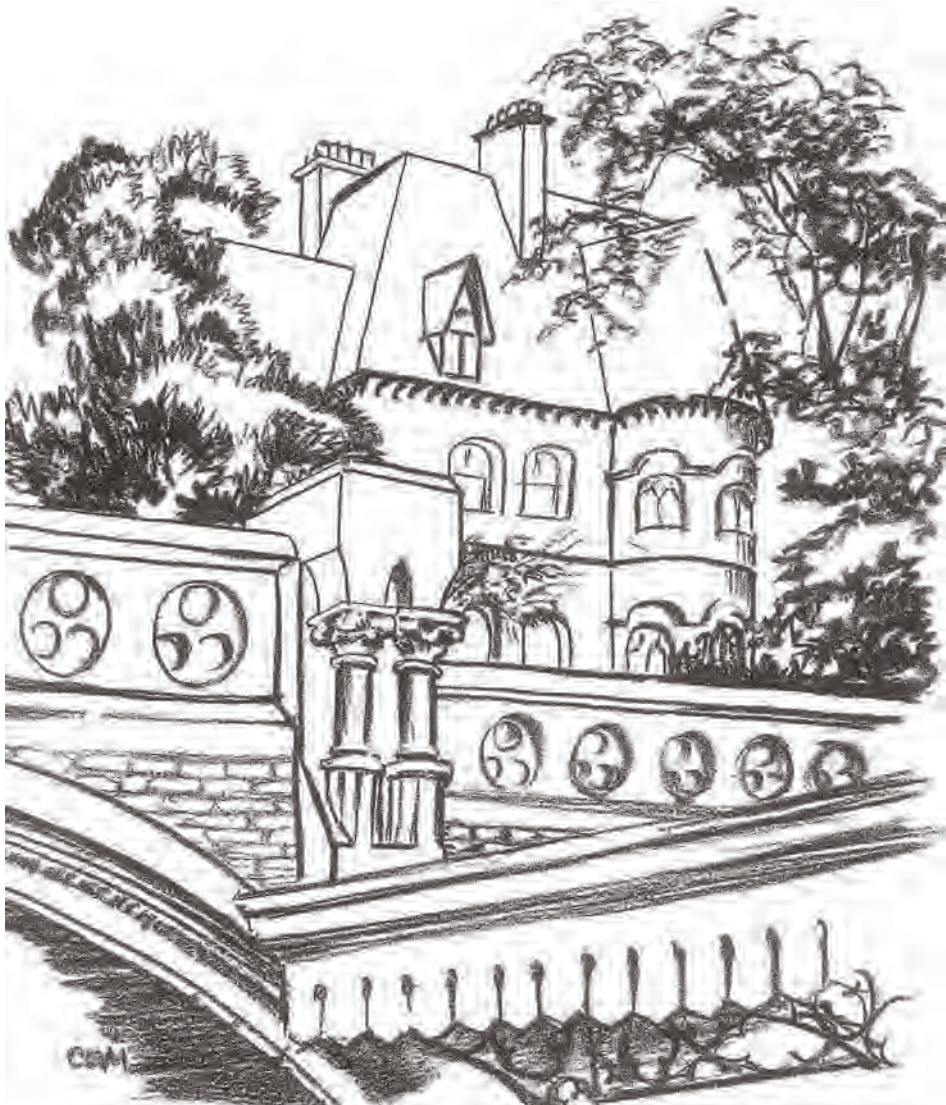
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Great Malvern Station (pen drawing by the author). In the 1860s the railway line reached Malvern where the most imaginatively designed station was built to bring trainloads of water cure patients to the town. The climax of arrival was achieved with a triumph of Gothic ironwork, a fine bridge over the line, a baronial pile of hotel buildings, and the graceful Avenue Road. It was the work of the architect E. W. Elmslie and was instigated by Dr Gully. As the water cure fashion faded and education took its place, music lessons produced a slender source of remuneration for Elgar. He was exasperated by the tardiness with which composition was recompensed. The railway itself must have been a lifeline to connect him to the wider musical world.

Campden was founded by C. R. Ashbee; Gimson and Peter Waals were making furniture in Chalford. The families of Henry Payne, Sir William Rothenstein and his circle with Charles Gere RA all promoted a philosophy derived from the Morris belief in the importance and value of craftsmanship—a philosophy that was conspicuous by its absence here in Malvern. In the Cotswolds, Elgar's father would have had his place in the aristocracy of craftsmanship.

Whilst Elgar was being taught to ride a bicycle in the lanes of Birchwood, bicycle riding was the subject of Marjorie Butler's pen on the east of the Severn Vale (see over); living in Tetbury, she was trained under Henry Tonks at the Slade School, and in Paris where she was a fellow student of Augustus John.

More sights and sounds for Elgar

Elgar reached the heights in musical composition through the freedom of his positive mind taking the whole of nature and the human condition for his subject. Malvern may have driven him to think of calling it 'the benighted paradise', but south of the hills at Redmarley d'Abiot and north at Birchwood there seems to be a source of this phenomenal richness, and we will follow him there in a third installment.

CATHERINE OLIVE MOODY was initiated at a very early age to the scientific approach to art of the Renaissance tradition. With an exhibition scholarship to the Royal College of Art she continued the study which had begun at Malvern School of Art with her father V. H. Moody. Craftsmanship and listening to music led to her interest—as an inhabitant of Malvern—in Edward and Alice Elgar. Catherine Moody paints, draws and writes on art, design and architecture.



Martha cycled all day on a Bun (pen and watercolour drawing from the sketchbook of Marjorie Butler of Tetbury, Gloucestershire, done in 1898—the time when Elgar was learning to ride a bike at 'Birchwood'—and reproduced by kind permission of Mrs Anne Harker). Marjorie Butler was part of the artistic movement, so active in the Cotswolds. In Malvern this was absent, but at Madresfield Court the remarkable flowering of Pre-Raphaelite design was to happen. The bridal gift to Earl Beauchamp from his countess was the mural decoration of Madresfield Court chapel. Henry Payne, Charles Gere RA and the youthful Henry Rushbury came over from the Cotswolds to produce a mural painting of grace and distinction, which seemed to arise from the festive atmosphere there. Earl Beauchamp's sister, Lady Mary Lygon, was an enthusiastic promoter of the Music Festivals movement.

Elgar's 'Enigma': the solution?

Andrew Moodie

The author argues that the theme of Elgar's Enigma Variations originates in a cipher which is manipulated in various ways to produce the rich melodic material of the composer's most widely discussed orchestral work.

In August 1971 Geoffrey Poole published an article in *Music and Musicians* ('Questioning the Enigma', pp. 26–9) offering a new solution to the theme of Elgar's *Enigma Variations*. I was at the time an undergraduate at university and attempted a solution of my own based on Mr Poole's theory in which the letters of Elgar's wife's name form a basis for the melody of the theme.

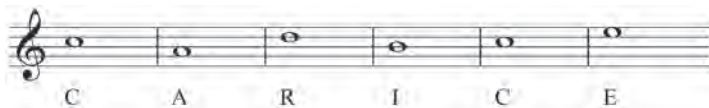
My theory was that Elgar had indeed used his wife's name Caroline Alice, though in the cryptic form 'Carice', the name given to Elgar's daughter derived from his wife's Christian names. It struck me that it might be worth looking at the possibility of using the letters of the word 'Carice' as the origin of the theme. My first thoughts concerned only the first two bars of the theme, though I have recently tried to prove how the other bars of the 'Enigma' theme might also be linked in the same way.

Elgar, as well as being interested in word puzzles (as has been well documented elsewhere), was also something of a tease, and many of the comments made in the latter part of his life concerning the origin of the 'Enigma' theme were possibly no more than red herrings. One suggestion was that the theme is a counterpoint to a well-known melody; this was hinted at by Elgar and has been a source of discussion over the years. But this could have been nothing more than a cover-up for the actual solution, to throw people off the scent: we have no hard evidence to prove or disprove the 'hidden' melody. Did Elgar actually mean that he was hiding the origin of the melody in some other way?

The idea of enciphering one's name in musical notation has been used by such composers as Bach, Schumann and Shostakovich, and there are many others who have hidden their musical 'signature' in a similar way. The use of a simple grid is all that is needed to translate the eighth to the twenty-sixth letters of the alphabet into the 'musical' first seven letters. Elgar knew this system and could have used it for the 'Enigma' theme:

| | | | | | | |
|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|----------|
| A | B | C | D | E | F | G |
| H | I | J | K | L | M | N |
| O | P | Q | R | S | T | U |
| V | W | X | Y | Z | | |

By the third decade of the twentieth century Schönberg was writing in a serial style in which every note could be justified in a numerical order according to the twelve-note system. Elgar's 'Enigma' theme is hardly likely to have been generated in such an exacting manner, though there is no doubt in my mind that the cipher was the way in which the theme was developed. Since 'Carice' is in itself a cryptogram of Elgar's wife's names, it seemed a good idea to start with that as the possible basis for the theme. 'Carice' enciphered using the grid above produces CADBCE:



By taking letters 1 to 4 of 'Carice' (CADB) and combining with a two-quaver/two-crotchet pattern, the first bar of the 'Enigma' theme is created:



The next bar of the theme is a retrograde of letters 3, 4, 5 and 6 of 'Carice' (ECBD). The rhythm of bar 1 is also reversed in bar 2:



At this point I felt that the generation of the first two bars from 'Carice' looked promising. In the published score the key of the piece is G minor, which means that the theme is transposed down a tone from my proposed original. Was Elgar transposing the theme into a preferred key for his orchestral score, or trying to disguise the relatively simple generation of the theme? My original theory now needed a further link to 'Carice'. I found it in bars 3 and 5. Bar 3 uses the notes CEAB, which are letters 5, 6, 2 and 4 of 'Carice':



Bar 5 is a retrograde of bar 3: the notes BAEC are letters 4, 2, 6 and 5 of 'Carice':



The middle section of the theme (bars 7 to 10 of the orchestral score) begins with a single-bar motif, this time developed from letters 4, 1(or 5), 3, 6, 2 and 6 of 'Carice'. All the letters of 'Carice' and no others are used in bar 7; the E appears twice and the C once. Is this too much of a coincidence to be anything other than intentional?



The remaining three bars of the middle section (bars 8, 9 and 10) are an ascending sequence. Elgar may have moved the key down a tone to disguise the theme at the opening; in the middle section he has used the

notes of 'Carice' at concert pitch, but by giving the phrase to the transposing clarinet in B flat the derivation is also disguised in bar 7. Bar 6 uses the notes 1(or 5), 2, 4 and 2 of 'Carice' (CABA):



Returning to the first section of the theme, bar 4 contains a G which cannot be derived from the notes CADBCE of 'Carice' without some reorganisation. An inversion of CADBCE gives ACGBAC, and the notes 3, 5, 4 and 6 of this inversion produce the notes GABC of bar 4. Although I doubt that Elgar would have gone to these lengths, this is a possible solution for bar 4:



However it is more likely that Elgar simply took the falling minor 7th of bar 3, repeated it as a falling sequence in the first two notes of bar 4, then made the last two notes of the bar into a retrograde of the first two notes of bar 5:



It is important to remember that Elgar was aiming to produce a satisfactory tonal-sounding melody, so some artistic licence would be required in the interpretation of his source material. However, bars 1 and 2, and bars 3 and 5 surely offer a clue as to how his mind was working in conceiving the theme.

In conclusion, this solution uses a simple idea to generate the theme from the 'Carice' motif which also fits with all that we know about Elgar's fascination with cryptograms. I therefore present it as a possible solution to the origin of the 'Enigma' theme.

ANDREW MOODIE is director of music at Northamptonshire Grammar School and education team leader (Midlands and East Anglia) for the Royal School of Church Music.

Elgar's 'Enigma': a Shakespearian solution

Edmund M. Green

The clearest evidence of Elgar's deep love for and detailed knowledge of the works of Shakespeare is his 1913 Symphonic Study, Falstaff, and later his learned letter to the Times Literary Supplement in 1921 on Shakespearian references in the novels of Walter Scott. But could the enigmatic Bard of Avon cast a shadow elsewhere in the works of Elgar, and perhaps offer a clue to the most celebrated Elgarian mystery of all, the identity of the 'Enigma'?

I have always wondered what would have happened if Richard Strauss had not disclosed the subject matter of his variations for orchestra *Don Quixote*, but instead had written for the programme notes for the first performance, 'through and over the whole set [of variations] another and larger theme "goes", but is not played... So the principal Theme never appears, even as in some late dramas... the chief character is never on the stage.' If that had been the case, I wonder if almost everyone trying to solve the problem during the last 105 years would have looked for a solution based on the theory that the 'larger theme' was a counterpoint on a well-known melody. That, I believe, is what has happened in the case of Elgar's 'Enigma'. No one seems to have reasoned that Elgar's description of the 'larger theme' that 'goes' through and over the *Enigma Variations* describes exactly how Cervantes' *Don Quixote* 'goes' through and over Strauss's variations. If they had, they might have come to the conclusion that the larger theme that 'goes' with Elgar's *Variations* is also a literary theme. This solution, based on the Sonnets of William Shakespeare, is the first to suggest that the solution to both parts of the 'Enigma' are to be found in one work of literature. More specifically, I suggest that the 'larger theme that "goes", but is not played' is Shakespeare's sixty-sixth Sonnet and that the word 'Enigma' stands for the real name of the dark lady who is found in Sonnets 127 through 152.

It is curious that no one has ever suggested an all-literary solution of the 'Enigma' before. I have read almost all of the biographies of Elgar, and everything else I could find on the subject of the *Variations*, and have not found a single reference to a solution in which the 'larger theme that "goes" but is not played' is a literary theme. It is curious because the only references to themes, in either the score or the programme notes to the first performance of the *Variations*, are three literary themes. In the programme notes, written by Elgar for the first performance, are two plays by Maurice Maeterlinck used as an analogy of the 'larger theme that "goes" but is not played'. In the score of the *Variations* is the reference to Nimrod, the 'mighty hunter' of Genesis 10: 8–12, and at the end of the score is the quotation from Tasso's *Jerusalem Liberated*. At no other time did Elgar leave any clue as to the nature of the larger theme.

Further, in support of a literary solution, there were, at the time of composition of the *Variations*, contemporary examples of variations for orchestra based on literary themes. For example, D'Indy's *Ishtar Variations* based on an ancient Babylonian poem was written in 1897, and Richard Strauss's *Don Quixote* based on Cervantes' novel was written in 1898. Nonetheless, despite these well-known examples, no one has ever suggested that Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, written shortly thereafter, was also based on a literary theme.

These examples of variations for orchestra based on literary themes are instructive because Elgar's description of the larger theme in the programme notes is a perfect example of how a literary theme actually 'goes' with a set of variations. For example, Cervantes' *Don Quixote* 'goes through' Strauss's variations

because each variation describes an episode in the book. It goes 'over' the variations because there are more episodes in the book than there are in the variations. The book is far longer, or 'larger' than the variations, and the book is read, not 'played'.

In contrast to all the evidence pointing to a literary solution, there is absolutely nothing in the score, the programme notes, or in contemporary music at the time the *Variations* were written, that would lead one to believe that they were based on any other type of theme. Nonetheless, the great majority of solutions to date have been based on the theory that the original theme is a counterpoint on a hidden melody. These solutions are invariably based on the statement made in 1905 by Robert J. Buckley on pages 54 to 55 of his biography *Sir Edward Elgar* that, 'The theme is a counterpoint on some well-known melody which is never heard.' Another example often cited in support of the counterpoint solution theory, is the one made by Mrs Richard Powell who wrote on page 119 of her memoir *Edward Elgar: memories of a variation*, 'Elgar made it perfectly clear to us when the *Variations* were being written that the Enigma was concerned with a tune, and the notion that it could be anything other than a tune is relatively modern.'

The principal problem with both Buckley's and Powell's statements is that they are unattributed. Neither one quotes Elgar saying that the larger theme is a counterpoint on a melody, and neither one says that he told them that is was. In fact, for all her certainty that 'the Enigma was concerned with a tune', Mrs Powell admits on page 119 of her memoir, "'It.' Yes; we always spoke of the hidden matter as "it", never as a tune or theme.'

Although Buckley quotes Elgar repeatedly throughout his biography, he neither quotes Elgar as saying that the theme is a counterpoint on some well-known melody, nor does he say that Elgar told him it was. If Elgar had told Buckley, surely Buckley would have said so. The case for the theory that Elgar must have told Buckley is further weakened by the fact that there is no record of him telling anyone else. Why would he tell Buckley and then for the remainder of his life refuse to tell Mrs Powell or anyone else? Further, the argument that Elgar must have told Buckley or Buckley wouldn't have made the statement is illogical given the statements of Mrs Powell. We know that Powell's statement was not based on anything Elgar said to her because she said they 'always spoke of the hidden matter as "it", never as a tune or theme.' Therefore, by the same reasoning, it is probable that Buckley's statement was not based on anything Elgar said to him either, and, of course, Buckley never said that Elgar told him that the *Variations* were based on a melody.

In fact, there is no record of Elgar telling anyone the nature of the larger theme. The only comment Elgar ever made regarding the nature of the larger theme was that he was not going to tell. On page 53 of his biography *Elgar*, W. H. Reed writes that near the end of Elgar's life he asked him, 'if it was really based on another tune', and Reed writes, 'He only said, with the well-known twinkle in his eye: "Ah, that's telling!"' The fact is that no one knows the nature of the 'larger' theme. It may be musical, literary, biographical, geographical or any one of the small set of themes to which programme music is set. The principal argument against a counterpoint solution is that no one has found it in over 105 years despite the fact that it is, as Elgar told Troyte, 'so well known it is extraordinary no one has spotted it'. In my opinion, the reason no one has spotted it is that it doesn't exist. I suggest that given the references to literary themes in the score and the programme notes, and the existence of other sets of variations based on literary themes, there is good reason to believe that Elgar's 'larger' theme is literary, and there is no reason to believe it is anything else.

The chain of inferences leading to the conclusion that the larger theme is in Shakespeare's Sonnets is straightforward and starts with the meaning of the word 'Enigma'. The inference that the word 'Enigma' stands for the identity of a person is a simple exercise in induction by simple enumeration, and a number of Elgarians have reached the same conclusion. Suppose there is a book with a preface and fourteen chapters. If the subtitle of each chapter is a quotation from Shakespeare and the preface has the subtitle 'Enigma', it is logical to infer that the subtitle 'Enigma' is also a quotation from Shakespeare. Similarly, if the subtitle of each variation stands for the identity of a person and the subtitle to the original theme is 'Enigma,' it is logical to infer that the word 'Enigma' also stands for the identity of a person.

As everyone interested in the problem knows, Elgar's statement for the programme notes to the first

performance said, in part, 'The Enigma I will not explain—its "dark saying" must be left unguessed.' It follows that if the word 'Enigma' stands for the identity of a person, then that person is probably, in some sense, associated with the word 'dark'. There is one well-known person whose name is always associated with the word 'dark' and that is the dark lady of the Sonnets. Further, the real name of the dark lady is literally an enigma. Therefore, a literal solution of the first part of the problem is that the word 'Enigma' stands for the real name of the dark lady of the Sonnets.

If the word 'Enigma', used as a sub-title to the original theme, stands for the real name of the dark lady of the Sonnets, then it is reasonable to infer that the 'larger theme that "goes" but is not played' might also be found in Shakespeare's Sonnets. Perhaps it is no coincidence that there are fourteen variations and fourteen lines in a sonnet. Perhaps the identity of the larger theme is one or more of the Sonnets and there is a correlation between the Sonnets and Elgar's friends pictured in the *Variations*. The only authoritative description of Elgar's friends pictured in the *Variations* was written by the composer and published in the book, *My Friends Pictured Within* (Novello, 1949). Keeping in mind Elgar's descriptions, I started to read the Sonnets one by one. When I reached Sonnet 66, I was startled to see what appeared to be a correlation between certain words in each line of the sonnet and Elgar's description of each of the friends pictured in the *Variations* as described in *My Friends Pictured Within*. The sonnet, with the lines numbered for convenience, reads:

Tired with all these for restful death I cry,
 As to behold desert a beggar born,
 And needy nothing trimmed in jollity,
 And purest faith unhappily forsworn,
 And gilded honour shamefully misplaced, 5
 And maiden virtue rudely strumpeted,
 And right perfection wrongfully disgraced,
 And strength by limping sway disabled,
 And art made tongue-tied by authority,
 And folly, doctor-like, controlling skill, 10
 And simple truth miscalled simplicity,
 And captive good attending captain ill.
 Tir'd with all these, from these would I be gone,
 Save that to die, I leave my love alone.

It was immediately obvious that the ninth line, 'And art made tongue-tied by authority', suggested Variation X, 'Dorabella', which is literally 'art made tongue-tied'. As one writer put it, 'Miss Penny stuttered; so does the music.' We know that Elgar knew Sonnet 66 because he used the ninth line as a preface to preliminary sketches he made for the E flat Symphony in 1903. On page 422 of his *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, Jerrold Northrop Moore writes, 'A line from one of Shakespeare's sonnets came to his mind: '...Art made tongue-tied by authority.' (It was from Sonnet 66, beginning 'Tir'd with all these, for restful death I cry'.) Atop a new full sheet of music paper he wrote 'Art made tongue-tied by authority', and developed the ensemble in short score.' It was this line in the sonnet that prompted Elgar's remark to Mrs Powell, quoted on page 119 of her *Memories of a Variation*, that 'I thought you of all people would have guessed it'. The words 'tongue-tied' would have been far more obvious to Mrs Powell than anyone else because, as she wrote on page 112 of her memoir, 'I stammered rather badly at times when I was young.'

It was then that I realized that a few words in each line of the sonnet, without regard for the real meaning of the line, suggested all of Elgar's friends pictured in the *Variations* as described in *My Friends Pictured Within*. The correlation between particular words in each line and Elgar's description of his friends, starting with the second line of the sonnet and Variation II, is as follows:

| | | |
|-----------------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 'behold desert' | 'chromatic beyond H.D.S.-P.'s liking' | |
| 'trimmed in jollity' | 'presentation of an old man in some amateur theatricals' | |
| 'unhappily forsworn' | 'hurriedly left the music-room with | an inadvertent bang of the door' |
| 'gilded honour' | 'Matthew Arnold' | |
| 'maiden' | 'lady' | |
| 'right perfection' | 'architect' | |
| 'right perfection' | 'an eighteenth-century house' | |
| 'strength' | 'Nimrod' | |
| 'tongue-tied' | 'Dorabella' | |
| 'doctor' | 'Mus. D.' | |
| 'truth' | 'scientific and artistic attainments' | |
| 'captain' | 'sea voyage' | |
| 'Tired with all these, from | 'written at a time when friends | |
| these would I be gone' | were dubious and generally discouraging' | |
| 'my love' | 'Reference is made to Var. I (C.A.E.)' | |

The following is a more detailed description of the correlation between the sonnet and *My Friends Pictured Within*.

2. 'As to behold desert', in the sense of receiving one's reward or punishment, is Elgar's description in *My Friends Pictured Within (MFPW)* of writing Variation II, 'chromatic beyond H.D.S.-P.'s liking';
3. 'trimmed in jollity', as in wearing a costume or makeup, corresponds to Elgar's statement in *MFPW* that, 'The Variation has a reference to R.B.T.'s presentation of an old man in some amateur theatricals';
4. 'unhappily forsworn' corresponds to Elgar's description of the day when W.M.B. 'hurriedly left the music-room with an inadvertent bang of the door';
5. 'gilded honour' is in consonance with Elgar's description in *MFPW* of Richard P. Arnold as the 'son of Matthew Arnold', famed poet, critic and educator;
6. 'maiden' in line 6 of the sonnet corresponds with Elgar's description in *MFPW* of Ysobel as 'a Malvern lady';
7. 'right perfection', refers to Elgar's description of Troyte in Variation VII as 'A well-known architect', and his statement in *MFPW* that Variation VIII (W.N.) was 'really suggested by an eighteenth-century house'; (Both friends are described in terms of architecture. He used the words 'right perfection' to suggest an architect in Variation VII, and architecture in Variation VIII. Elgar, who was superstitious about the number thirteen, based two variations on one line in the sonnet to increase the total number of variations from thirteen to fourteen.)
8. 'strength' in line 8 of the sonnet is the principal attribute of Nimrod (Variation IX), the 'mighty hunter' of Genesis 10: 8-12;
9. 'art made tongue-tied' in line 9 of the sonnet is a perfect description of Variation X which pictures Dorabella's youthful stutter;
10. 'doctor-like' in line 10 of the sonnet corresponds with Elgar's description of George Robertson Sinclair as 'Mus. D.';
11. 'truth', in the sense of the 'body of true statements and propositions' (Merriam-Webster Dictionary), refers to Elgar's description of B.G.N.'s 'scientific and artistic attainments';

12. 'captain', as in captain of a ship, corresponds to Elgar's description in Variation XIII as 'on a sea voyage';
13. 'Tired with all these, from these I would be gone' corresponds to Elgar's description in *MFPW* of Variation XIV being 'written at a time when friends were dubious and generally discouraging as to the composer's musical future';
14. 'my love', in line 14 of the sonnet corresponds to Elgar's statement in *MFPW* that in Variation XIV 'reference is made to Variation I (C.A.E.)'.

This solution explains why Elgar never revealed the identity of the larger theme. Basing the *Variations* on a sonnet that begins, 'Tired with all these' may have been considered an innocent practical joke in the year he wrote the *Variations*, but as Elgar's fame grew exponentially, its disclosure would have become increasingly embarrassing. Elgar's motivation for the practical joke is explained by his statement in *My Friends Pictured Within* that the *Variations* were 'written at a time when friends were dubious and generally discouraging as to the composer's musical future'. At first glance it is difficult to understand this statement because there is no doubt that many of his friends were very helpful in promoting his career. However, Elgar expressed doubts about his friends as early as 1890 just after the completion of *Froissart*. In a letter to Frank Webb, quoted in part on page 37 of Michael Kennedy's *The Life of Elgar*, Elgar wrote, 'I do not think it will be liked. I find in my limited experience that one's own friends are the people to be most in dread of.' Elgar's statement about his friends in 1890 is consistent with his description in *My Friends Pictured Within* that his friends were dubious and discouraging as to his musical future. Elgar's statements about his friends may seem to us to be untrue, but there is no doubt that he believed them to be true, and it is important to observe the distinction.

This solution also explains why Elgar wrote of Variation I that, 'The variation is really a prolongation of the theme', indicating that C.A.E. was not a variation for the purpose of the practical joke and, therefore, was not one of the friends he was 'tired of'. Finally, this solution also explains why Elgar, for the first time, decided to call Jaeger 'Nimrod': he needed a correlation with line eight of the sonnet whose subject is 'strength', and Nimrod is described in the Bible as 'mighty'.

It seems to me that this solution is entirely in character. It is a practical joke and Elgar loved to play practical jokes (japes!). It is based on an association of words and, as anyone who has ever read his letters knows, Elgar loved word games. It is based on the Sonnets of Shakespeare, and Shakespeare was Elgar's favourite author. This solution also explains why Elgar never revealed the solution, why he wrote that Variation I is 'really a prolongation of the theme', why he decided for the first time to call Jaeger 'Nimrod', and why Miss Penny, of all persons, should have guessed 'it'.

I suggest that in *My Friends Pictured Within* Elgar left the clues necessary to identify the larger theme, and that he described the 'idiosyncrasies' of his friends to coincide with words in the lines of Shakespeare's Sonnet 66. The *Enigma Variations* is a musical sonnet that Elgar wrote and dedicated to his friends pictured within.

EDMUND M. GREEN graduated from the University of California at Berkeley in 1952, became a certified (chartered) accountant and is a partner in his own accounting firm in San Francisco. He had an extensive musical education and has attended both the San Francisco Symphony and the San Francisco Opera continuously for almost sixty years. His great admiration of Elgar's music is undoubtedly the result of first hearing the Enigma Variations conducted by Pierre Monteux.

Elgar's 'Enigma': a decryption?

Stephen Pickett

The author suggests Elgar's 'hidden theme' has little to do with the musical theme—a setting of the quotation attributed to Tasso found at the end of the manuscript score—upon which the Enigma Variations, Op. 36 are based. The 'hidden theme which goes', he postulates, is an acrostic joining the names or initials found at the head of each of the fourteen variations in a crossword puzzle arrangement which spells out RULE<SP>BRITANNIA.

For 102 years since the introduction of Elgar's *Variations on an Original Theme*, Op. 36, when the composer let it be known that 'another and larger theme "goes" but is not played', musicologists and puzzlers have struggled to find the 'larger theme'. The final piece of the puzzle came to me only recently when, in an effort to understand and to place in perspective my own proposed solution, I read for the first time of Professor Brian Trowell's brilliant insight, namely that Elgar's misquotation of Tasso—'Bramo assai, poco spero, nulla chieggio'—(placed at the conclusion of the manuscript) is the inspiration for the melody of the main theme which Elgar himself called 'Enigma'. I will not invoke extensive discussion from elsewhere about Elgar's various struggles and possible emotional involvements which make the text appropriate as a self-portrait of the composer. The only purpose in mentioning this is to point out that, except for the possibility of traces in the actual music of *Rule Britannia* (composed by Thomas Arne in 1740), we need look no further than Elgar's postscript (dated a year earlier in 1898) for an assignment of the main 'Enigma' melody (note that I avoid the use of the word 'theme') upon which the variations are based. A moment's study reveals that, regardless of the mangling of the quotation itself, its melancholy and dramatic intent not only fit the metre but also the mood of the words; this in turn reinforces Elgar's contention that the 'larger theme' is simply of no importance as a *musical theme*:



What then could be the connection between the variations?

When I originally read Patrick Turner's fascinating account of the creation of 'Enigma' (*Elgar's 'Enigma' Variations: a centenary celebration* published in 1999) and all that has transpired since by way of attempted solutions, the following very odd comments stood out:

1. Rosa Burley said, 'I'm not a variation; I'm the theme' (from Kennedy's *Portrait of Elgar*, p. 96).
2. As late as 1923 Troyte Griffith asked Elgar if the tune was *God Save the King*—Elgar replied, 'Of course not... but it is extraordinary that no-one has spotted it'; and to Dorabella, 'it is so well-known that it is extraordinary no-one has found it'.
3. The incident with Troyte and the stamp paper when Elgar numbered certain piano keys and told him that he would hear the theme if they were played in order (see Turner, p. 48).
4. Elgar wrote to Jaeger around the time of composition, 'you are Nimrod' (Kennedy, p. 81).

5. In a subsequent letter Elgar wrote, 'The pretty Lady is on the sea & far away...' (Turner, p. 67).

All of these five points, taken with Elgar's comment that the theme is not audible, suggest that there is some connection other than directly through the music. And yet the connection appears to be a popular song (see the second comment above). How can this be?

To attempt to solve the puzzle I simply copied out the table of variation names (mostly initials) from the beginning of Turner's book and looked for patterns. The first thing that is clear is there is no significance in the first letters that might indicate a conventional acrostic; there are far too many consonants to make anything intelligible. But what if the connection was the *name* of a song which could be derived from the variation names, choosing one letter per variation?

It is clear from the evidence that Jaeger knew the true solution, so comments 4 and 5 should be taken in the context of Elgar explaining to Jaeger (as confidante) how the names fitted the solution. I will return to these later.

The most convincing case for the identity of the hidden theme seems to me to be that made by Theodore Van Houten ("You of all people": Elgar's *Enigma*', *Music Review*, vol. 37, no. 2 (1976), pp. 130–42), although at the time I read his account I had already noticed some resemblance to *Rule Britannia* in both the tune and bass line myself. Wait! There are thirteen letters in RULE BRITANNIA. Assuming we rule out either the finale or perhaps the infamous '****' variation that Elgar himself said was connected to Lady Mary Lygon, this would then be a reasonable starting point, as we have reduced the number of variations from fourteen to thirteen. So I set to see if I could work out how they might fit.

Meanwhile the first comment above sticks out like the proverbial sore thumb. What could it be about Rosa Burley that might make someone ask if she was a variation? If you realise that the 'friends pictured within' are mostly represented by their initials, Rosa is now making herself clear—*her* initials (R.B.) are the initials of the theme *Rule Britannia*.

I now offer an explanation of what happened in the incident when Elgar stuck a series of numbered pieces of paper to a piano keyboard (some numbered twice) and instructed Troyte to play them in order. It seems to me that, supposing Elgar assigned a note to each letter of the alphabet (A=A, B=B, C=C, etc., and H=A', I=B', J=C', and so on), then he could claim to Troyte that the latter had indeed just 'played the theme'. But since this would have been a mere transliteration of the letters RULE BRITANNIA into notes, then of course the result would have been a meaningless musical jumble. I find it hard to believe that Troyte was tone-deaf since he was allegedly lampooned for his piano-playing in the variation that bears his name. But all previous explanations of this incident have required him to be tone-deaf. This does not. What he heard would have given him no clue as to the 'hidden theme', and it seems likely that Elgar was merely having some fun at Troyte's expense. The fact that some pieces of sticky paper were numbered twice points strongly to the existence of repeated letters. There are two Rs, two Is, two Ns and two As in RULE BRITANNIA (but not two Ts, as per Van Houten's incorrect spelling BRITTANIA!).

The other minor puzzle that seems to have baffled everyone who has looked at this so far is why most of the participants appear as initials, but some have proper names or 'alternate' initials. My explanation, which will become clearer later, is that Elgar needed to change them to fit the acrostic. Originally the third variation was dedicated to Ivor Atkins (I.A.). Whilst this would have fitted easily, for whatever reason Elgar decided to rededicate the variation. One possible reason might be that with only two letters, its place in the acrostic would have been too easy to guess. Or it may have been as simple as a falling out. I am sure the historians will eventually correct me on this point.

'Ysobel' is a bit of a puzzle. Elgar's deliberate misspelling of words is well-known, examples being 'critikise' and 'skore'. So I think it may be he decided to include Isabel with its French spelling just to muddy the waters a little bit. Elgar once punned 'Ysiah' for Ysaÿe, too.

But moving on to the assignments. Some letters in RULE BRITANNIA occur only in one place in the

variation names:

U in E.D.U.—I think this is why 'Edoo' became E.D.U.

I in Nimrod and Isabel (two are needed)—of course, if I.A. (Ivor Atkins) was there we would have rather a different undertaking, as Julian Rushton has pointed out to me. But Occam's Razor suggests we should go with what we have, rather than what might have been. The arrangement into the 'larger theme' could have been taking place concurrently with the writing of the music. I believe Elgar may have juggled things for a variety of reasons, much like the practical art of orchestration, of which he was a master.

Given the previous point (the second I is clearly from 'Ysobel', as we shall see below), the only two places for N are B.G.N. and W.N. (this fits with BRITANNIA but not BRITTANIA!).

The only place to fit G.R.S. has to use the R since there is no G and no S in RULE BRITANNIA. (We always knew that G&S and Elgar were poles apart!)

The only place to fit W.M.B. is using the B since neither W nor M appears.

None of the letters in H.D.S-P. occur. However there is a space between RULE and BRITANNIA, which looks suddenly as though it might be a fourteenth 'letter'. Some doubt was initially raised about using SP for 'space' as it suggests something to do with modern computers. However the teletypewriter was invented in 1874, and 'space' (or SP) was one of the only non-alphanumeric characters to get its own dedicated character in the Baudot Code (a 5-bit code containing thirty-two or 2⁵ characters) which was used at the time for telegrams and for many years afterwards. Elgar, as an amateur scientist and cryptographer (note his coded messages to Dorabella), would surely have known this.

At this stage we have assigned eight of the fourteen variations.

We turn now to comments 4 and 5 above. When Elgar wrote 'you are Nimrod' I think he was explaining to Jaeger *for the first time* why he had given him this name. It is said that Jaeger only acquired the name around the time of the composition of Op. 36—here could be the explanation, that he needed an I, especially with the departure of I.A. (Ivor Atkins) from the score.

As to 'the pretty Lady', a question has been raised as to whether the person depicted was Lady Mary Lygon (as Elgar claimed) or perhaps Helen Weaver, even Dorabella, though of course the latter is already present at the head of another variation. Elgar's capitalization in his letter to Jaeger suggests that the L is what matters, as it features in the acrostic. Nowhere in the remaining names or initials is another L available. So the glove fits, as L.M.L., Helen or Lady would all do for the label. It rather looks like **** must have been L.M.L., as Elgar claimed, but the spirit of the variation is perfectly in accord with the contention that in fact it was Helen, the love of his life, who was really behind the music.

The two As can come from R.P.A. and C.A.E. easily enough. Now we are up to:

| | | | |
|----|------|---|-------|
| | G | R | S |
| ED | | U | |
| | | L | ML |
| | | E | |
| HD | <SP> | | |
| WM | | B | |
| | | R | |
| | | I | SABEL |
| | | T | |
| | C | A | E |
| BG | | N | |
| | W | N | |
| | N | I | MROD |
| RP | | A | |

Only three assignments remain to be made, and it is simple to add Troyte, Dorabella and R.B.T. to the matrix. Each one can be placed in two out of the three positions to fill the letters E, R and T:

| | | | |
|-------|------|-------|----|
| | G | R | S |
| | ED | U | |
| | HE | L | EN |
| DORAB | E | LLA | |
| HD | <SP> | | |
| WM | B | | |
| | R | BT | |
| | I | SABEL | |
| | T | ROYTE | |
| C | A | E | |
| BG | N | | |
| W | N | | |
| N | I | MROD | |
| RP | A | | |

Can any other popular themes be so assigned? The occurrence of the single space rules out most songs, as to get to a fourteen-letter title with only one space needs a long word like 'Britannia'. How many other popular songs have nine-letter words in them? Even if you omit spaces from the equation, as in BLUESUEDESHOES, you will be hard pressed to fit most songs even then. Remember, it has to be something as obvious as GODSAVETHEKING (fourteen letters). That might work, but only if some of the abandoned dedicatees are used (Sullivan, Parry, Atkins), and of course Elgar said it wasn't *God Save the King* anyway.

So why would *Rule Britannia* be particularly appropriate for Elgar at that time? It was the height of Empire, Victoria had just had her diamond jubilee in 1897, and jingoism was quite acceptable. Specifically, Elgar had written *Caractacus*, a piece about the ancient Britons repelling invaders, and would soon author the four *Pomp and Circumstance* marches. So a set of variations on *Rule Britannia* would not seem far from his thoughts of 'Queen and Country'. Perhaps after no-one guessed the solution he became embarrassed by its patriotic connotations, and preferred Op. 36 to be remembered as the mysterious 'enigmatic' piece that reflected his Tasso (mis)quotation. Could it be that Elgar later consented to the work being referred to as 'Enigma' because it represents a kind of cryptogram?

A closing thought, after browsing Patrick Turner's website. We read 'there is, in fact, such an envelope, not in some lawyer's safe, but in the safekeeping of the Elgar Birthplace Museum at Broadheath' and 'there are instructions that this envelope is only to be opened 100 years after Elgar's death (which will be in 2034)... it would seem from the little that is known about the envelope that its contents have something to do with *The Dream of Gerontius*.'

Is it too much to hope that this envelope instead contains the crossword puzzle solution as I have depicted it?

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank the following for their help, advice and of course publications, most of which are widely available: Eoin Macauley (Dublin), Julian Rushton (Huddersfield), Theo Van Houten (Netherlands) and Patrick Turner (France). Like Watson and Crick's unravelling of the DNA molecule, there is little original research here, rather a re-arrangement of the available facts into what I hope may be considered a coherent framework.

STEPHEN PICKETT was born in Tenterden, Kent, whose Methodist manse once housed the infant David Frost. Exposed

early to G&S, Stephen went to the (Methodist) Leys School, Cambridge as a music scholar, and although trained as a chemist, became a computer geek shortly after Bill Gates started Microsoft. One Jewish grandfather and one Methodist grandfather perhaps foreshadowed Stephen's musical eclecticism—Elgar's Catholic background being right in the middle of that spectrum. He plays cello in and writes programme notes for the West Coast Symphony Orchestra (Vancouver, British Columbia), which eventually led him to write about 'Enigma' in 2002. 'It's not Fermat's Last Theorem, but I did go to school with Andrew Wiles,' he says. You can see his web page at www.microtopia.net/bridge.

BOOK REVIEWS



Faber and Faber, 2004
212 pp. hardback
ISBN 0 57122337 0
£14.99

Elgar: Child of Dreams by Jerrold Northrop Moore

Of all putative new Commandments, the one hotly tipped to be in the vanguard if another batch is ever brought down from the mountainside is 'Thou shalt not judge any book by its cover'. But with Jerrold Northrop Moore's new *Elgar: Child of Dreams*, such judgement proves a not entirely misleading way in. Elgar is pictured on the cover in familiar bicycle-holding pose, but limned with a tint so green (in his clothes, his bicycle, and even in his face—his moustache might be a tenacious lichen) that he is in places almost indistinguishable from the countryside of hills, ducks, and welcoming picnic tables which compose the scene behind him. And our guess as to the book's likely contents is immediately vindicated in the preface. In the book, Moore says, Elgar will be 'revealed for the first time as a pastoral visionary to set beside Shakespeare, Milton, Turner, and Samuel Palmer' (p. viii).

Perhaps we shouldn't judge a book by its heft either, but the difference between this light, small book and Moore's earlier brick-like *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* could not be more marked. This is not a book for the library shelf; it is a book for the bedside, for a train journey, or perhaps its author might even intend—for walking. The text inside, although it covers the same ground as the much larger biography, is snappier, has no chapter divisions (this simple technical trick gives the book a stronger sense of flow), and is unencumbered by footnotes. This will be music to the ears of many Society members and general readers, who (unlike academics) don't lose sleep if quotations aren't fully referenced. And it is for these readers, not academics, that this book is written. Those who found Moore's earlier biography problematic will find similar problems in this new one (I'll address just one of these below); but those who enjoyed the first as an engaging narrative of a very interesting life will find this little book a delight from start to finish. This review is written almost entirely with the second constituency in mind.

It must be noted immediately that the association of Elgar with the countryside is one of the most basic ploys to cleanse him of any taint of imperialism (an aspect of Elgar's character which Moore only mentions once, in connection with *Pomp and Circumstance*, p. 53). It is based on the simple switch of emphasis from Elgar's love of the political and social entity called Britain to the earth and water and other natural elements which cartographers call Britain. Begun with Ken Russell's unforgettable (and wholly fabricated) image of the boy Elgar riding a symbolically pure white pony over the glorious open country of the Malvern Hills, and consolidated by Michael Kennedy's portrait of a man who seems primarily constituted of *Innigkeit*, intimate inwardness, it runs on into the pastoral-visionary interpretation always present in Moore's writing but now explicitly highlighted. For this reason alone, Moore's association of Elgar and all his musical inspiration with landscape will meet with a mildly self-righteous scepticism in some quarters where Empire is regarded as shameful (and not just an episode in British

history). But Moore is not alone: Matthew Riley, a member of the first well-packed generation of university-based Elgarians, also takes a keen interest, and his own book on the subject should appear in the next year or two; tantalizing glimpses have already been shown in an essay in *19th-Century Music* and at conferences (see Matthew Riley, 'Rustling reeds and lofty pines: Elgar and the music of nature', *19th-Century Music* 26 (2002), pp. 155–77). Moore's good fortune is to have aimed this new book at non-academics; Riley will have to address the imperial conundrum or face criticism.

Moore's narrative weaves several strands. The first is a musical one which traces a single line running from the boy-Elgar's 'tune from Broadheath' to the death of Lady Elgar and, on Moore's view, the virtual cessation of creative activity. The Broadheath Tune stands, among other things, for a certain characteristic of Elgar's music: its essentially instrumental nature. Its role in the purely musical narrative is as a guiding light towards the ultimate musical expression of the English landscape, a symphony—'the top department of instrumental music', as Shaw said (p. 48). All roads lead to the 'great beautiful tune' that will hymn the English landscape.

To this end, Moore hears the conventional rise and fall of the Broadheath Tune appearing throughout Elgar's oeuvre and in all his greatest works, including the *Variations*, the symphonies (all three), and *Falstaff*. Crucially for Moore, it is the tune's reuse in *The Wand of Youth* that prepared Elgar psychologically for the composition of the First Symphony. (As in *Creative Life*, some may think the Broadheath Tune Pudding has two or three too many eggs in it.) And psychology is crucial to Moore's reading of the music's composition. He views the principal works as coming in three-year cycles, and in 'phantom doubles', where one big work is followed by a smaller one that shows a different side of some of the themes and attitudes of its predecessor (pp. 81–111, *passim*). The image of Elgar building up psychological (and technical) potential energy, by winding himself round as if about to throw a discus, is a pervasive one. At every step of the way towards the First Symphony, the Broadheath Tune is there, rooting him in the country and cranking him up for ever greater effort. But so is his mother.

Moore lists many important ways she influenced Elgar's life, and points up her importance at several signal moments of his career. Her Catholicism and love of nature are the root of it all. But Moore also argues that her love of Longfellow provided Elgar with a way into composition (*The Black Knight* and *King Olaf*), it being, he says, easier to create long forms with the support of words than without them. (Associating Longfellow entirely with Elgar's mother doesn't quite get round the problem that the poet was a great influence to empire-building minds.) The poet reappears in a part-song setting just before the composition of the First Symphony, and Moore considers it significant (p. 103). The Broadheath Tune and the lessons learnt at his mother's knee thus come into focus just as the fully mature Elgar is about to set to work on his great musical paean to the English landscape.

We are half way through the book, and till now sustained discussion of Elgar's relation to landscape has been hard to find; indeed it is surprising to reflect that the artists Moore mentions in the preface haven't appeared again (and won't till the book's final paragraph). But when Moore's narrative reaches the First Symphony, he gets the bit between his teeth, and a concrete argument emerges. Almost its entire strength rests on his interpretation of that work.

He sets the scene by noting that Elgar 'filled the summer of 1907 with country pursuits so persistent as to hint at consultation—perhaps invocation' (p. 106). For his

grand project, Elgar had to press-gang English nature to his service. Moore acknowledges the difficulties raised by the curious combative juxtaposition of a stately 'motto' with the much less settled material of the main body of the First Symphony's first movement. By the time the second movement begins, the direction the wind might take is difficult to gauge with any certainty (although he says that the 'Aeolian music' he has noted from time to time before in his narrative has now become a firm feature of Elgar's style, pp. 114 and 120). But everything is, Moore argues, about to change. Hearing the B flat section of the scherzo as 'river-music' (a fair assessment, given Elgar's comments on it), he argues that this music overwhelms the movement, and that in a sense the English countryside makes order out of the preceding chaos. It is a critical point.

Within half a dozen bars the river has receded to its contemplative, reflective self: but the whole landscape is changed. All the power of the 'scherzo' has been swept away.

This total instantaneous triumph of pastoral—just foreseen in the first-movement development climax—has no parallel in earlier music. Even Beethoven's 'Pastoral' Symphony routed no such strutting force as Elgar's river has overwhelmed. Its music shows a Roman figure [sc. an idea Elgar sketched in Rome] utterly submerged by the flooding inspiration of Elgar's home landscape—'that sweet borderland' between the Malvern Hills of Caractacus and the Welsh coast where distant singing had reached him...

So it marks the beginning of a final choice in Elgar's music—between marching and not marching, between action and lyric contemplation, between inspiration far-fetched and inspiration wafting into his own study on the airs of a western summer (pp. 122–3).

Here at last is a reasoned argument that England's landscape asserts its authority over the music even when inspirations could have come from abroad. If foreign musical inspirations are overwhelmed by native English ones, then the themes and forms and gestures of a musical work might truly be heard to extol the virtues of the English landscape over all others; England will have its musical pastoral visionary.

The problem is that for some readers, Moore's analysis may still leave questions unanswered. For instance, although the mood certainly changes at the appearance of the river-music, as it does in many scherzos when the new idea comes, does it not change back again once this section is over? And how does that theme 'overwhelm' the movement, let alone the symphony? Does not the theme which is shared by the two middle movements have the more central role in the work? Is it for harmonic, motivic, or structural reasons that Moore believes that the river-music is stronger? He gives no hint. Some will be concerned by the lack of detail; others will not. It is probably a very individual question whether such interpretations are believed.

The analysis of the symphony is wrapped up by the suggestion that when all is restored to rights in the finale, it is not in a showy, martial manner, but in a more innocent and earthy one. The argument is that the triumph of the First Symphony (other commentators are not so convinced it is a triumph at all) is of 'personal pastoral' over 'public marching' (pp. 130–1). Elgar could have ended with a pompous and circumstantial version of the 'motto', Moore says, but chose not to. 'Thus Elgar sees clearly at last the earthly paradise around him, touching the Eden of innocence kept within him as his inheritance from his mother's faith' (p. 131).

Moore's new book passionately expresses its author's belief that Elgar was 'a pastoral visionary to set beside Shakespeare' and the rest. Many readers will be happy

to make their own connections between the isolated bits of evidence he presents, while others will regret that it is only during the discussion of the First Symphony (and, to a much lesser extent, works like *Introduction and Allegro* and *Falstaff*) that connected arguments are put forward. What all readers will be grateful for is the clarity and charm of its expression and the pleasure it will bring by throwing attention (both in listening and reflection) back onto the works themselves. It is a shame that Faber has set the musical examples so minutely, so that some eyes might struggle with them. But that is a small flaw. As Elgar studies are taken up in England and America by a new generation of scholars of very different persuasions which are likely to interrogate his conclusions with academic ruthlessness, Moore's new book will be welcomed as the eloquent testimony of a thoughtful Elgarian whose popular appeal to a wide constituency of Elgar-lovers is never likely to be matched again.

J. P. E. Harper-Scott

A Special Flame: the music of Elgar and Vaughan Williams

edited by John Norris and Andrew Neill

Few who attended the two-day international symposium held at the British Library in March 2003 will forget the weekend of stimulating papers and friendly discussion that resulted from the meeting of many Elgar and Vaughan Williams enthusiasts (see the report of the event printed in the *JOURNAL*, July 2003, pp. 40–2). However, while this collection of papers originally presented at the event provides a valuable guide and souvenir, their presentation as written papers is occasionally erratic in style and quality.

The opening paper, Michael Kennedy's 'Elgar and Vaughan Williams: a 21st century celebration', offers a good general background to the relationship and links between the two composers, their divergent backgrounds and the influence of Elgar's music on that of the younger man. Sadly, however, the text remains a transcript of the spoken version, starting with the statement, 'For most of us in this room, I suspect, Edward Elgar and Ralph Vaughan Williams are the two greatest English composers of the past 150 years' (p. 1), thus alienating readers who did not attend the symposium. There are also frequent interruptions in the text for recorded musical examples, their introductions still included, then '*Musical Example x*' printed on the page. One then has to turn to the end of the article for a list of the extracts, where often only the name of the work and the movement is given, making it difficult to properly follow Kennedy's argument. (This gripe also applies to other chapters in the book.)

The following paper, Andrew Neill's "'It looks all wrong, but sounds all right": the social background to the life and music of Elgar and Vaughan Williams', is unfortunately marred by an editing slip. In this broad survey of the two composer's backgrounds, the omission of a footnote and incorrect numbering of those that follow amusingly leads to the implication that Vaughan Williams gave a lecture at London University in February 2003—obviously musicologists in this particular music department are indulging in some more unorthodox methods of examining the lives of their subjects! In addition, a similar list of musical examples is given at the end of the chapter, but this time with no indication as to where in the presentation they occurred.

Although Claire-Louise Lucas and Jonathan Darnborough's presentation was a

lecture-recital, those reading the written version are aided by the inclusion of printed musical examples, and thus it actually works extremely well as a written paper. “Dreamers of Dreams”: the songs of Elgar and Vaughan Williams’ is a fascinating exploration into the two composers’ often neglected songs, highlighting ‘their different personalities and their different preoccupations’ (p. 31), most notably the roots of Elgar’s songs in Germanic romanticism and Vaughan Williams’s in folksong traditions, as well as that elusive concept of ‘Englishness’ which arises as a common thread throughout many of these papers. Most useful perhaps are the performers’ insights into word-setting and issues arising in the performance of a song—an aspect frequently neglected by researchers in their approaches to this repertoire. Rather than conforming to the usual presentation of Elgar as a lazy word-setter, placing music as the primary concern, Lucas and Darnborough portray him as sensitive to the nuances of the text and music, demonstrating that at least some instances of apparently lackadaisical word settings can be explained when Elgar’s instructions to his performers and score markings are carefully considered in the context of performance. Their insights have wide ranging implications for those considering Elgar’s approach to text, highlighting the importance of considering issues of performance in such research.

Lewis Foreman’s paper, ‘Battle Songs and Elegies’, is a comprehensive and stimulating discussion of the music which reflected, commented on or evolved from the First World War, giving a wider context to the already well-known war works of Elgar. As Vaughan Williams did not compose during the war years, Foreman’s last section concentrates on the impact that his active service might have had on his later music and he poses an interesting question which certainly warrants further exploration: ‘how far the music imagery we have come to associate with the war was pre-figured in the music from the pre-war period’ (p. 66), suggesting that ‘the post-war brave new world dates from that time in the summer of 1914’, before the outbreak of war, when Vaughan Williams’s *A London Symphony* and Holst’s *The Planets* received their first performances (p. 67).

Byron Adams’s article is one of the few in the anthology which goes beyond a general survey or comparison of the two composers in order to propose more challenging interpretations of their lives and works. “What have we learnt from Elgar?”: Vaughan Williams and the ambivalence of inheritance’ explores Vaughan Williams’s concept of ‘evolutionary progressivism’ and the ambivalence that he felt towards Elgar. Taking Bloom’s theory of *The Anxiety of Influence* as his basis. Adams explores the nature of the younger composer’s ‘cribbing’ from his elder and proposes that in *A London Symphony*, Vaughan Williams finally assimilated elements from Elgar’s *Cockaigne*, an obvious predecessor, and ‘filters these through the prism of his peculiar music preferences, achieving thereby an aesthetic distance from both *Cockaigne* and Elgar’s style in general’ (p. 76). The theme of influence is carried into the following paper by Michael Pope, this time examining the connections and influences between Stanford, Elgar and Vaughan Williams, while Hugh Cobbe’s “My Dear Elgar”: the letters of Elgar and Vaughan Williams’ first traces the (admittedly very limited) correspondence between the two men, drawing some suppositions about the nature of their relationship, and then examines Vaughan Williams’s knowledge and opinions of Elgar’s music through many hitherto unpublished letters.

The contrast between Elgar and Vaughan Williams’s compositional concerns and personalities is a common thread running throughout the majority of the papers, and they come into sharp relief in Charles McGuire’s stimulating exploration of their differing



Elgar Editions, 2004
192 pp.
ISBN 0953708292
£15.00

approaches to the oratorio genre. Centering on Elgar's *The Apostles* and Vaughan Williams's *Sancta Civitas*, McGuire demonstrates how Elgar's main preoccupation in his oratorio is the portrayal of characters and their personalities, their inner feelings and reactions, and their fallibilities: the emphasis on individual religious redemption reflecting Elgar's 'highly idiosyncratic interpretation of religion' (p. 114) and his egocentric compositional concerns. Meanwhile, Vaughan Williams was more interested in the expression of symbols of community, not individuality, as seen through his negation of individual characters and use of chorus: *Sancta Civitas* is 'a smaller amalgamation of sacred texts presented by the community for the community' (p. 114) and Vaughan Williams's wider nationalistic and societal concerns become apparent. Set against the wider context of changing attitudes towards Wagner's personality and works—Elgar's oratorios were often presented as Wagnerian in style and use of leitmotif, while Vaughan Williams's were presented as anti-Wagnerian and more akin to Bach—this paper provides a thought-provoking and wide-ranging insight into the ideals of both men, the reception histories of the works and contemporaneous English musical aesthetics.

The final two papers each explore a single work by each respective composer. Firstly, Stephen Connock examines the genesis of Vaughan Williams's *The Poisoned Kiss* and the libretto's protracted development, as revealed in the unpublished letters between the composer and librettist Evelyn Sharp. Again, Vaughan Williams's nationalistic concerns are manifest as he strove to write a work in the tradition of English comic opera. Finally, Robert Anderson explores some of the compositional and cultural background of Elgar's *The Crown of India*, offering a tantalizing glimpse of themes and insights which will undoubtedly be explored in far greater depth in his forthcoming Elgar Society Edition volume of this neglected work.

The book concludes with a transcript of the panel discussion held at the end of the symposium, entitled 'Eleven Symphonies: Do they travel? If not, why not?', and finally the programme of the concert that took place on the Saturday night. Both these features add to the feeling that this volume is really intended to be a souvenir for those who attended, rather than an independent text. If this is the aim, then retaining the strongly individual voices of the contributors is a nice touch, and the book will undoubtedly be enjoyed by those who fondly remember the weekend. But for those who are coming to the book independently, the inconsistencies of style and presentation may well deter. Papers such as those by Byron Adams and Charles McGuire which have been adapted and presented as written rather than spoken articles contrast with others which, had they been afforded greater thought in their presentation, might have further improved the quality of the publication.

Corissa Gould

**Words on Music: essays in honour of Andrew Porter
on the occasion of his 75th birthday**
edited by David Rosen and Claire Brook

Andrew Porter has been described as 'the greatest music critic of our time', and is known and respected both in the UK and in America, where he spent a year in New York in 1972–3 as critic of the *New Yorker*. His opera notes were so well-received that they were published in book form as *A Musical Season*, and he later returned to the

USA as critic, and also as lecturer (in New York and Berkeley). In Britain he wrote reviews for the *Financial Times* for twenty years, and was editor of the *Musical Times* for seven years in the 1960s. He has also prepared singing translations of over thirty operas, and these have been widely acclaimed, most famously in Reginald Goodall's *Ring* at the ENO. More recently he has contributed to the *Observer* and, currently, the *Times Literary Supplement*. A helpful index of his writings is found at the back of the book.

In the light of this it is not surprising that many of the twenty-three contributors are either American or opera experts, or both. Several of the contributions are musical tributes, by Elliott Carter (four bars), George Perle (ten), and Ned Rorem (a song *Let us remember*); and Joseph Kerman has arranged the E major fugue from Bach's *Well-Tempered Clavier* (Book 2) as a motet to the Latin words of Psalm 92.

British contributors include John Allison on Sibelius and the *Kalevala*; Winton Dean on Handel's *Giustino*; Stanley Sadie, who co-authored the opening appreciation; and Michael Kennedy's account of the composition of Strauss's *Capriccio* against the background of the political situation in Germany at the time (1935–42). Diana McVeagh worked as assistant editor to Andrew Porter on the *Musical Times*, and has written a piece entitled 'The Making of *Gerontius*' (pp. 207–24). She has pointed out that over the years little has been written 'about the genesis of the score, as revealed in the abundant sketches for it in the British Library, and about the remarkable poem Elgar chose to set'. The sketches reveal the changes to his score that Elgar made along the road to its completion: for instance, the dramatic *fff* climax of the Prelude, with the 'prayer' theme 'thundered out in augmentation', was originally in 4/4 time, and far less impressive. More drama was also injected into 'Sanctus fortis', which was originally to have been set to the 'prayer' theme again; eventually it was given new music.

McVeagh shows that much of Part I is based on Roman Catholic liturgy—not surprisingly, perhaps, as the Priest and his Assistants are bringing spiritual comfort to a dying man. At the end of the article, the text of the Roman Catholic *Manual of Prayers* is laid alongside the relevant passages from Part I of *Gerontius*, and it is helpful to see how Newman has adapted this liturgy to fit his poetic scheme.

It is a pity that the facsimiles of two sketches are poorly reproduced, and that in one place 1890 is written instead of 1900, but this is a fascinating look—all too brief, alas—at the genesis of both the poem and Elgar's masterpiece.

Geoffrey Hodgkins

(Available from: Rosemary Dooley, Crag House, Witherslack, Grange-over-Sands, Cumbria LA11 6RW, tel. +44 (0) 1539 552286; or from booksellers, quoting the ISBN number.)

Inspired Golf

by Richard Baxter Townshend

transcribed and edited, with some Elgarian interludes,

by Kevin Allen

In his book *Elgar the Cyclist: a creative odyssey*, Mr Allen comments: 'Elgar was one of the great escapists and (in addition to cycling) he enjoyed various open-air hobbies over

the years, including walking, fishing, horse racing, woodcraft, kite-flying, and golf.'

Mr Allen's latest book is based upon an instruction primer, *Inspired Golf* by R. B. Townshend ('R.B.T.'—the third of the friends musically pictured by Elgar in the 'Enigma' Variations). He was a Cambridge-trained educator who taught Elgar how to play golf in 1892. His book was written as a teaching aid to improving one's game, and begins with a poem—'A million to one'—a reference to the exhilaration resulting from a rare hole-in-one.

Mr Allen has ingeniously added chronological 'interludes' after each of the ten chapters. Elgar was involved in the game from 1892 to 1904 when he stopped playing regularly, though he continued to maintain an interest in it. The interludes concern Elgar's fascination with the game and refer to his musical progress at the same time. Thus, this is an example of a book within a book, full of interesting historical pictures of Elgar, Townshend and friends playing golf. Also included are amusing cartoons of Elgar, usually in golfing togs and each with a musical theme. Old photographs and maps add further interest.

In summary, this book examines in detail Elgar's golfing career from 1892 to 1904 and also gives us an insight to his association with his friend R.B.T.—a highly educated pedagogue, writer and golfer. It is an enjoyable book, recommended to all those fascinated by Elgar's outdoors activities, the historical associations of his musical activities at the same time, as well as the vagaries of the game of golf.

Patrick J. Kinahan

(Available from: Kevin Allen, 2 Milford Court, Gale Moor Avenue, Alverstoke, Gosport, Hants, PO12 2TN for £7.50 plus £1.00 postage and packing to UK and Europe or £2.00 to the rest of world.)

Elgar in Hampstead

by Helen Lawrence

Following on from the heady years of fame at 'Plas Gwyn', Hereford, Elgar's time in Hampstead from 1912 to 1921 was reasonably productive in spite of the upheaval of the Great War—indeed, this led to some works being specifically written for the war effort. Some twenty-five years ago Dr Louie Eickhoff researched this period of Elgar's life and put on exhibitions at Gloucester and at Burgh House, Hampstead. She was a child in the district during Elgar's stay, and her work brought new insights into the Elgar story. Now, drawing from this, Helen Lawrence, a trustee of the Hampstead & Highgate Festival, has produced an exemplary booklet as a happy complement to the festival's celebration of Elgar last May. It is a deft compilation of information from a judicious selection of Elgar biographies and letters.

The positive and negative aspects of Elgar's Hampstead years are well contrasted in the booklet. We read of the joy of Elgar's own great house, situated in the capital yet close to old Hampstead with all its historical associations and, of course, the heath. There was the large, panelled music room, described by Lady Elgar as 'a setting which seems to have been waiting for him.' But counter to this were Lady Elgar's trials in breaking a family trust established in her mother's will to enable the purchase of 'Severn House'; the financial burden of maintaining it; Elgar's increasingly troublesome



Pendragon Press, 2003
xiv + 346 pp. hardback
ISBN 11576470911
£40.00

health; Novello's lack of enthusiasm for new orchestral works from him; the disillusionment with the advent of the telephone and its constant ringing; the burglary (by ex-policemen!) while the Elgars were away at 'Brinkwells'; the replacement of loved trees beneath the Elgars' windows by a neighbour's garage; the discomforts arising from the post-war fuel shortage; general concern about the war; and Lady Elgar's failing health and eventual death in her husband's arms.

Elgar in Hampstead is well written and attractively produced with many photographs and house plans, so that one is able to gain as good an impression of Norman Shaw's last Queen Anne studio house (demolished in the late 1930s) as it is possible to get.

Michael Trott

(Available from: The Heath & Hampstead Society, 38 Glenilla Road, London NW3 4AN for £3.00 including postage and packing. Please make cheques payable to The Heath & Hampstead Society.)

Enigma Variation: a fictional memoir

by Patrick Jackson

As intriguing concepts for books go, a 'fictional memoir' takes some beating. You take the life (or lives) of those who were once flesh and blood, and interweave with them the stories of phantom characters. Thus, it is hoped, fact and fiction will illuminate the other: actual people can be seen in a slightly different light, whilst the fictional become, somehow, more rounded-out by their supposed interaction with those who really existed.

This art of blending fact and fantasy is not as easy as it might seem: but it often helps if the writer can base his 'factional' land on his own knowledge. Patrick Jackson's uncle actually did go from Huddersfield to Hereford before the Great War to be an articulated pupil of George Sinclair, the cathedral's well-known organist, and left behind some reminiscences of that 'friend pictured within' (or should that be 'friend of a doggy friend pictured within'?).

In many ways this is less a memoir of Elgar the man, more of a wistful remembrance of things that are no more, whether it be golden ages or golden youth. In and out of the narrative Elgar drifts like some benign figure wandering through Hereford on a summer's day.

The premise of this 'memoir' is that the author (another 'George') has been called on to give his memories of Elgar for a book being published just after the composer's death. He declines, but his thoughts travel back to his youthful encounters with Elgar and others before the Great War.

Of course, memoirs don't have to centre on one person. This book takes in first of all George Robertson Sinclair, who ruefully observes to 'our' George that the new 'Dan' (the original and best having gone to canine heaven some while before) has just bitten the tortoise in half in the garden. The picture of Sinclair is piquant and believable. Indeed there is a sincere affection on the part of the author for his characters in general, both the real and imaginary (apart from the tortoise, we presume).

Then there is Marcus. He seems to take centre stage for much of the book. As



Kevin Allen, 2004
84pp. softcover
ISBN 0953122735
£7.50

fictional characters go, he seems to have it all: good-looking, cultured, a whizz at singing and playing, charming and funny, sensitive and thoughtful. He is the younger son of the gentry and therefore one of those alarmingly languid-yet-greatly-gifted characters who seem to pop in and out of the earlier works of E. F. Benson. He rather shocks George with his opinions, both philosophical and musical, saying that *The Apostles* has 'an atmosphere of namby-pamby piety'. Elsewhere the two chaps go to the new picture-house in Hereford, or skating, or to the Coliseum to disapprove of *The Crown of India*'s vulgarity. But Marcus's great personal sorrow is to be unloved by his family. This is actually compensated for, to a greater extent, by his relationship with George, whose feelings towards Marcus amount to something greater than a 'pash' but a bit less than a full-blown love affair. This relationship is delicately drawn and never overdone. Ultimately the book seems to be more of a memoir of deeply-held feelings, and of human relationships' strengths and fragilities.

Elgar himself doesn't appear until Chapter 6, when George and Marcus go to visit him at 'Pläs Gwyn'. There is a bit of informal chat about the Symphonies, and the young men hit it off with the great man. Elgar is sympathetically drawn, talking easily with the youngsters and being quite frank about his music. Lady Elgar fares less well, at one point apparently disapproving of the small-talk which she suspects has just gone on between the two chums and her husband. Occasionally Elgar seems a bit too frank with two young men whom he hardly knows: when George says he finds *Gerontius* almost overwhelming, Elgar comes out with: 'Yes, it's hard not to cry... Fortunately, at a distance people are misled by the moustache and the military bearing, so I can get away with a furtive sniffle.' I don't think even 'Nimrod' would have been party to such thoughts.

Taking all in all, I found this a very sweet book, affectionately written, the tone of which invariably rings true. Jackson is a skilled writer who conjures up a convincing atmosphere of a world which cherished music-making for its aesthetic, educational and social qualities, and which was swept away by the Great War. As the story hops and skips out of fact and fantasy we are drawn into that world which is no more, full of (to paraphrase) 'the things that were, and might have been'. I would recommend it to anyone curious to see Elgar from a different perspective, and those who are attracted by an unconventional love-story.

Dominic Guyver

Samuel Sebastian Wesley: a life

by Peter Horton

There is only one reference to Elgar in this book: he was present at Wesley's organ recital at the 1875 Worcester Festival (the notorious 'Mock' Festival) and was greatly impressed by the aged composer's extemporisation which led into a performance of Bach's 'Giant' Fugue. When Wesley died the following year, Elgar was eighteen, but he must have already known and been influenced by the works of the leading church musician of the period. Some years ago at a conference, Dr Christopher Kent submitted a stimulating paper on this subject.

Like Elgar, Wesley came from a musical family (his father Samuel was an infant



Heath & Hampstead
Society, 2004
32 pp. softcover
£3.00

prodigy whom Dr Boyce once called 'the English Mozart'). Yet he received no formal musical education, although his time as a chorister at the Chapel Royal under William Hawes was formative, especially as Hawes introduced him to a musical world beyond the choir stalls. In his late teens he took on a number of organist jobs and assisted Hawes in the English Opera House as pianist and chorus conductor. Wesley was appointed organist of Hereford Cathedral in 1832 when he was twenty-one, the first of a number of similar appointments at Exeter, Leeds (Parish Church), Winchester and finally Gloucester. Whilst at Hereford he wrote two orchestral pieces—an Overture in E, and a symphony—but his remoteness from London made him, as Horton says, '...an outsider, on the periphery of national musical life'. He also raises an intriguing question. 'Would [Wesley's] development have proceeded as it did had he not suffered such enforced artistic isolation, or would he ultimately have concentrated on church music regardless of circumstances?' (p. 51)

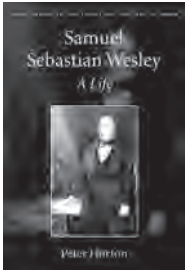
Also like Elgar, Wesley suffered the indifference and disdain of the cathedral authorities towards musicians, a state of affairs sadly still with us, as recent events at Westminster and Ripon have shown. Horton comments that Wesley's time in Winchester was 'characterised by what might be termed a gradual decrescendo'. He applied for many other posts, including that at Worcester Cathedral in 1844 when William Done was appointed: *Musical World* bemoaned the 'painful' triumph of 'mediocrity' over 'talent'. One might speculate on the young Elgar's musical development had Wesley been the Worcester organist. He wrote almost 200 hymn tunes, writing in a preface to a new hymn book in 1863: '...much new composition seemed necessary, unless I accepted the alternative of inserting tunes apparently quite devoid of merit'. (This chimes with the reason Elgar gave Jaeger for not writing hymn tunes—they are so ghastly inartistic'.) But hymn tunes paid well, and—again like Elgar—Wesley was constantly complaining about shortage of money.

Peter Horton is reference librarian at the Royal College of Music (and incidentally a member of the Elgar Society). This book has been a labour of love, written over many years of painstaking research, and it must be said that it is eminently worth the wait. Without doubt it is the definitive biography, written in a very readable style, with perceptive and scholarly analyses of the works incorporated into a chronological account of Wesley's life. In *Grove* Nicholas Temperley wrote that Wesley was 'the greatest composer in the English cathedral tradition between Purcell and Stanford'; and I urge anyone interested in that tradition, in the history of English music in general, or in the musical world of provincial England into which Elgar was born, to buy this book. They will not be disappointed.

Geoffrey Hodgkins



Athena Press, 2004
80 pp. softcover
ISBN 1844012816
£5.99



Oxford University Press,
2004
327pp. hardback
ISBN 0198161468
£60.00

CD and DVD REVIEWS

Hallé Elgar

Introduction and Allegro for Strings, op. 47; *Symphony No. 2*, op. 63; Percy Bysshe Shelley, *Song* (Mark Elder, reciter)

Lyn Fletcher, Ann Lawes (violins), Timothy Pooley (viola),
David Watkin (cello)
Hallé Orchestra conducted by Mark Elder

For the last year or so I have enjoyed reviewing Mark Elder's sterling work with Elgar's music which he is recording with the Hallé Orchestra, and the recent renewal of his contract as music director comes as welcome news when he might have been enticed away to fill the vacant post at the BBC Symphony Orchestra after Leonard Slatkin's



Hallé
CD HLL 7507

departure. In an age when new accounts of standard Elgar fare are appearing almost every few months, it comes as a welcome surprise that the Hallé discs always seem to include something original and different. The *Canto popolare* was included on the disc of the First Symphony and the *Smoking Cantata* on the more recent account of *Falstaff*. On this disc it's not music but a recitation by Elder of Shelley's poem, one which is so intimately linked to the symphony, which is sandwiched between the two musical works. There's not a whiff of Elder's Northumbrian (Hexham) origins in his reading, but instead plenty of signs of his further education at Cambridge. It's a very good recitation, meaningful, distinctly enunciated and stylishly phrased. As far as I can recall, it marks (no pun intended) a unique contribution by a conductor who then goes on to feature on the disc.

The *Introduction and Allegro* is a powerful account from the grandeur of its opening statement, yet care has been taken to balance the string quartet of fine section principals against the full body of string sound. The performance is eloquently phrased, perhaps a little too lovingly in places, thus stifling forward momentum here and there, but the Bridgewater Hall's acoustics provide both expansive sound and quiet intimacy when either is called for. Right until the final full-blooded pizzicato chord of G major this is exciting playing, the strings confidently negotiating the notoriously difficult upward leaps to the top A at fig. 12, the similar spot a tone lower a couple of bars before 27, and the (often screamed out) top D at 29. Richness of tone on the G string and the glowing bloom to the sound when we are in the terrain of violas and cellos evoke memories of Barbirolli, but this remains very much Elder's own interpretation.

To preface the performance of the symphony with a reading of the Shelley poem makes perfect sense. After all, Elgar himself wrote to Novello in April 1911, 'To get near the mood of the Symphony, the whole of Shelley's poem may be read'. Admittedly, he went on: 'the music does not illustrate the whole of the poem, neither does the poem entirely elucidate the music. My attitude toward the poem, or rather the "Spirit of Delight", was an attempt to give the reticent Spirit a hint (with sad enough retrospection) as to what we should like to have.' The symphony was written at fever pitch, the slow movement in a week, 'and the thing is tremendous in energy'. So is this performance. If occasionally caressing the lyrical moments to excess, Elder is a caring Elgarian, with an immaculate sense of style and sound governed by admirable attention to detail. One hears every semiquaver, for example, in the opening rising fanfares at the seventh and eighth bars for trumpet and four horns (probably five, with the bumper employed at this point) resulting in immaculate ensemble and unanimity of articulation. Less clear though is the very first bar, the B flat in violins and cellos, which comes across as one long note where three articulations are indicated. The elegiac qualities of the slow movement, with its funereal mood, is beautifully paced and balanced (the recording has now moved from the Hallé's home to the BBC's Studio 7 in New Broadcasting House) in a passionate reading. The scherzo (a rondo actually) effectively captures the music's brilliance ('very wild and headstrong', in the composer's own words), while the finale vividly paints its various colours and quixotic moods, including the Hans Richter theme at fig. 139 which the composer had written years before. Richter, who never conducted this symphony, had given his last concert in Britain on 22 April 1911 at Eastbourne with the LSO, and Elgar premiered the symphony a month later on 24 May to an audience which '[sa] there like a lot of stuffed pigs'. He would have no cause for complaint today, certainly not after such a performance as this one.

Elgar: Sacred Choral Music

Give unto the Lord, op. 74; Three Latin Motets, op. 2; 'O hearken thou', op. 64; *Te deum and Benedictus*, op. 34; *O salutaris hostia* in F; *Great is the Lord*, op. 67; 'The Spirit of the Lord is upon me' from *The Apostles*, op. 49; *Go, Song of Mine*, op. 57; 'Seek Him that maketh the seven stars' and 'Light of the world' from *The Light of Life*, op. 29.

Jonathan Vaughn (organ)
Choir of St John's College, Cambridge
conducted by Christopher Robinson

The late 1960s were an exciting time for Elgar enthusiasts, with lots of mouth-watering recordings appearing almost monthly—orchestral pieces from Groves and Marriner (first recordings or appearing on LP for the first time), part-songs from the Louis Halsey Singers, and of course, Boult's *The Kingdom*. Another welcome release from 1969 (CSD 3660) featured church music by the Worcester Cathedral Choir under Christopher Robinson, who had been appointed to the organist's post six years earlier at the tender age of twenty-seven. Several of the pieces were première recordings, and the disc also featured Robinson playing short extracts from the *Vesper Voluntaries*, op. 14. (Happily, this recording is still available, coupled with Sumsion's classic version of the Organ Sonata, on CDM 565594.)

Christopher Robinson and the St John's choir have really carved out a niche for themselves in their wonderful series of acclaimed recordings of English choral music for Naxos. Six times they have been the *Gramophone* editor's 'Choice of the Month', and they have received four Gramophone Award nominations. Now, as a farewell to Robinson's time at St John's, and recorded in July last year, the month in which he retired, comes a new recording of the Elgar repertoire. The CD format permits more music than the LP did, and so the oratorio extracts, *Go, Song of Mine*, *O salutaris hostia*, and the earlier of the two psalm settings are added to the previous items, the only omission from the earlier recording being the part-song *Angelus*. The first of the two extracts from *The Light of Life* is of some interest. It was first published as a separate anthem in 1896 and gives different words to the tenor soloist. In the oratorio the Blind Man bemoans his condition (to words by Capel Cure); the new words (taken from Psalms 30, 130 and 139) asking for God's help in difficulties, are more suitable for a general anthem. (This therefore constitutes a first recording.)

When comparing the Worcester and Cambridge recordings, it is immediately clear that Robinson's approach to the music has differed little since 1969. The timings tend to be slightly quicker, but without exception these are excellent accounts of these pieces. One obviously misses the orchestra in the oratorio extracts and the psalm and canticle settings (if one is used to them, that is!) but Robinson and his singers bring out all the passion in these marvellous works. Recording techniques have obviously improved over thirty-five years, and the St John's acoustic is much easier on the ear than the heavy reverberation of Worcester Cathedral (Donald Hunt and his forces also suffer here on their fine disc of 1988, re-released last year and reviewed in the JOURNAL,



Naxos
8.557288

November 2003). The balance between voices and organ is well high ideal, the diction is superb, and it is difficult sometimes to believe you are listening to no more than twenty-eight voices. The *Light of Life* anthem 'Seek Him...' is for men's double chorus, yet there is remarkable body to the sound achieved by just ten singers. Perhaps the most impressive aspect of the choir is the top line. Treble voices can sound somewhat anaemic on occasions, but these are sensational—listen to the section between letters H and J in the *Te Deum* ('The holy Church throughout all the world...') as an example; there are many equally impressive moments. The four altos also give a good account of themselves (they are virtually inaudible in some places on the 1969 recording).

If you are still unconvinced about acquiring this recording, the clinching factor might well be the amazing price—less than £5. For those interested in Elgar's church music, the good news is that as well as the 1969 EMI disc mentioned above, Christopher Robinson's other Worcester recording (containing the *Bavarian Highlands* and some early church pieces) is available on Chandos 6601 at budget price, and Donald Hunt's on Helios CDH 55147, also at budget. Then, of course, there is the album of rarities from the Chelsea choir, which I reviewed last time. My advice—get them all!

Geoffrey Hodgkins

Violin Sonata, op. 82

plus Franck, Violin Sonata in A major, and music by Kreisler, Massenet and Vieira

Tuncay Yilmaz (violin), Robert Markham (piano)

Much as I would like to encourage the performance and recording of Elgar by a Turkish violinist (Tuncay Yilmaz was born in Izmir; Robert Markham is a British pianist, a product of Chetham's and of the Juilliard School), this is not a CD I enjoyed listening to. Though Tuncay Yilmaz has on occasions a nice sweet tone, this sweetness is too often marred by gratuitous *portamenti*, excessive vibrato and a poor intonation so that it becomes if not sour, then certainly unpleasantly saccharine.

The opening of the Elgar sonata is rather inaccurate in pitch with one very sour note, though not so sour as the D flat in the bar before fig. 50. Elsewhere—from fig. 18 to 19—the tone can be rather rough. Tempi, too, are wayward and changes of speed are exaggerated. For example, nine bars after fig. 12 there is an unbelievably severe slowing down; a similar one occurs at two bars after fig. 28. It is as if Mr Yilmaz takes *dolce* and *dolcissimo* to be signals for great speed reductions, which they are not. Conversely, from fig. 31 to 32, there is a ridiculous *accelerando*. I know that Elgar needs a performance which is flexible in tempo, but the trouble here is that the basic tempo is never really established and we are side-tracked all along the way by incidental detail—of which this score is typically full. The *largamente* after fig. 40 is brought one bar early each time, which ruins the effect. The music at fig. 53 completely loses momentum, and at fig. 55 is by no stretch of the imagination *molto più lento*. Overall the performance can best be described as fidgety and this leads to a loss of structural cohesion. The balance of the recording, too, is rather odd, with the pianoforte somewhat muffled, which means that when it should take the lead—as in the third movement just before fig. 42—it is the violinist's accompanying figure that we hear, and the train of musical thought is lost.

The other pieces do not fare much better. The Franck sonata repeats faults already mentioned. The second movement, in particular, has some odd tonal

characteristics, at times being very fuzzy and, in the middle, adopting a ghostly non-vibrato sound that I find quite unpleasant. The famous canonic theme of the last movement has an irritatingly lengthened upbeat which I also find irritating.

Three smaller pieces fill up the CD: Kreisler's *Liebeslied* (misspelt *Liebesleid*), Massenet's 'Méditation' from *Thaïs* and the première recording of Amaral Vieira's *Novelette* (which is dedicated to Tuncay Yilmaz). I will not repeat myself by listing faults I have already mentioned. There are some nice moments—like the *rubati* at the start of the Kreisler (except when they become too mannered) and the reprise of the opening section of the Massenet (until its poise is spoiled by a sudden unwarranted acceleration).

I have always taken the view that performances of Elgar's music by non-British artists, firmly rooted as it is in the late Romantic European tradition, should be encouraged wherever possible. This CD, unfortunately, contains a performance of the sonata that is not the kind which will do him much good. If you like your Elgar covered in meringue and with stops *en route* for all the fascinating little places along the roadside, then you might enjoy it. Regretfully, I haven't.

Paul Adrian Rooke



Dogan
DMC-20110

Artists Rifles (1914–18)

A compendium of poetry, prose and music from the Great War including George Butterworth: *English Idyll*; Siegfried Sassoon reading his *July 31, 1914* and *Attack*; Edward Elgar: *Carillon* (recorded 1915); Maurice Ravel: 'Prelude' from *Le tombeau de Couperin*; Robert Graves reading his *Dawn Bombardment*; Ralph Vaughan Williams: 'Prelude' from *Sinfonia Antartica* and *A Pastoral Symphony* (second movement); David Jones reading from his *In Parenthesis* (Part 3); Gustav Holst: 'Mars' from *The Planets* (recorded 1926); Edmund Blunden reading his *Concert Party, Busseboom*; Ernest Moeran: *Lonely Waters*; Edgell Rickword reading from his *Winter Warfare—The Soldier Addresses his Body*; Ivor Gurney: *In Flanders* (song for baritone and orchestra); Arthur Bliss: 'Spring Offensive' (extract from *Morning Heroes*, recorded 1934) with Basil Maine, orator; Laurence Binyon reading his *For the Fallen*; Cecil Coles: 'Cortège' from his suite *Behind the Lines*; Sgt Edward Dwyer, VC, 1915 recording of his experiences fighting in France.

I first met with CD41 when reviewing *Siegfried Sassoon—Memorial Tablet* for the JOURNAL (March 2004, p. 41). That CD had the primary focus of Sassoon reading from his own poems and autobiographical prose. For we Elgarians the added spice was the reissue of the Elgar Violin Concerto as recorded by Marie Hall with Elgar conducting in 1916. Please note that, unfortunately, the new CD duplicates two of the Sassoon items recorded on the earlier CD.

With this new CD the scope is wider, having the over-grand subtitle of 'the definitive collection of prose, poetry and music of the Great War'. Putting that aside, and with a number of caveats, I must say that I enjoyed the new collection and, recalling the advice of 'the curate's egg', I concentrate on what I perceive as 'the good bits' and make little comment on the other parts! It is perfectly true of course that perceptions are largely subjective, particular responses, so I do not go looking for 'definitives' in this collection,

should they exist!

All of the items in this collection have some link to the Great War. The recording of Ravel's *Le tombeau de Couperin* comes from an elderly-sounding recording and seems to be of little musical distinction. In the case of Ralph Vaughan Williams, the booklet gets rather in a knot when discussing the Third and Seventh Symphonies, with the heading naming the Seventh and the immediate text being totally related to the Third. There is no question that his Symphony No. 3 is directly linked to the war—the first sketches were indeed set down whilst he was in northern France. It seems to me however to be stretching a long bow in claiming that he 'must surely have drawn from his Great War experiences' in composing the *Sinfonia Antartica*, (note the correct spelling is 'Antartica', it being Italian, as is 'Sinfonia'). However, if listening to these fine performances conducted by Sir Adrian Boult leads the listener to want to hear more Vaughan Williams, then no damage will have been done.

This too goes for the delightful—and excellently recorded—works of both Butterworth and Moeran. Like Sassoon and Blunden, Butterworth was awarded the Military Cross—but such a tragic loss to music, dead by 1916.

There are at least four items on this disc which make it a 'must purchase' for me.

The first is the recording of *Carillon* recorded in 1915 with the well-known actor Henry Ainley as reciter and Elgar conducting. The recording now sounds very well after its digital 'clean-up' and Ainley is in excellent voice, declaiming without the histrionics which a number of reports say the original reciter Tita Brand Cammaerts displayed. The full text is given whilst the largely separate music has had to be abbreviated somewhat given the marketing demands that the recording be limited to two twelve-inch sides.

Here I must of necessity report that the unspecified writer of the note accompanying *Carillon* refers to Elgar as 'the leading English classical composer of the time'. Further on, in the Ralph Vaughan Williams notes, another writer(?) states, 'Vaughan Williams went on to become arguably the most important English classical composer since Purcell.' Still, in this world people will argue about almost anything, won't they!

Elgarians will be interested in hearing the voice of Laurence Binyon, he of *The Winnowing Fan* and the subsequent marrying of this to Elgar's music in *The Spirit of England*. The recording is from a rather elderly 78rpm, but the surface noise is not excessive. His 'They shall grow not old...' must surely be one of the most often declaimed poems, not only throughout Britain and Europe (as the sleeve-note writer tells us) but also, I can assure you, throughout Australia, New Zealand, Canada, and other long forgotten countries!

Until I heard this recording I must admit I had never heard of Cecil Coles—nor had many others until 2002. It is quite something to hear for the first time his funeral *Cortège*—lost for over eighty years, discovered by his daughter and finally recorded by Martin Brabbins in 2001. The recording, from Hyperion, is superb. Coles was killed near the Somme on 26 April 1918. He was just thirty.

My last offering is, to the best of my knowledge, truly 'definitive'! It is, technically, one of the worst recordings I have ever heard. But it is also one of the most wonderful windows back in time to the real world of 1914–15 and just what it was like to be a 'Tommy' near Ypres in April 1915. Here is an actual recording, titled 'Our Boys at the Front', with subtitles 'On the March' and 'At the Front', of a nineteen-year-old VC winner, Sergeant Edward Dwyer, telling us, 'Although I'm only a youngster as soldiers go, I've seen about as much fighting as is good for any man...' He was awarded the



CD41
CD41-009

VC, wounded and shipped home, and promoted and lauded as 'The Little Corporal'. He then spent six months supporting the national recruiting drive. Tiring of this and wanting to return to his men he returned to the front. He was killed in action leading his men near Guillemont on the Somme, 3 September 1916. A priceless recording. Buy it!

Ernest Blamires

(Available from: CD41 Publishing, 1 Spinney Close, Beetley, Dereham, Norfolk NR20 4TB. Cost per disc is £10.00 including postage (£11.00 overseas), cheques payable to 'J. Nice' or Visa by telephone on 01362 861009.)

Jacqueline du Pré in Portrait

including Elgar's Cello Concerto in E minor, op. 85
New Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim

Like the contralto Kathleen Ferrier before her, cellist Jacqueline du Pré enjoyed enormous public acclaim and esteem, and left behind an enduring reputation, and again like Ferrier, her career was cut cruelly short by mortal illness after barely a decade. Here we have a vivid portrait of the cellist in Nupen's 1980 revised version (made at du Pré's express wish) of his original 1967 biopic, in which full performances of Elgar's Cello Concerto and Beethoven's Piano Trio, Op. 70 No. 1 ('Ghost') are included as well as snatches of other music. She is described as 'one of the finest musicians England has produced in the past 300 years', with which it is hard to disagree. True, she was criticised by some at the time for her involvement in her music-making which produced physical distractions such as flinging back her long, flowing golden hair, or thwacking her bow in percussive manner as she attacked her entries, but this was no more than trivial envy by some. As Barbirolli so notably said of her 'excessive emotion': 'I love it. When you're young, you should have an excess of everything. If you haven't an excess, what are you going to pare off as the years go by?' Du Pré had a close musical relationship with Barbirolli, with her 'cello Daddy' William Pleeth (they duet together at one point in the film), and of course with her contemporary Daniel Barenboim whom she married in 1967.

Her London debut took place under Ibbs and Tillett's auspices at the Wigmore Hall on 1 March 1961 in a recital accompanied by Ernest Lush, but the music which captured the public's imagination was her performance of Elgar's concerto, a work born of the composer's maturity ('a swansong of rare and vanishing beauty,' wrote Neville Cardus) containing an inherent pathos which, despite her youth, she managed to bring out. The day after her Royal Festival Hall performance with the BBC Symphony Orchestra under Rudolf Schwarz on 21 March 1962, Cardus continued in his *Guardian* review, 'Those actually present were witness on the first day of Spring to an early blossoming in Miss du Pré's playing, and such a beautiful blossoming as this year or any other year is likely to know for a long time to come.'

At the beginning of the film (and in colour rather than the 1967 black and white original) du Pré, by now crippled by the multiple sclerosis which confined her to a wheelchair and precluded any cello playing, is seen with cellist Moray Welsh suggesting fingerings for the concerto, singing along and behaving like the brave and adventurous spirit that she was. It is a touching moment. A full performance under Barenboim with the New Philharmonia Orchestra concludes this segment of the film. It

is followed by the Beethoven trio played by Barenboim, Zuckerman and du Pré, full of the zest and energy which all members of that set displayed in their combination of horse-play and serious moments (Mehta and Perlman were also friends and musical collaborators).

The magical sounds of du Pré's 1712 Davidov cello (one of the top three or four instruments in the world donated anonymously through the shop of the string specialist Charles Beer) will linger long in the memory, enhanced by the sight here of her captivating charm and sense of fun. She may have been difficult for Barenboim to accompany (surely more because of his relative inexperience at the time as a conductor, rather than any confusing *rubato* on her part, because her phrasing was always crystal clear), but she is the exception to his rule that 'people who are in love do not necessarily play well together, while people who play well together are not necessarily in love'. Music-lovers the world over were and probably will remain in love with the immortal Jacqueline du Pré.

Christopher Fifield



BBC Opus
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LETTERS

From: Philip Scowcroft

*At the beginning of August this year I attended the 2004 convention of the Dorothy L. Sayers Society at Loughborough University, which was devoted to her novel *The Nine Tailors*, a book much concerned with bells. The programme included (1) a recital by a local team of handbell ringers, one of whose items was an arrangement (1992, by John Mitchell) of the trio section from *Pomp and Circumstance No. 4*, eagerly encored by the audience, and (2) a visit to Loughborough's war memorial carillon. Elgar devotees are well aware that EE composed *Memorial Chimes* for this in 1923; this particular recital, given by the Canadian carillonneur Gerald Martindale, did not include Elgar's piece and Mr Martindale told me that he had never played it, though he much enjoyed an arrangement for carillon of *Salut d'amour* transcribed by a Dutch composer whose name he could not recall.*

From: Ian Morgan

*At the start of *Composer's Notes*: Elgar (Classic FM, 18 September 2004), presenter John Suchet stated that this programme would investigate what kind of sums Elgar earned for the music he composed. In the event only three works were mentioned: *Salut d'amour* (two guineas), the *Vesper Voluntaries* (five guineas), and his 1914 part-songs for which he received twenty-five guineas plus five per cent on all sales. By this time, the head of Novello was critical of 'the composer's greed'! While *Salut d'amour* may well have become Elgar's best-known work, it was observed that the Elgar Birthplace has had to pay a high price for the manuscript (£15,000 in 2002). It was something of a surprise that, while mention was made of Elgar's friendship with G. B. Shaw, nothing was said about the extraordinary efforts the latter made to get the BBC to commission the unfinished *Third Symphony* in 1932 for £1,000. (Anyone who wants proof of this has only to visit the Birthplace archive.)*

*From this listener's perspective, it was interesting to hear two of the four musical illustrations played—the whole of the Introduction and Allegro for Strings (Vienna Philharmonic, John Eliot Gardiner) and the first two movements of the Cello Concerto (Yo-Yo Ma, LSO, André Previn)—which I had not previously heard. Also used were the inevitable *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1* (BBC Symphony Orchestra, Andrew Davis) and a very moving 'Nimrod' (CBSO, Simon Rattle).*

*However, there were several glaring factual errors: (1) Elgar was 'twenty-two in 1884' when he played in the orchestra under Dvořák at Worcester (he was twenty-seven by this time); (2) *The Black Knight* and *Caractacus* were described as 'oratorios'—surely 'dramatic cantatas' would be correct? (3) His date of death was given as '23 February 1924'. I realise that the producers of this programme were probably aiming at a basic level of interest in Elgar, but surely someone like Mr Suchet, who is a well-known Beethoven enthusiast, has a better brain than this script might have conveyed. The saddest thing from my perspective was that ninety per cent of his listeners will know no better!*

100 YEARS AGO...

Back home after the Gloucester Festival, Elgar made the most of the fine September weather to cycle, with Rosa Burley and with Charles Gorton. The latter's visit had inspired Elgar to turn to his oratorio scheme once again: on 26 September the diary notes that he was '... deep in libretto of the "Apostles"'. The first week in October found the Elgars in Leeds for the Festival, with a performance of *In the South* on the 5th, and the award of an honorary degree from the university the following day. They enjoyed spending time with the Kilburns, and returned to Hereford on the 7th, where Edward was soon 'busy with his text'. Yet inspiration was elusive, as he wrote to Alfred Littleton on the 15th: 'I am working away at the oratorio but have nothing to shew you yet, & I sometimes feel overweighted'. He and Alice had just returned from Birmingham where they attended the prize-giving at Bantock's Midland Institute. Plans were afoot in the city to invite Elgar to the new chair of music at the university. On a visit to Liverpool to conduct on 22 October, Bantock talked to Elgar about the Birmingham appointment.

On 9 November Elgar conducted the Worcestershire Philharmonic in a performance of *Caractacus*. The title part was sung by Charles Tree: in letters to Ivor Atkins Elgar made much play of a 'Singing Tree'. It was well received, and Alice was presented with a bouquet: 'all very nice and touching', she wrote. Three days later Professor Fiedler, dean of the arts faculty, came to Hereford for 'a long talk' about the Birmingham post, but Elgar declined the nomination saying that 'the duties would take up too much time'. On 17 November Bantock and Alfred Hayes (secretary of the Midland Institute) came to Hereford to discuss further. Elgar was by now in mental turmoil over it all: 'Very anxious how to decide Birmingham', wrote Alice on the 20th, the day Elgar put the finishing touches to the third *Pomp and Circumstance* march. The following day he travelled to London to ask Littleton for his opinion: he 'advised acceptance', and so Elgar finally agreed.

At short notice he decided to go to Germany for Fritz Volbach's performance of *The Apostles* in Mainz, because Steinbach was conducting *In the South* at Köln a week later. He and Frank Schuster left on 28 November. *The Apostles* was a 'great success. It was said there had never been such a triumph in Mainz', Alice wrote. Two days later the work was performed in Rotterdam, and Elgar told Jaeger that Van Post, the bass who sang Judas, was 'the best we have yet had—in fact I could scarcely wish for anything better!'

The Malvern Concert Club meeting on 3 December saw a performance by the Brodsky Quartet. Alice said that Adolf Brodsky had '...no feeling about Birm. except pleased for anythg wh. wd. be good for E'. The Köln performance of *In the South* on 6 December was another 'great success' according to the diary. After visiting Buths in Düsseldorf the following day, Elgar and Schuster arrived back in London on the 9th. Alice met them and they spent ten days in the capital, visiting art galleries and the theatre, and attending lunches and dinners. They also went to the Queen's Hall on the 15th to hear Steinbach conduct the LSO. They left London on the 20th, but Elgar went on to Birmingham for a concert of Richard Strauss's music, the composer conducting: Elgar made a speech of welcome. On arriving at Hereford he '...looked well & in good spirits', but Christmas took its usual toll. On Boxing Day he was 'still depressed' and the following day he received 'an odious letter from Stanford'.

Geoffrey Hodgkins

ISSN 0143-1269

*Printed by
Westpoint Printing Co. Ltd,
113 Fazeley Street,
Birmingham B5 5RX*