

The Society

*Elgar*



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April 2016 Vol.19, No. 4



# The Elgar Society Journal

18 Holtsmere Close, Watford, Herts., WD25 9NG  
Email: journal@elgar.org

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*The Editor does not necessarily agree with the views expressed by contributors,  
nor does the Elgar Society accept responsibility for such views.*

*Front Cover: Baldwin, Elgar and Ivor Atkins outside Worcester Cathedral, 17 August 1926.  
(Wulstan Atkins)*

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Books: Author, *Title* (Place of publication: Publisher, year of publication), page[s]. Thus: Robert Anderson, *Elgar* (London: Dent, 1993), 199.

Periodicals: Author, 'Title of article', *Title of periodical*, issue number and date sufficient to identify, page[s]. Thus: Michael Allis, 'Elgar, Lytton, and the Piano Quintet, Op. 84', *Music & Letters*, 85 (May 2004), 198.

End a footnote with a full stop, please, and never put a comma before a parenthesis.

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## Editorial

This issue must start on a sad note with the recording of the deaths of two unsurpassed writers on the life and music of Elgar: Robert Anderson and Brian Trowell. Full obituaries are to be found in the *News*, but readers will forgive a few personal remarks here.

I didn't know Brian at all well but, though he didn't know it, he was one of the reasons why I started my 'Elgar database' many years ago. Whatever he wrote about Elgar seemed to be produced with remarkable perception and insight, such that I could never hope to possess. I could, however, make it easier for writers like Brian to have easy access to Elgar's letters, diaries and other contemporary material, and so I decided to become a sort of unofficial self-appointed research assistant to prepare the ground for the insights of Brian and others.

Robert I knew of from his biography of Elgar, his editorship of the Complete Edition and, not least, his marathon play throughs of the complete Bach Cantatas in the '60s on Sunday afternoons at St. Bartholomew the Great. Imagine my delight (and trepidation) when John Norris invited Robert and me to be series editors of 'Edward Elgar: Collected Correspondence'. The three and a half years that we worked together on the series were sheer delight. As an editor he knew with unerring certainty when to give me my head and when to rein in my more verbose enthusiasms. The afternoons I spent at his Kensington home were an absolute pleasure, and not only for the bottle of Chablis that we invariably demolished. He lived opposite Stanford's old home, and we egged each other on in agreeing that Stanford, while not having any of the genius of Elgar, produced music of a far more consistent standard. He would then reminisce about music, and at our last meeting I listened with Cheshire-cat-like grin to his tale of Jacqueline du Pré arriving to do some 'cello practice, only to call down ten minutes later, saying 'Robert, I'm bored, let's play the Brahms sonatas'. Robert could convey in a glance what other editors can struggle to say, and I am glad to say that I still see that glance whenever my enthusiasm threatens to get the better of me.

And so to this issue, the first of my final year as editor. I hope that in the three diverse essays you find plenty of interest, and I give my wholehearted thanks to these and other contributors for providing such a cornucopia of material that as one issue goes to press much of the next, as if by magic, awaits.

Martin Bird

## In Praise of Worcestershire: Edward Elgar and Stanley Baldwin

Kevin Allen

*Stanley Baldwin (1867-1947), First Earl Baldwin of Bewdley, a Worcestershire man born and bred, was a dominating Conservative figure in British politics during most of the 1920s and 30s, Elgar's later years. He was Prime Minister three times and rose to an almost unprecedented height of public trust and popularity through his even-handed attitude to party politics, and his tactful and resolute handling of the General Strike and the Abdication, although a certain insularity of mind meant that his handling of foreign affairs was less sure. Nevertheless, Winston Churchill thought Baldwin the most formidable politician he had ever known, and his arch-enemy Lloyd George used the same word about him. Formidable – and eccentric perhaps, for Baldwin lived the life of a phlegmatic countryman in politics in a way that would be impossible today. If Elgar may be described the Worcestershire composer, then surely Stanley Baldwin was the Worcestershire Prime Minister. Like Elgar, he spoke often and movingly about the largely rural county and its spiritual influence. Both men explored it widely and loved its history, its people, its countryside, rivers, hills, orchards, cottages and churches. And both men would surely have echoed the sentiments of another occasional, celebrated resident, J.R.R. Tolkien, who wrote that 'any corner of that county (however fair or squalid) is in an indefinable way 'home' to me, as no other part of the world is.'*<sup>1</sup>

Tuesday 17 August, 1926: Wulstan Atkins' photographic vignette of Elgar and Stanley Baldwin chatting outside Worcester Cathedral a few weeks before that year's Festival remains a classic from several points of view, bringing together two 'Worcestershire Worthies' from different fields but with linked interests, and offering interesting scope for interpretation of body language. The Prime Minister, formally dressed and simultaneously poised and relaxed, seeming to have all the time in the world, stands talking at the centre of the orbit of a small group of satellites of whom Elgar is the nearest, while Ivor Atkins remains an observer at a slight, suitably respectful distance; behind him, almost out of the scene at Baldwin's insistence, is his official detective. Despite his apparently leisurely image on that occasion, Baldwin was desperately seeking a few days' escape in his home county in the uncertain aftermath of a major, stressful national emergency, the General Strike. Although he was musical, and Elgar a staunch Conservative, the encounter was one of surprisingly few between two figures whose lives and works, in their different ways, might be defined by their devotion to the county of Worcestershire and the values with which they imbued it.

Elgar would probably have known the name of Baldwin from way back, for the celebrated

1 Letter to Michael Tolkien, 18 March 1941.

family ironworks at Stourport, a few miles north from Worcester along the Severn, together with other concerns at Bridgnorth and Wolverhampton, had been successfully established before his birth. With further gradual expansion Baldwins Ltd would become one of the giants of the steel industry, with family wealth to match. Alfred Baldwin, in full control of the firm from 1870, had married Louisa Macdonald, a writer and one of a celebrated sisterhood which came to include the mother of Rudyard Kipling and the wives of Edward Burne-Jones and Edward Poynter. Born in 1867, Alfred and Louisa's son Stanley thus inherited the kind of artistic hinterland which few politicians could boast, intensified as his mother developed a depressive illness which left her an invalid for many years. And although Alfred became a Justice of the Peace and Conservative Member for Bewdley (returned unopposed several times), he too was a victim of a degree of mental illness, developing a severe facial tic and obsessive fears, for example of thunder. So there was too, another, darker side to Stanley's inheritance. He remained an only, and occasionally a lonely child, led, as was Elgar, by his mother's example into a world of reading and imagination. The family were members of the London Library, and young Stanley was keen to be the first to open the regular parcel from St James's Square, remembering in later life the warm look and smell of the books inside, bound in half morocco and calf. He remembered too, reading lying on the carpet in front of the fire, the log smouldering in the grate.<sup>2</sup> He set out on a personal voyage of discovery through books, just as the young Elgar did, although without such resources, and thus laid the foundation of his education, his love of the classics, history and romance; and in the process laid the foundations of his later mastery of language. One wonders, though, what kind of sanitised Victorian 'story-book' history he may have been exposed to. At the time of the Abdication he is said to have remarked how reading about kings and queens as a child, he little thought that he would one day have to come between king and his mistress. It was typical of a streak of innocence, even naïvety, that marked his character. Another lifelong habit he developed early, and one shared with Elgar, was that of exploring the countryside in order to satisfy a need for escape and stimulus. In Elgar's case it was by bicycle and latterly motor; Baldwin preferred to go on foot, and in later life would walk enormous distances around Worcestershire's country lanes. The two men had lived a rural Victorian childhood generally experienced no faster than a horse's pace. Although Elgar had busy Worcester and its railway on his doorstep, Baldwin's was a more remote part of the county. 'When I was young', he remembered, 'I lived as everybody else did at that time, in the centre of a circle with a



**Baldwin, Elgar and Ivor Atkins outside Worcester Cathedral, 17 August 1926. (Wulstan Atkins)**

2 'Mr Baldwin on Books', *The Times*, 14 February 1934.



forceful of the sisters and had worked hard among the local tenantry at election times against that unspeakable radical, W.E. Gladstone. She canvassed on behalf of Baldwin at that unsuccessful Kidderminster bye-election, and was proud to meet him on polling day, where she noted that her whole family gave him 'a great reception'. Florence's relationship with the Baldwins, particularly Lucy, developed almost as much through cricket as politics, and they often met at Worcester's New Road ground. Lucy thought enough of Florence to suggest that she set up a local branch of the West Worcestershire Women's Conservative Association, and invited her to lunch at the family home, Astley House. One day Lucy drove Florence to the works at Wilden, where Stanley showed them over his father's Church with its famous windows, and one Christmas the sisters were asked to stay the night at Astley to enjoy a children's Fancy Dress Ball. It was a connection that the Norburys prized and treasured, and far more a matter of shared values than any pretension to a link with celebrity. When Stanley's famous broadcast on the eve of the General Strike was reproduced in the press ('I am a man of peace. I am longing and working and praying for peace ... Cannot you trust me to ensure a square deal for the parties, to secure even justice between man and man?') Winifred Paget sent Baldwin a box of apples from the estate, he asked for another so that he could ensure it would be opened in his presence. A letter from Norbury in *The Field* about red squirrels and the little owl was greeted 'as a breath of fresh air', and led to a reminiscence from Downing Street about how the former used to be plentiful in a big Scotch fir at Astley House.

\* \* \* \* \*

Baldwin was backward about pushing himself forward. While at Cambridge (like Richard Baxter Townshend and William Meath Baker) he joined 'Maggie and Stump', the Trinity Debating Society, but was asked to leave because he never spoke. Once elected member for Bewdley, he made a quiet, largely unremarked start in the House. He became a regular and conscientious attender on the back benches, but made few debating contributions after the formality of his maiden speech. The record shows however that he did ask various questions reflecting a countryman's concern for horses, one which he shared with Elgar. *Hansard* for 15<sup>th</sup> July, 1909,<sup>7</sup> tells us that Mr Baldwin asked the Secretary of State for War 'if he is aware that the hay at first supplied to the horses of the Worcestershire Yeomanry during their recent training was quite uneatable; and whether he will caution the contractors concerned'; and there was a second question, too, about the quality of the rugs supplied to the horses on that occasion.

Too old to serve in the Great War, Baldwin did much backroom committee work and gained the reputation of being a sensible trustworthy man with useful business experience, but otherwise unremarkable. In 1916, possibly *faute de mieux* with so many younger men away in the forces, he became (unpaid) Parliamentary Secretary to Andrew Bonar Law, the Chancellor of the Exchequer in Lloyd George's wartime coalition, and thereafter he was promoted to Financial Secretary to the Treasury. He became President of the Board of Trade, his first full cabinet position, in 1921. He found himself unhappy with the post-war atmosphere of the Commons, famously noting that it was now full of hard-faced men who looked as if they had done well out of the war. Baldwins Ltd had inevitably done well out of the war, of course, through the manufacture of armaments, but Baldwin refrained from selling his shares. In fact his conscience in the matter was such that he decided to give about one-fifth of his personal fortune to the Treasury as an example to others to put the country first and reduce the huge post-war debt. It was an entirely characteristic gesture and one which remains without parallel.

7 Accessed via [hansard.millbanksystems.com](http://hansard.millbanksystems.com) on 12 May 2010.

Bob Boothby thought that Baldwin was simply the nicest man he had ever known in politics, and his reputation was always that of a peacemaker and conciliator. The man himself was aware of his weaknesses as Leader of the Opposition – he could not summon up the necessary attacking aggression and venom. But if there was ever a case of a man with an obsessive *bête-noire* it can be found in Baldwin's intense dislike of Lloyd George, whose quicksilver mind and lack of scruple were at total odds with a man of Baldwin's temperament and values. L.G.'s charismatic leadership had ensured the continuation of the wartime coalition and his Premiership, but at the cost of splitting his own party and the Conservative party too; and Baldwin was a healer. When it seemed that L.G. was fomenting a war with Turkey in order to cement his electoral position at home, Baldwin felt that enough was enough. Together with Bonar Law he spoke out against 'the goat', as he called him, at the famous meeting of MPs at the Carlton Club in October 1922. Baldwin's speech on that occasion was nothing more than a few plain sentences – he distrusted conventional political rhetoric and passionate Churchillian bombast was not his style – but it was enough to force Lloyd George's resignation and end his career. He never again held office. For such an unpretentious man as Stanley Baldwin – there were still many in the country and even in his own party who had hardly heard of him – to have destroyed one of the Titans of British politics was a feat indeed; 'Tiger Stan' was Lucy's nickname for her husband.



'The Practical Visionary' (*Punch*)

It was a moral stand which proved the opportunity for further advancement. Major experienced Conservative figures who had supported the Coalition would not take office under the new Prime Minister Bonar Law, and so Baldwin was an almost inevitable choice for Chancellor of the Exchequer, although he turned it down at first. Thereafter, 'events dear boy, events', in Harold Macmillan's famous words, took over. Within months Bonar Law fell victim to terminal cancer and had to resign, and the choice for the Premiership lay between Baldwin and the only senior Conservative to have come over from the Coalition, Lord Curzon. His position in the Lords, inexperience of domestic politics, and reputation for arrogance ensured that, as Winifred Norbury noted in her Diary for 22<sup>nd</sup> May, 1923, it was Baldwin that the King sent for. Curzon was furious, and is said to have spluttered that his rival was 'a man of the utmost insignificance'.

The Worcester authorities evidently felt that some special recognition was in order, and later that year in November Baldwin joined Edward Elgar in the roll of Freemen of the City, arriving at the Guildhall to be greeted by a crowd of well-wishers including the Norburys. At the ceremony he made a speech of thanks in which he reviewed his family's connection with Worcestershire, stated his creed of political office, and remembered his education in countryside values.

... one knows in one's bones now that one is a Worcestershire man, and that there is nothing like it. One came out of this red soil, and one will return to it and lay one's bones in it, and there is no soil like it in this country ... I am just one of yourselves, who has been called to special work for the country at this time. I never sought the office. I never planned out or schemed my life. I have but one idea, which was an idea that I inherited, and it was the idea of service – service to the people of this country ... I lived as a child in the heart of Worcestershire, by the side of one of the last iron forges that were left in the rural districts of England, and the impressions of childhood are those that last, and as you get

older come back more strongly. Among the chief friends that I had in those days ... was a shepherd who could neither read nor write, but like many men of those days who could neither read nor write, he was a great deal more intelligent than many who can do both now. He had a face like an old pippin, and talked the undiluted tongue of our fathers. I learned much from him.<sup>8</sup>

And he mentioned an example of what he had learnt, in a phrase that surely would have resonated with Elgar, a victim of the shallowest kind of social snobbery; 'I learned instinctively and unconsciously another very useful lesson, and that is a man is a gentleman by what comes from within ...' Baldwin's respect for the country people was equalled by Elgar's own. W.H. Reed remembered ...

... his great love of humanity, especially the village folk, and those in the humbler walks of life. Position or station were nothing to him in his dealings with his fellow creatures; but the things they said were for him of inexhaustible and abiding interest ...<sup>9</sup>

\* \* \* \* \*

Although Parliament had still some four years to run on his accession to the Premiership, Baldwin felt morally bound to call an early election and seek a fresh mandate because his economic policies differed from those promised by Bonar Law. The result of this honourable but politically inept decision in the ensuing General Election of December 1923 was a loss to the Conservatives of 88 seats and their working majority. But Baldwin did not allow matters to spoil his Christmas, for on 29<sup>th</sup> December Winifred Norbury recorded that she went to the College Hall to hear some seasonal music, 'a lovely selection' by the choir and a band of strings. 'Sir Ivor conducted in his doctoral robes. The Prime Minister was there and also at the Deanery tea party to which Florence and I went and enjoyed it very much'.

Baldwin resigned perforce in January 1924 and the first Labour government took office under Ramsay Macdonald. Elgar, whose detestation of the new régime and its leader was virulent, notoriously resigned his membership of the Atheneum when he found that the new Prime Minister had been granted membership *ex officio*. Baldwin's gesture in calling an unnecessary election was seen by many on his side as verging on the naïve; some have seen something of a spirit of chivalry and fair play behind it. The new Government was a minority one, totally inexperienced, and proved short-lived. Others have argued that Baldwin was happy for it to go ahead and prove a failure; 'the many-sidedness of truth'. Be that as it may, Baldwin was returned with a large majority in the ensuing election of November 1924 and was able to embark on a full five-year term. He was instinctively a healer and one of his priorities was a deep wish to reunite and re-establish the Conservative Party and guard against any possible resurgence of the Liberals, the Coalition and the detested Lloyd George. To this end he made sure to offer Cabinet posts to some of the leading coalition Tories, welcoming them back into the fold and at the same time keeping them fully occupied in demanding posts; posts, A.J.P. Taylor says mischievously, to which they were not always necessarily well suited. The classic example of this was Baldwin's dramatic promotion of Winston Churchill to the Chancellorship of the Exchequer. Churchill himself could not believe it and thought he was being offered the sinecure of the Chancellorship of the Duchy of Lancaster.

8 Speech at Worcester, 7 November 1923, reprinted in Stanley Baldwin, *On England and Other Addresses* (London: Philip Allan, 1926), 17-21.

9 W.H. Reed, *Elgar As I Knew Him* (London: Gollancz, 1936), 43.

It was a clever move. Inordinately ambitious, Churchill had already left the Conservatives for the Liberals and then quit the Liberals to come back to the Tories: 'ratted and re-ratted', as he put it. There was no knowing what this loose cannon might do to foment a return to coalition if he thought it might offer him a chance of power. Better to keep him in the tent. The Exchequer would satisfy his ambition and guarantee his loyalty. But for those who understood 'the many-sidedness of truth' the promotion might also signify Baldwin's awareness that the post would conveniently occupy all Churchill's energies and offer him every opportunity to fail.

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'I am busy from morning till night the houses seem to choke it all off', Elgar wrote from London to Ivor Atkins in 1914; Stanley Baldwin's working methods as Prime Minister might seem those of a countryman who likewise failed to fully adapt to city life. 'In London', he said,

... I am a bird of passage. I own no house, I am not a tenant: I just live in a house from which I can be ejected at any moment without compensation. From it I can see the Horse Guards' Parade, which reminds me of the General Strike; the Foreign Office, which reminds me of troubles in China and Mr Chen; the India Office, which reminds me of Lord Birkenhead and the Swarajists; the War Office and the Admiralty, which remind me of Estimates. And then I think of what I can see from my own garden in the most beautiful view in all England. I see the hills known to all of you, beginning in the north-east, the Clent; and beyond, in Warwickshire, Edgehill, where the English Squire passed with horse and hounds between the two armies; Bredon, the beginning of the Cotswolds, like a cameo against the sky, and the wonderful straight blue line of the Malverns, little shapes of Ankerdine and Berrow Hill, and, perhaps most beautiful and graceful, his two neighbours, Woodbury and Abberley; and Clee Hills, opening up another beautiful and romantic world and presenting a circle of beauty which I defy any part of England to match.<sup>10</sup>

These words were spoken at the Inaugural Banquet of the Worcestershire Association, a non-political body whose stated objects were 'to revive personal associations, friendships, and promote good fellowship among Worcestershire folk wherever resident, and to foster love of county and pride in its traditions'. Baldwin was the natural choice to be its President; Elgar was not present on that occasion and seems never to have been a member. But surely he would have responded to Baldwin's county nostalgia, especially as he came to cut his ties with London in the 1920s. Earlier that evening Baldwin had said:

To-day, to us exiles, thoughts of Worcestershire in spring pluck at our very heart-strings. We who are confined to London see the verdure of the Evesham Gardens, the blossom of the Pershore plum. We see the cherry orchards from Bewdley to Tenbury. We see the pear and apple blossom everywhere, and we can smell the hopyards in the autumn.

\* \* \* \* \*

Like Elgar, Baldwin was one of the great escapists. He went to Chequers every weekend when he could, unpretentiously travelling by train and walking to the station and buying himself a ticket like anyone else. He disliked the telephone and often claimed to have no use for newspapers apart from

10 Speech at the Inaugural Banquet of the Worcestershire Association, 22 February 1927, reprinted in Stanley Baldwin, *Our Inheritance* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1928), 223-229.



Stanley and Lucy Baldwin at their home, Astley Hall, near Stourport in 1936.

the crossword. He had no formal timetable at Downing Street, preferring to delegate and let people get on with their jobs, just making himself available for advice and support as necessary. He often said little or nothing at Cabinet meetings, circulated few memoranda and left no autobiography or political memoir. His emotional inheritance from his parents resulted in a pronounced tendency to nervous exhaustion during his Premierships, resolved through those escapes to Chequers where he would play patience for hours on end while mulling over problems, and through long country walks and lengthy periods abroad at his favourite resort of Aix-les-Bains. And to complete the picture of a man possessed of the conventional symptoms of the ‘artistic temperament’, Baldwin developed a whole array of nervous tics. He was variously described as sitting on the front bench scratching himself continuously, making grunting noises, screwing up one eye, or snapping his fingers. Most eccentric of all, he had an obsessional habit of being unable to handle a book without sniffing at it; sometimes even an innocent sheet of blotting paper would fall victim to his attentions. Besides all these, Elgar’s own nervous habits of continuous blinking, rapid speech, eye and throat trouble and smoking seem to pale into insignificance. Reliance on the soothing effect of tobacco was something shared by both men and Baldwin was rarely seen without his pipe, which functioned too as an ‘image prop’. It was a ‘man-in-the-street’ image that he cultivated, in contrast to Churchill’s capitalist cigar. ‘Stanley Baldwin did nothing apart from getting photographed with his pipe in his mouth’, famously said Bernard Shaw, but it was one of the secrets of his success. A colleague told the story of the Prime Minister chairing a Cabinet Committee in 1925.

At 4.15 the PM presided over the unemployment Committee and did it in such good-tempered fashion that the conflict between the Chancellor and the Minister of Labour never emerged. For the first five or ten minutes the PM did nothing but work away at his pipe, scouring it out and filling it, lighting it and relighting it, meanwhile telling some quite amusing stories. We also had tea served and by the time we came to business we were all in the friendliest mood.<sup>11</sup>

Along with Baldwin’s countryman’s patience, kindness, modesty, craft and guile, there existed too a kind of deep-rooted obstinacy in his make-up which may have stemmed from an incident which took place during his schooldays at Harrow, when he was discovered in possession of an item that in those days was considered to be pornographic. The offence seems to have been compounded in the eyes of authority in that the material was sent on to a friend at Eton, thus besmirching

11 Keith Middlemas and John Barnes, *Baldwin: A Biography* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1969).

Harrow’s good name. Retribution fell on the youngster like the proverbial ton of bricks; his father was summoned to the school and expulsion was considered. In the event Stanley was given a severe flogging by the headmaster, Montague Butler. The result was not only that he ‘switched off’ from work to the detriment of his academic achievement, but his whole attitude towards the world of authority and authority figures changed. He later recalled an occasion when Gladstone visited the school to make a speech, in the course of which he referred to Butler as ‘your admirable headmaster’. ‘I felt that the Prime Minister was so out of touch with the whole of the life I was leading, that I never listened to another word’, he wrote, in a comment that must surely find an echo among generations of teenagers past and present. He described himself as becoming a ‘passive resister’ to his teachers, and it was unfortunate that just as Baldwin left Harrow for Trinity College Cambridge, so did Butler, to become Master. The malign shadow persisted. Baldwin remained a resister, even against his own best interests, obstinately lazing his way through his three years as undergraduate. One is tempted to think that the episode lay behind his sturdy independence of mind, a refusal to be impressed and a stubborn imperviousness to criticism typical of sons of the soil. As with Elgar and Fittleworth’s Mark Holden, Baldwin had an ear for the sayings of country people and evidently knew something of the celebrated Sussex folklore philosophy of ‘we won’t be druv’. Certainly Baldwin was familiar with the phrase and used it in speech at the 1929 Worcester Association dinner. He was on home ground.

We country people have, by the mere fact of our birth and sojourn in the heart of England, learned something which stands us in good stead in the strange life of politics in which [I am] immersed. I learned very early that a Worcestershire man cannot be “druv”. The Chancellor [Winston Churchill] knows the same is true in Oxfordshire. The other day we found ourselves side by side in the House of Commons, and the mood of that house recalled to us some of the peculiarities of the people amongst whom we were brought up. I well remember what an old drover said to me on the road one day. When driving some pigs to market, he was experiencing more than the usual difficulty in getting them along the road – it was more than forty years ago – and he said to me: “A hard thing to drive many on ‘em very is a pig”. I whispered that to the Chancellor and we surrendered! When you add to that the fact that we all of us come up from our native shire quiet folks, silent, not giving to wearing our hearts on our sleeves, not confiding in the first stranger we meet, never believing a word that is said to us, we have some of the essential qualities for success in politics.<sup>12</sup>



Baldwin and his wife at Chequers. (Illustrated *London News*, 21 April 1913)

\* \* \* \* \*

12 Speech at the Worcestershire Association, 26 February 1929, reprinted in Stanley Baldwin, *This Torch of Freedom* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), 125-128.



That conversation outside Worcester Cathedral in 1926, and another at a formal dinner at Buckingham Palace two years later, form two of the few recorded meetings between Elgar and Baldwin. Baldwin admitted to a certain shyness of him, and despite Elgar's political sympathies, the composer may possibly have harboured some feelings about the other man's 'silver spoon'. Certainly his attitude towards the Worcestershire Association might be interpreted as one of studied avoidance. Evidently Baldwin felt some disappointment, and early in 1933, some six years after the Association's formation, he made a point of inviting the composer to the Annual Dinner that year. His invitation in mid-January was characteristically handwritten, informal and understated. He knew how to hook his man, and his timing was propitious; Elgar was happily sketching music again after a lengthy fallow period and had just received the proofs of the second Organ Sonata. 'My dear Sir Edward', Baldwin wrote, 'I want you to do something which will give pleasure to a number of people though it may not to you! Come and dine with the Worcestershire Association on February 22<sup>nd</sup> and you shall NOT have to speak. We just want to see you among us'.<sup>13</sup> In his prompt note of acceptance Elgar wrote that 'your very kind letter affected me very much', but even in this late stage of his life, was unable to resist re-opening an old wound, real or imaginary. 'I have always felt that the county was unaware of my existence', he added, but then continued, 'of course the city is another affair',<sup>14</sup> At the dinner Baldwin spoke 'with characteristic feeling', as *The Times* put it, of the risk to the quiet corners of the countryside of the encroachment of urban and industrial needs. And he sought to emphasize the importance of escape, of how it was within the power of every man to turn inward from time to time 'into the quiet recesses of his own soul'. He saw the process as 'a swift pilgrimage to a secret source from which fresh power may be drawn', Elgar's 'insidest inside', perhaps. Both Baldwins evidently went out of their way to make sure Elgar was given plenty of attention that evening, and the dinner was a success. Elgar wrote 'to thank Mrs Baldwin & you for your great and charming kindness to me ... you gave us all a most delightful evening & I thank you'.<sup>15</sup>

Baldwin's own recollection of the dinner, and a clue to his distance from Elgar, were offered in his letter of condolence to Carice the following February, written two days after the composer's death. Both letter and envelope were handwritten, and one almost wonders whether its writer walked out of Downing Street into Whitehall to post it himself. 'My thoughts have been much with your father these last weeks', he wrote. 'We knew each other but slightly but it was a great happiness to me to get him to the Worcestershire dinner last year when we sat next to each other and had much fine and friendly talk. I was always shy about intruding on his privacy – I know what great artists are – but I held him in the greatest regard not only as one of our really great men but for his whole attitude and manner of life. It was always a pleasure to see him and I valued much the warm handshake and welcoming smile I always had from him'.<sup>16</sup>

Part of that 'attitude and manner of life' shared by both men was the deliberate profession of amateurism. The story goes that during a country ramble, Baldwin was asked to explain why he valued so highly the writings of the political thinker Henry Maine. The Prime Minister puffed his pipe and thought. He then explained that while Rousseau argued that human relations in society moved from status to contract, Maine had proved that in fact they moved from contract to status. Another pause for thought while the pipe was puffed. Finally Baldwin said, 'Or was it the other

13 Baldwin to Elgar, 14 January 1933, EBM letter 4232.

14 Elgar to Baldwin, 16 January 1933, EBM Letter Book 266.

15 Elgar to Baldwin, 10 March 1933, EBM Letter Book 266.

16 Baldwin to Carice Elgar Blake, 25 February 1934. EBM letter 890.

way round?'<sup>17</sup> I am reminded of Elgar's remark to Billy Reed after a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius*: 'Billy, I believe there is a lot of double counterpoint, or whatever they call it, in that'.<sup>18</sup>

But let the last words be Baldwin's. Part of his mastery of the House and his success as a public speaker lay in his ability to rise to heights of simple, poetic eloquence which touched all who heard him. One of the most celebrated of his 'purple patches' is contained in a speech he gave to the Royal Society of St George in May 1924. 'We are fighting for the *country*' Elgar had written to Ivor Atkins at the beginning of the War, and that idea, and many other Elgarian resonances – wild anemones, autumn bonfires, horses, the smell of the Scotch firs at Broadheath and even perhaps a passing wagon – are all evoked in Baldwin's words.

To me, England is the country, and the country is England. And when I ask myself what I mean by England, when I think of England when I am abroad, England comes to me through my various senses – through the ear, through the eye, and through certain imperishable scents. I will tell you what they are, and there may be those among you who feel as I do.

The sounds of England, the tinkle of the hammer on the anvil in the country smithy, the corncrake on a dewy morning, the sound of the scythe against the whetstone, and the sight of a plough team coming over the brow of a hill, the sight that has been seen in England since England was a land, and may be seen in England long after the Empire has perished and every works in England has ceased to function, for centuries the one eternal sight of England. The wild anemones in the woods in April, the last load at night of hay being drawn down a lane as the twilight comes on, when you can scarcely distinguish the figures of the horses as they take it home to the farm, and above all, most subtle, most penetrating and most moving, the smell of wood smoke coming up in an autumnal evening, or the smell of the scotch fires: that wood smoke which our ancestors, tens of thousands of year ago, must have caught on the air when they were coming home with the result of the day's forage, when they were still nomads, and when they were still roaming the forests and the plains of the continent of Europe. These things strike down into the very depths of our nature, and touch chords that go back to the beginning of time and the human race, but they are chords that with every year of our life sound a deeper note in our innermost being. These are the things that make England ...<sup>19</sup>

Surely Elgar would have said 'amen' to that – and to this, too, for as David Cannadine has said, for Baldwin, politics was about more than politics; its ultimate aim was access to cultural enrichment for all.

Often I have talked of democracy. Political democracy is but a means to an end. The true democracy after which we all strive is an enjoyment in which there may be made common the enjoyment of wealth in the highest sense of well-being, of culture, and of leisure. That is the ideal to which we are moving all too slowly; but if there be a right cause of discontent in the hearts of men, it is not that one man envies another because he has more motor cars, but because of that feeling, ineradicable in the heart of man, that there is something unfair in there being but a partial allocation of the discoveries of the



Baldwin in 1923. (Lafayette)

17 Quoted in Finkelstein, Daniel, 'Cameron's daring will change politics for ever', *The Times*, 14 April 2010.

18 W.H. Reed, *Elgar As I Knew Him* (London: Gollancz, 1936), 150 (Author's italics).

19 Speech at the Annual Dinner of the Royal Society of St George, 6 May 1924, reprinted in Stanley Baldwin, *On England and Other Addresses* (London: Philip Allan, 1926), 1-9.

human mind and the genius of the human soul in the arts – and that the achievements of the human spirit should be shared, and shared by all alike ... The culture of the things that you cultivate is *like the air*. The possession of that culture robs no man, but it enriches everyone who partakes of it ...<sup>20</sup>

Once more, Baldwin offered a phrase with an uncanny Elgarian echo. Fittingly, his ashes rest in Worcester Cathedral, where his Memorial on the Nave floor lies a few feet away from the Elgar Memorial Window. Next time you do homage there, spare a thought for Stanley Baldwin, the Prime Minister who translated Worcestershire into a politics of rare kindness, vision and integrity, as through his own alchemy, Edward Elgar translated it into music.

*One of Kevin Allen's treasured Elgarian memories is of a family expedition to Malvern sometime in the late 1970s to stay 'B&B' at 'Forli', and hearing a performance of the 'Enigma' Variations via a portable radio there one evening. In addition to chronicling Elgar's outdoor activities in the saddle and on the golf course, he has made a special study of various members of Elgar's circle, notably August Jaeger ('Portrait of Nimrod'), Vera Hockman ('Elgar in Love'), and the Norbury family and their Worcestershire friends ('Gracious Ladies').*

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20 Speech at the National Eisteddfod, Treorchy, 8 August 1928, reprinted in Stanley Baldwin, *This Torch of Freedom* (London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1935), 189-191 (Author's italics).

## *Beau Brummel:* A postscript and a call to action

**Robert Kay**

### **Introduction**

The December 2011 *Elgar Society Journal* recounted the story of Elgar's *Beau Brummel* incidental music, which received several performances but then vanished. The score is still lost, and the *Journal* gave various possible explanations for its disappearance.

A recently-discovered letter in the Elgar Birthplace throws further light on the possible fate of the manuscript. This article deals with this latest discovery.

The author feels that the absence of *Beau Brummel* constitutes a major piece of unfinished business, which should be addressed with a view to recovery of the manuscript.

### **Beau Brummel 1928 to 1930 — a brief chronology<sup>1</sup>**

*Beau Brummel* was a four-Act play specially written in 1928 by Bertram P. Matthews for Gerald Lawrence, an actor-manager then in his mid-50s. Lawrence had enjoyed much acclaim in the early 1920s with the Regency costume drama *Monsieur Beaucaire*, and doubtless felt that a new romantic play set in the same era would bring him not only continuing success but also (since he appears to have owned the performing rights) financial fortune.

Elgar had volunteered to write the music for Lawrence's next production, and so *Beau Brummel* had the distinction of being accompanied by a brand-new Elgar score. The play was premièred at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham in November 1928 and subsequently went on tour in England and South Africa. To capitalise on the play's success, the *Minuet* from Act I was published and recorded, using a newly-prepared manuscript score specially supplied by Elgar (a different score from the one used in the theatre performances). Elgar also promised his publishers Elkin's a *Beau Brummel Suite* to be supplied in due course.

Following his return to England in October 1929 Lawrence made efforts to secure a London production for *Beau Brummel*. These efforts were unsuccessful and it became clear that Lawrence's hopes for the play were to be disappointed. Correspondence with Elgar petered out in mid-1930.

To read the playscript<sup>2</sup> is to be made aware of its shortcomings, but the music received favourable reviews in newspapers and specialist journals. However, following the play's run, both

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1 This information is set out in more detail between pages 4 and 29 of the December 2011 ESJ.

2 A copy (from the British Library) is in the Elgar Birthplace. Elgar's own copy has disappeared.

the composer's manuscript and the orchestral parts (used by the players in the theatre) subsequently vanished. As only the *Minuet* had ever been published, this meant that the bulk of the music was totally lost, apart from a few fragmentary, and essentially unsalvageable, sketches.

### ***Lost opportunities 1934 onwards***

At the time of Elgar's death in 1934 several MS full scores were missing. *Arthur*,<sup>3</sup> *Beau Brummel* and the brass-band *Severn Suite* had been given away, undocumented, but Elgar's daughter Carice appears to have made no effort to trace them. Neither did she retrieve various Elgar manuscripts from his last publishers Keith Prowse & Co. – this caused problems many years later.<sup>4</sup>

Elgar biographers also ignored *Beau Brummel*, even though contemporary newspaper reviews had made it obvious that the music was extensive, resourceful and of high quality. From Maine (1933) to Parrott (1971) no mention is made of *Brummel* beyond the bare fact of its existence. By a major misfortune, the one Elgar expert known to have heard the music, appreciated its worth and to have been in a good position to mobilise an effective search for the missing manuscript – A.J.Sheldon of *Musical Opinion*, who wrote a laudatory review in the *Birmingham Post* – had died by the time Elgar himself passed away. A further difficulty was that Elgar's letters to Gerald Lawrence, which provide important clues, remained in private hands, their existence unsuspected by scholars.

Lawrence's elder daughter Joyce Carey had been interviewed<sup>5</sup> about *Beau Brummel* shortly before her death but could not cast any light on the music, which was not in her possession when she died.<sup>6</sup> An attempt was made in the 1970s to contact former employees of the Birmingham Theatre Royal – in ignorance of the fact that the play had gone on tour elsewhere. It is surprising that no efforts were made to interview Lawrence before he died in 1957, as he could at least have disclosed the fate of the orchestral parts.

There matters rested. *Beau Brummel* was believed to have been of no consequence, consisting primarily of the *Minuet*, which had in any case been published. Gerald Lawrence was assumed to have wilfully misappropriated the manuscript materials.

### ***Developments 1999 and 2006***

In 1999 Elgar's letters to Lawrence were acquired by the Elgar Birthplace, having been owned by Joyce Carey. These letters revealed two crucial facts – firstly, Lawrence had been given permission by Elgar to keep the orchestral parts against the possibility of further performances. Secondly, in mid-1930 Elgar had asked Lawrence for return of the MS full score, but this was not in Lawrence's hands: it had apparently had been left with a private individual in Birmingham (probably a musician called Cornelius Meachem, who was a violinist and may also have acted as copyist/proof-reader).

3 *Arthur* was Elgar's previous piece of incidental music, written in 1923. Both plays have much in common as to length and emotional content. Comparisons between the two scores are inevitable, especially as *Arthur* also remained unpublished and was lost for many years.

4 *Nursery Suite* was stolen from Prowse in the 1960s (later recovered) and the orchestral *Severn Suite* was inadvertently thrown away (fortunately rescued: see *ESJ* 12/2013).

5 By Dr. Christopher Kent (telephone information from Dr. Kent to the author).

6 Telephone information to the author from Sharon Lomas of the Combined Theatrical Charities Appeals Council, to which Carey left virtually her entire Estate.

The significance of Carey's letters was not realised at the time, but in 2006 occurred a major development. A fragment (pages 50 to 64) of the original stage score, comprising the *Minuet* in its entirety but nothing else, was discovered among the effects of Isaiah Burnell (d.1959), a musician who had been a friend of Elgar from 1925 onwards.

With this discovery, the theory that Lawrence had made off with the music was shown to be false: Elgar had let Lawrence retain the performing materials, but the full score must subsequently have been retrieved by Elgar from Birmingham. There was no other way that Burnell could have ended up in possession of the *Minuet* fragment. The pagination of the fragment – up to page 64 by the end of Act I – showed the music not to have been negligible as was previously believed, but very extensive – possibly as much as 200 pages of manuscript for four Acts.

It was assumed that Elgar himself had divided up the score and given Burnell the *Minuet*, but this later turned out not to have been the case.

### ***2013 — the December 1934 Burnell letter***

Until the appearance of the *Minuet* fragment Isaiah Burnell was not recognised by Elgar scholars as a person of particular significance. However, in 2013, following the appearance of the *ESJ* article a further examination of the Elgar Birthplace archive revealed a letter from Burnell, addressed to Carice and dated 1st December 1934. Carice had given Burnell Elgar's writing-case and blotting pad as a memorial keepsake<sup>7</sup>, and after thanking her Burnell went on:

I have always longed to have something personal of your Father's – not as a reminder, but a link between us. I peeped into all the pockets of the writing case hoping there might be a page of his MS. This I suspect has all been dealt with.

In other words, Burnell did not own any Elgar MS material in December 1934. Following this heavy hint, Carice presumably then sent Burnell the *Minuet* fragment.<sup>8</sup>

This has several implications. If the complete full score was retrieved by Elgar from Birmingham in late 1930, this meant that he had had over three years in which to dispose, for whatever reason, of the remainder of the MS. Secondly, Carice must either not have recognised that the existence of the fragment implied the absence of a much longer work, or she already knew that it had been deliberately separated out and was viewed by Elgar as having been of no further use. Thirdly, as Burnell did not receive the *Minuet* until after Elgar's death, any idea that he was given the whole score (the majority of which he then proceeded to lose) was immediately discredited.<sup>9</sup>

The fact that Elgar had separated out the *Minuet* also implied that the remainder of the score had not been thrown away or donated as a gift, but had been given away for the essentially commercial purpose of editing the music for further use.

7 Carice sent Elgar memorabilia, both MS scraps and household articles, to various friends following his death. The Birthplace archive contains a number of letters from grateful recipients. The Burnell letter is coded 1977.1651.8/L 10451.

8 A generous act – but Elgar's letters to Burnell (now in the British Library) show him as depending heavily on Burnell for intelligent conversation.

9 One can discount as fanciful the scenario of Carice herself splitting up the score, giving Burnell the *Minuet* and disposing of the rest to an unknown source. This would have been most uncharacteristic.

## A theory

Although the possible survival of the orchestral parts should not be ignored, any theory regarding what was done with the *Beau Brummel* materials, and why, must concentrate primarily on the orchestral full score. Although Elgar gave Gerald Lawrence permission to keep the parts, it is likely that Lawrence lost them in a house move or destroyed them – either when his hopes for *Brummel* finally evaporated or in a fit of despair following the tragic death of his daughter.<sup>10</sup> Miracles happen, but the chance of the parts having survived is just about zero. No blame should attach to Lawrence as he would not necessarily have realised that the full score MS was also missing and that the destruction of the orchestral parts was tantamount to consigning the entire music to oblivion.

As regards the manuscript full score, *Beau Brummel* was only one among several such items missing at Elgar's death. One was almost certainly gifted as a gentlemanly *quid pro quo* for services rendered (the *Severn Suite* brass-band full score, given to Ivor Atkins for his work on Organ Sonata No.2). This may also have been the case with *Arthur*, given to conductor Joseph Lewis. But it is also possible that Lewis had been given *Arthur* with an instruction to compile from it a concert Suite, as he had previously done with the incidental music for *The Starlight Express*.

The 1928 publication by Elkin's of the *Minuet* was an obstacle to including it in any subsequent *Brummel* Suite. In mid-1930 Elgar had signed an exclusive contract with Keith Prowse. Under its terms, Elgar was not permitted to offer any new compositions to any other publisher – so he was thenceforth unable to offer Elkin's a *Beau Brummel Suite* as he had originally promised, nor could he include the *Minuet*, Elkin's property, in any later Prowse publication. Nevertheless, it is significant that his request to Gerald Lawrence for the return of the full score took place just at the time when the Keith Prowse contract was being finalised.

The absence of the *Brummel* playscript, known to have been received by Elgar in 1928, is also suggestive. Elgar could have simply destroyed it, but for a music editor preparing a Suite it would have been invaluable, as an aid to identifying correctly the various musical motifs in the score.

These considerations make the following the most likely theory as to the fate of the *Brummel* score:

***Copyright reasons preventing the Minuet from being incorporated into any subsequent Beau Brummel Suite published by Keith Prowse, and his contract terms preventing him from offering such a Suite to Elkin's as originally promised, Elgar separated out the Minuet pages after he had retrieved the complete score from Birmingham and put them aside. He gave the remainder of the score, undocumented, to someone who was able to edit it into a concert Suite for future publication.***

## Eliminations

Early theories for the disappearance of *Beau Brummel* have now been discredited. Initial searches for *Brummel* were carried out in the belief that the play only ran in Birmingham. As the music was mentioned in newspapers later in the run these searches were obviously futile. Lawrence had publicly expressed his intention of mounting the play in London after his return from South Africa, and this disposes of the theory that he lost the music on tour. The long-held assertion that Lawrence

<sup>10</sup> Lawrence's younger daughter Marjorie was murdered by her estranged husband on 6<sup>th</sup> July 1930, around the time when Lawrence was finally realising that *Beau Brummel* had failed as a paying proposition.

wilfully retained the music for selfish reasons falls down with the revelation that Elgar specifically permitted him to keep the orchestral parts and that the full score was not in Lawrence's hands anyway. The idea that the score was gifted or destroyed comes up against the objection that in such cases the separation of the *Minuet* would have been unnecessary.

The score, minus the *Minuet*, could have been given to Keith Prowse, who then lost it. This is theoretically possible but Prowse seem to have been meticulous in corresponding with Elgar on publication matters. If they had been sent the score it is likely that there would survive epistolary evidence of this, especially as the *Minuet* theme would have given rise to copyright problems had it featured elsewhere in the music.

It has been suggested that as the *Brummel* music was recycled into *The Spanish Lady* Elgar may have destroyed the score to cover his tracks. But in this case he would surely have destroyed the whole score, the *Minuet* having already been published and being of no further commercial use. And even though Elgar did indeed recycle the *Arthur* music into the Third Symphony, he stopped short of destruction, giving the score to Joseph Lewis instead.<sup>11</sup>

As explained above, it is probable that the score was given to a practising musician. **Isaiah Burnell** seemed in 2011 to be a candidate, but the December 1934 letter shows that he had no other Elgar MS material at that time. **Joseph Lewis** cannot be completely eliminated, but given that he kept the *Arthur* score safe and later disposed of it to a friend who then restored the score to public ownership,<sup>12</sup> this begs the question of why this did not also happen with *Beau Brummel*. Conductors such as **Adrian Boult** are possible contenders (although Boult himself did not go in for music editing, unlike (say) **Constant Lambert**). **Percy Hull** was suggested in the *ESJ* 2011 article, but subsequent investigation<sup>13</sup> has shown this to be unlikely. **W.H. Reed** is another possibility, as are **Percy Pitt** and other colleagues. Even **Cornelius Meachem**, the proof-reader from Birmingham, cannot be entirely ruled out.

If the remainder of the score was, after all, given away as a gift for services rendered, one obvious candidate is **Basil Maine**. In 1933 he had published, with Elgar's cooperation, a highly authoritative *Life And Works*. However, Maine's Will<sup>14</sup> makes no mention of any Elgar material. Although Maine's book deals in detail with such late works as *The Severn Suite*, *Nursery Suite*, the Bach orchestrations and *Pageant Of Empire*, no such treatment is given to either *Beau Brummel* or *Arthur*, suggesting that these manuscripts were no longer available for inspection.

These are only a few possibilities within the wide field of Elgar's friends and professional contacts.

- <sup>11</sup> Elgar may have wished to keep *Arthur* from view and thereby conceal the fact that the Third Symphony was extensively based on borrowed material (in the sketches the *Arthur* excerpts are headed simply 'Sym.III'). *Arthur* was also recycled into *The Spanish Lady*.
- <sup>12</sup> Alan Barlow, Lewis's conducting pupil at Guildhall, to whom he gave *Arthur* in the early 1950s. Barlow later compiled a *King Arthur Suite* and then sold the *Arthur* score to the British Library.
- <sup>13</sup> Telephone interview with Hull's grandson Mark (an experienced amateur musician) December 2011. Mark Hull stated that although the Hull family retain a few "minor Elgariana", these certainly do not run to manuscript scores. This seems to dispose of a possible destination for the missing score of *Pomp & Circumstance 5*, dedicated to Hull.
- <sup>14</sup> Maine left the residue of his Estate to Queens' College, Cambridge, where he had been Organ Scholar. His legacy (information from College Archivist, 2015) consisted wholly of money (which could admittedly have come from the sale of artefacts by Maine's executors). The sum was used at Maine's request to fund a music scholarship.

### *The case for a search*

It could be asked whether the music would actually be worth salvaging. It is in the nature of incidental music that it can be too fragmentary for concert performance without extensive editing.<sup>15</sup> The incidental music for Bizet's *L'Arlésienne*, for example, fits this description. It lives on in two concert Suites but would have stood no chance of performance in its original format once the play had failed. *Arthur* shares these shortcomings, and it is probable that the same applied to the music for *Beau Brummel*.

However, Elgar had himself offered Elkin's a *Brummel* Suite in 1928 and reviews of the play commented on the quality of the music and the desirability of its publication. Editors have extracted a 20-minute Suite from the 113 pages of *Arthur* score and it is likely that the *Brummel* score was considerably longer.

The likelihood of the score still existing is slim, but there are some grounds for optimism. Firstly, its recipient would *ipso facto* have been aware of its significance. His association with the famous composer may have been remembered. This actually happened in the case of the *Minuet* fragment, Burnell's friendship with Elgar having passed into family folklore, even though they were unaware of the fragment's true authorship, believing it to have been by Burnell himself.

The score may reside not in an attic but in an archive. The pages of the Burnell fragment are headed 'Brummel' rather than 'Beau Brummel'. If, like *Arthur*, the manuscript carries no composer signature, it may be sitting on a shelf, filed in incorrect alphabetical or composer order. Odd things have happened – Coleridge-Taylor's *Thelma*, described in textbooks as 'lost', was in the British Library all the time and was only traced 98 years later. The orchestral *Severn Suite* MS was lost for 40 (some would say 80) years, as was *Arthur*: Nobody expected the *Minuet* fragment to materialise, 76 years after the event. It could be argued that there may be a slightly greater psychological resistance to throwing away old music manuscripts than other types of waste paper.

So any search for *Beau Brummel* should be carried out in a constructive spirit, even if the probability of the score having survived is admitted to be small.

### *Strategy*

Let us imagine that the *Beau Brummel* score still exists, its whereabouts unknown and its owners unaware of its existence. There is also the faint chance that the orchestral parts might have survived. There are four areas in which Elgarians could assist.

The first is a more extensive search of music archives. Something might turn out to be not where it should have been. This is a task for the specialists.<sup>16</sup>

Every reader of this *Journal* will have friends who are music-lovers. The essential facts about *Beau Brummel* could be communicated in a few sentences at the next dinner-party, and the importance of the matter stressed. If this is done with an enjoiner that the listener himself passes the story on, and especially if it is stated that the missing score is probably worth a six-figure sum,<sup>17</sup>

15 See e.g. the review of the complete *Arthur* CD in *ESJ* 12/2014 and correspondence in 4/2015, 8/2015 and 12/2015.

16 *ESJ* 12/2011 p.16 illustrates two pages of the *Minuet* fragment (to give searchers an idea of its appearance).

17 The *Minuet* fragment was sold to a UK collector for a price in excess of £1000 per page. So for a 200-page MS ...

then word may get around. Social media could be employed. This approach costs little time or effort and could produce results if someone eventually decided to investigate that old box under the piano (as did the Burnell descendants).

Other steps could involve the musical Press. The *Beau Brummel* story is fascinating, quite apart from its 'missing score' aspect, and would make a good basis for a feature article. If a classical music magazine with a wide (preferably worldwide) circulation ran such a feature, the problem would be brought to the attention of a large number of musicians. The matter is not necessarily confined to England: there is no reason why a missing Elgar score should not have migrated to the U.S.A., for example.

Articles in music journals are all very well. But even if *Brummel* was originally given to a musician, it will now be in the hands of descendants two generations on, who may not be musical themselves. The only way to reach these people is via the national press. The human interest of the *Beau Brummel* saga, added to the natural fascination of a lost work by THE major composer, plus the fact that the MS would be worth a lot of money, might be enough to get a newspaper editor enthused. This is a task for Elgarians with friends in the Fourth Estate.

### *A call to action*

It may be felt that such action might not progress the issue very far. But it would be the best that can be achieved in the circumstances. Even if it produced no results there would not be the nagging feeling that more could have been done.

*Beau Brummel* has not been best served by scholarship. Amid much Elgar literature which is either peripheral or redundant, it took 83 years before the core facts about *Brummel* were documented. Past generations of musicologists could have done more to search for the score at a time when the chances of succeeding would have been higher. Here we have a major work (at least in terms of length), totally lost, but whose absence and potential significance is today scarcely commented upon by the Elgar fraternity – in spite of the possibility that its rediscovery may throw new light on Elgar's creativity in his final years.

Elgar's music gives pleasure to many and this debt needs to be recognised. If *Beau Brummel* still exists we have a duty to try and find it.

*Robert Kay is a proprietor of Acuta Music, publishers of music from Elgar's last years. He would be happy to discuss any aspect of the 'Beau Brummel' case with interested parties. Contact details may be found on the Acuta Music website.*

## Tales from the Complete Edition - 9: Short Works, Long Histories

### David Lloyd-Jones and John Norris

Most readers would probably not expect a Complete Edition volume of Elgar's short orchestral works to contain a raft of surprises.<sup>1</sup> Nor did we when we embarked on it. After all, *Salut d'amour*, the *Chansons de matin et de nuit* and the *Canto popolare* from *In the South* are among Elgar's best known works, and a number of others – *May Song*, *Mina*, *Carissima*, *Rosemary*, the *Romance* for bassoon and *Three Characteristic Pieces* – are familiar titles of works which others have presumably already explored, even if their tunes do not readily come to mind; while the *Three Bavarian Dances* and two *Falstaff* interludes were surely adapted from their parent works with a minimum of effort on Elgar's part. These were our preconceptions, and perhaps also yours. At least we knew we could claim the first publication in full score of *Carissima* and *Rosemary*; and perhaps along the way we might stumble across the long lost orchestral score of *Cantique*.<sup>2</sup>

#### *A Lesson in Cueing-in: 'Pleading' – the miniature*

It is the specific responsibility of the Complete Edition to delve beneath long-held public preconceptions to establish Elgar's true intentions for a work, and the first discovery, just as we were embarking on this volume, came about through parallel work on the volume of Orchestral Songs. To claim, as some do, that *Pleading* is among the best of Elgar's solo songs is not a significant accolade in a genre in which Elgar's total contribution is markedly under-appreciated. He would nevertheless have received a satisfactory financial return from his original arrangement for solo voice and piano at a time when music hall and drawing room performances of such works were immensely popular. It would therefore not be surprising if Elgar had chosen to capitalise on his plaintive setting of Arthur Salmon's poem by providing an orchestral accompaniment to take the work to a wider audience. This is how Novello appears to have sought to promote the orchestral work, but our attempts to track down a published version of the orchestral song proved frustrating, eventually leading us back to Elgar's orchestral manuscript in the Elgar Birthplace archive.<sup>3</sup>

1 David Lloyd-Jones (ed.): *Short Orchestral Works*: Elgar Complete Edition Vol.23 (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2015).

2 Along the way we did come across the reference to *Cantique* in Jerrold Northrop Moore's *Letters of a Lifetime* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2nd edn., 2015), p.286, in which the author records that Elgar left the orchestration of the work to Alfred Dove, the musical director at the Coliseum, thus debarring the work in this form from the Complete Edition.

3 Elgar Birthplace (EB) MS 4.



The first page of EB MS 4, Elgar's arrangement of his solo song *Pleading*.

The manuscript is not among Elgar's clearest. It is somewhat cramped, and with many of the staves filled simply by an annotation to 'cue in' from another staff. At this point many readers may welcome an explanation of 'cueing-in'. It is most commonly encountered in orchestral parts where, after an instrument has been silent for a number of bars, a phrase played by another instrument is added in small print to the first instrument's staff, not to be played but as a cue to enable the player to come in at the right point, or 'on cue'. In this sense, cueing-in of an instrument is much the same as the practice of providing theatrical actors with cues.

But cueing-in has another purpose which we were to encounter regularly in the works in this volume. To allow them to be played by an ensemble other than that for which it was originally composed, crucial phrases are 'cued' into the part of a second instrument or 'voice' which plays them only when the originally intended instrument is not present. This form of cueing-in can serve a variety of circumstances. When a work written for voices and orchestra is to be performed as a purely orchestral piece, crucial phrases sung by the choir or soloists must be given to an instrument of the orchestra. This form of cueing-in is found in *Three Bavarian Dances* where Elgar has perforce redistributed unsupported lines sung by the choir in the choral song of the *Bavarian Highlands* suite to instruments of the orchestra, to play in the corresponding *Bavarian Dance*.

A slightly different form of cueing-in is needed in pieces containing parts marked as *ad lib.*, indicating that they are to be treated as non-essential but worth adding if the appropriate instrument is available. Many of Elgar's major works contain organ parts marked as '*ad lib.*', adding a resonance to the orchestral sound when the work is played at a venue with an organ without debarring performances at lesser venues at which an organ cannot be made available. Among the Short Orchestral Works, only *Sursum Corda* contains a part for organ, but Elgar clearly envisaged the salon pieces being performed by orchestras with limited forces at their disposal. To facilitate this, he allowed instruments in a number of works to be considered *ad lib.* (significantly in *May Song* where the cornets, timpani, triangle and harp or piano are all marked thus), with occasional essential phrases assigned to *ad lib.* instruments also cued into the parts of ever-present instruments, for the latter to play only when the *ad lib.* instrument is not deployed.

In his autograph score of *Pleading*, however, Elgar takes cueing-in a stage further. The score is written for no fewer than five solo instruments – violin, flute, 'hautboy', clarinet, cornet – while the printed parts hint at viola and cello as further solo options. Elgar also provides parts for the same instruments within the orchestral ensemble but, instead of writing out these parts for bars 3-12 (to which, in the song, he set the first verse of Salmon's poem), he annotates the relevant staves with 'cue' followed by the name of the corresponding solo instrument from which the part is to be cued in – that is, 'cue Fl. solo' on the orchestral flute staff.

His autograph score is an ingenious production, intended to show various alternative ways of performing the work, with the piano accompaniment from the song adapted for performance by either piano or harp. But unfortunately Elgar left no instructions on the autograph to guide us in interpreting his precise intentions. Three things seem certain.

First, he did not intend the work to be performed simultaneously by five solo instruments. While there is an obvious difference between a solo violin and the full violin section of even a small orchestra, there would be little difference between, on the one hand, a wind instrument as soloist and, on the other, the same instrument playing the same notes as an integral member of the orchestra; there was no point at all in asking five instruments to step out of the small ensemble simultaneously to become soloists for ten bars.

This leads us to the conclusion that Elgar's score was intended not as a single orchestral arrangement of the song but as five separate arrangements which he hoped would be published,

or at least performed, separately. No letters from Elgar to Novello survive to inform us of his precise intention, so we cannot be sure whether each cued-in part is to be performed only when the corresponding solo instrument is not playing or when there is no solo instrument at all. Perhaps Novello were equally bemused by Elgar's ingenuity for they published only one set of parts, with the harp/piano part also intended to serve as the conductor's score.<sup>4</sup>

But what is beyond doubt is that Elgar's autograph contains no part for a voice. In fact the vocal line from the song is clearly marked 'Solo Violin, or Flute or Hautboy'. This above all else persuaded us that Elgar intended an orchestral miniature, not an orchestral song. We presume from his provision of multiple arrangements that Elgar hoped his orchestral miniature would prove to be a commercial successor to the *Canto popolare*; musically this plaintive miniature is far more of a precursor to the haunting *Sospiri*. It is a pity Elgar never recorded it as this would not only resolve the uncertainties but also allow us to hear it. Fortunately it is scheduled for a premiere recording in coming months.

### ***Not just cut-and-paste: 'Canto popolare' and the two 'Falstaff' Interludes***

Recordings of many of the miniatures in the new volume with Elgar himself conducting do, of course, survive, including the *Canto popolare* and the two *Falstaff* interludes. Perhaps it was these performances, sounding identical to the corresponding passages in the works from which the miniatures are taken, which led us to our initial, incorrect view that Novello's republication of each as a separate miniature with 'reduced orchestration'<sup>5</sup> was more a marketing ploy than a significant musical development. After all, all three passages are already scored for a very small orchestra, making a further reduction in orchestration seem unlikely. We were right to be suspicious, but wrong in our conclusions: the reductions in orchestration are minimal in the *Falstaff* interludes, while the *Canto popolare* uses an orchestra of identical size to that required for the same passage in *In the South*; but both republications contain other significant changes, not just in orchestration but in structure.

For the *Canto popolare* (a designation which does not appear in the full score of *In the South*), these changes amount to a considered reworking in order to make it a viable separate concert piece. By raising the key a fourth from C to F (as in the song *In Moonlight*) and violin and piano arrangements), Elgar allows the tune to be given mainly to the first violins rather than the solo viola. At his publisher's request, Elgar has lengthened the piece from 104 bars to 109 without introducing a second theme or other significant new material, as he initially thought he would be obliged to do. Then, in contrast to the dreamy original in which there is no dynamic louder than *piano*, Elgar has created two climaxes which reach *forte* and *fortissimo (con passione)* respectively, the first approached by an *animato*. The whole piece represents a most interesting and imaginative rethinking of the intentionally simple original.

The changes Elgar made to the two *Falstaff* interludes are less substantial, while achieving some reduction in the already small orchestra used in Op.68 and allowing other instruments to be treated as *ad lib.* Oddly, while permitting the piccolo to be considered one of the *ad lib.* instruments, he failed to cue in the final distinctive trill of the first Interlude which, if left uncorrected, leaves a clearly audible omission when a piccolo is not deployed. For the dreamy passages of the second

4 Novello, 1909, plate number 12937.

5 *Canto Popolare*: Novello, 1905, plate number 12037; *Falstaff* Interludes: Novello, 1914, plate number 14030.

interlude he has wisely rearranged the divided violas and cellos of Op.68 for the full string section and, to extend the piece, has repeated the sixteen bars 12-27 shortly before the end. Instead of the original dying fall, he has provided a loud finish.

So why did we embark on the volume in the belief that the separate publications were unchanged from the equivalent passages in the parent works? It is clear that, when recording the two Interludes in 1929, Elgar chose to ignore his arrangements for reduced orchestra in favour of his original versions.<sup>6</sup> In consequence, the reduced orchestra arrangements will be unfamiliar to readers; that of the *Canto popolare* in particular deserves to be performed more often in its own right.

### *The Sum of its Parts: 'Air de ballet'*

The addition of *Pleading*, *Canto popolare* and the two *Falstaff* interludes increased the number of complete works in the volume from fourteen to seventeen. The eventual total of eighteen was reached late in the editing process when we discovered that, from the disparate and incomplete material in the Elgar Birthplace archive, a performable score could be constructed of a work long thought to be lost. This is Elgar's *Air de ballet*, a work whose history first needs some clarification.

Michael Kennedy, in his comprehensive appendix to *Portrait of Elgar*, credits Elgar with the composition of two works with that name, one dating from 1881, the other from the following year. It now seems clear that these were two performances of the same work: its premiere on 17 May 1881 by the Worcester Amateur Instrumental Society Orchestra, conducted by Elgar; and a further performance in August 1882 at a special concert given to entertain members of the British Medical Association who were meeting in the city. While nominally given by the same performers, the orchestra was strengthened for this second performance by the inclusion of at least one of the BMA delegates, Dr Charles Buck of Settle, Yorkshire, a keen amateur cellist, who was much impressed by the piece and immediately struck up a strong friendship with the young composer.

Although Elgar arranged the work for piano in a revised and shortened form, published under his occasional pseudonym Gustav Franke by Boosey in 1903 as *Pastourelle*, Op.10, Elgar appeared to take no further interest in the orchestral version. The score was long thought lost, then believed to be in private possession (where the autograph full score may still be), leaving only an inaccurate copyist's full score,<sup>7</sup> plus five string parts (only two of which are in Elgar's hand) and those for clarinet(s) and piano.<sup>8</sup> For publication in the Complete Edition volume's Appendix of incomplete fragments and sketches, it was necessary to rationalise the disparate source material as far as possible to give a consistent and coherent account, through which process it became apparent that it was possible to reassemble a complete and authentic score of the work, now published for the first time in this volume, opening up the possibility of what we believe will be the first performance of the work since 1884.

Three things are immediately striking about the composition of the orchestra – the lack of a bassoon, the 'piano obbligato' part (not shown in the copyist's full score) and the surprising inclusion of a euphonium. However, this gives us a clue as to the piece's provenance, because it is for much the same forces that Elgar was concurrently writing his music for the County Lunatic

6 EMI Classics 7 54568 2, disc 1.

7 EB MS 68.

8 EB Mss 67 & 76.

Asylum at Powick.<sup>9</sup> Doubtless scored for the available talent (though the *Air de ballet* uses two horns rather than the bombardon and two cornets of the Powick Music), Elgar may therefore have conceived the piece for performance at the asylum, though not necessarily as dance music.

### *A Copyist's Hand: 'Sursum Corda', 'Three Bavarian Dances' and 'Mina'*

The *Air de ballet* is not the only work in the volume for which we have source material not in Elgar's hand. Elgar was asked to write *Sursum Corda* by Hugh Blair, the Worcester Cathedral organist, for a special service to be held in the Cathedral on Sunday 8 April 1894 to commemorate the visit to Worcester five days previously of the Duke of York (the future George V) to lay the foundation stone of what is now the City Art Gallery and Museum. If Elgar is to be believed, Blair gave him little more than a week's notice so, short of time, he adapted the Adagio from his unfinished violin sonata to complete the 104-bar work in time for a rehearsal in the Cathedral which he conducted on the afternoon of the 8th, leaving the copying of parts to others.

Elgar immediately offered the score for publication to Novello<sup>10</sup> and then to Breitkopf & Härtel,<sup>11</sup> but he was unable to arrange satisfactory terms with either. The work remained unpublished in full score until the autumn of 1900 when Schott's accepted it.<sup>12</sup> A full score and parts were published in the spring of 1901; together with eight shorter arrangements by others. But the full score of the original work is deficient in several respects. Subsequent correspondence between Elgar and Jaeger suggests that Schott had engraved from the wrong manuscript.

By the time of publication the manuscript parts used for the original performance had disappeared. Having received a request from Hugh Blair, who wished to borrow the parts for a performance in London in November 1899, Alice's diary records: 'E. into Worcester [in] vain attempt to find parts of *Sursum Corda*';<sup>13</sup> a journey to Birchwood on 19 September to continue the search proved no more successful. Fortunately the parts have survived, probably having been stored after the first performance in the Cathedral organ loft where they remained for many years, having more recently made their way to the Birthplace. They have not only allowed errors in the Schott score to be corrected but also explain observations which Jaeger made to Elgar after Blair's London performance. Jaeger, who was present, wrote to Elgar with suggestions which seem to bear no relationship to the Schott score. The parts used for the first performance reveal why. Elgar appears to have responded positively to Jaeger's observations by cutting twelve bars which survive only in the manuscript parts from just before the end of the work; but he then failed to complete a revision of the dynamics of the following bars to provide a satisfactory revised ending, a deficiency now corrected with the help of the parts.

Manuscripts in a hand other than Elgar's are usually treated with caution when editing Complete Edition volumes as we cannot be certain that they accurately represent his wishes. Such reservations over using the manuscript parts in unknown hands for *Air de ballet* and *Sursum Corda* were largely overcome by the knowledge that Elgar had presumably been able to exercise some control over the copying and had subsequently conducted performances in which the parts had been used. Such delicate questions of balance did not arise with the source material for *Three*

9 Elgar Complete Edition Vol.22.

10 Jerrold Northrop Moore: *Elgar and his Publishers* (Oxford University Press, 1987), p.22.

11 EB letter 4802.

12 Schott, 1901, plate number 26896.

13 Alice Elgar diary, 1 May 1899.



*Bavarian Dances*. A little of the historical background will again help set the scene.

As many readers will know, Elgar composed his choral suite *From the Bavarian Highlands*, settings of six poems by Alice with orchestral and piano accompaniments, in 1895, the latter arrangement being published the following year by Joseph Williams.<sup>14</sup> Elgar was sufficiently pleased with the outcome that he decided to extract the first, third and last of the six songs to form a shorter orchestral suite to which he gave the name *Three Bavarian Dances*. Although the precise timing of his decision is not recorded, he must have reached it soon after the publication of the choral suite because the dances were first performed at Crystal Palace in October 1897.<sup>15</sup> But the *Dances* were not published by Williams until 1901.<sup>16</sup>

When we started the editing process, we were unaware of any source material relating specifically to the *Dances* rather than the choral suite. This was not necessarily surprising for the first two dances (*The Dance* and *Lullaby*) are essentially the same as the orchestral versions of the choral suite, with a few instrumental cueings-in replacing the missing vocal lines. But the published version of the third dance (*The Marksmen*) is a different proposition, being far more virtuosic, incorporating transpositions of the original and eight cuts amounting to 67 bars.

A later search located two substantial manuscripts acquired comparatively recently by the British Library, both mainly in a copyist's hand. The first is a copy of the full score of the three songs subsequently chosen by Elgar, without the vocal staves but also without Elgar's changes to the third *Dance*.<sup>17</sup> It seems likely that this copy was made for the 1897 Crystal Palace performances as it is marked up for performance in Elgar's hand, and was subsequently used by the publisher as a hire copy for performances of the set of dances, presumably until 1901, when the published full score became available. Elgar's conductor's markings are, however, minimal.

Eventually Elgar was obliged to prepare the *Dances* for publication and this was clearly the purpose of the second of the two British Library manuscripts.<sup>18</sup> It contains a further copy of the first dance in a copyist's hand but this time copiously annotated by Elgar, and an autograph copy of the third dance. The latter he dated 'May 23 1901/Malvern', so it would seem that the *Dances* were only finalized at around that time, leading to the presumption that performances of the third dance in the four years between its premiere and publication of the full score were of the uncut version.

The most challenging of the manuscripts containing a substantial contribution from another hand is that for the orchestral version of *Mina*, Elgar's final completed composition. Once more some historical background is required. His relationship with Novello having cooled, Elgar entered into a contract with Keith Prowse Music (KPM) in 1930 to provide a minimum of three new compositions a year. Towards the end of 1932 KPM published two short piano works by Elgar, *Serenade* and *Adieu*, and on 5 December they acknowledged receipt of another, provisionally named *Mina* after his beloved Cairn terrier. Strangely, although Elgar's somewhat sketchy autograph score

14 Joseph Williams, 1896, plate numbers N10401-10406.

15 Not on Saturday 23 October under Elgar's baton, however, the date usually given for the première, but the previous afternoon under August Manns who, so as not to take the spotlight from Elgar's performance, disguised them under the name *Characteristic Dances*, leading to the subsequent confusion. We can only speculate whether Manns' choice of this name influenced Elgar when he decided on the name *Three Characteristic Pieces* for his 1899 suite.

16 Joseph Williams, 1901, plate number J.W.12634.

17 British Library (BL) MS Mus 275.

18 BL MS Mus 276.

A page from *Lbl Add. MS 58067 f.5*, Elgar's part-autograph score for *Mina*.

of *Mina* survives,<sup>19</sup> KPM appears never to have published the piano original. Despite this, the following year Elgar set to work preparing an orchestral version, informing his publishers in late August 1933 that he hoped to send them the orchestral score ‘in a few days’.<sup>20</sup>

By now Elgar’s health was failing and in early October, with the orchestral score still far from complete, he was admitted to South Bank nursing home in Worcester. Yet when Fred Gaisberg visited Elgar at home at Marl Bank in late January, Elgar produced the *Mina* score and, having added a dedication to Gaisberg, handed the score over to him. Recognising that Elgar had not long to live, Gaisberg arranged for the work to be recorded within two weeks and sent a test pressing to Marl Bank. But a cursory study of the autograph score reveals that the completion of the score between October and January was no superhuman feat on Elgar’s part.<sup>21</sup> While the opening 26 bars (the first 16 of which are later repeated) were fully scored by Elgar, and the first page clearly shows the small orchestra required (including Elgar’s only use of a celesta), thereafter only the first violin line, the clarinet counter-melody of bb.53-64, the celesta chord in the penultimate bar and the final unison string chord are in Elgar’s hand. The remainder has been completed in another, unknown hand, presumably to facilitate the test recording that Elgar heard.

Who was this person? Three names suggest themselves. First, Elgar’s close friend Billy Reed, who had witnessed the gift to Gaisberg, and who had probably led the *ad hoc* New Light Symphony Orchestra for the test recording. Reed was a minor composer in his own right who could well have undertaken such a dutiful task but, while the autograph contains a note initialled by him, it has not proved possible to track down enough manuscript full scores in Reed’s hand to allow a satisfactory comparison of the handwriting. Moreover, Reed makes no mention of the work in his 1939 study of the composer. A second, much less likely, person is Haydn Wood, who eventually conducted the first commercial recording of the work.<sup>22</sup> A far stronger candidate is James Ainslie Murray (1884-1972), a very capable musician, composer and orchestrator who made orchestrations of *Les Sylphides* and *Carnival*, the latter of which was recorded by Malcolm Sargent. More significantly, he was the in-house librarian of The Gramophone Company at the Abbey Road studios and therefore someone whom Gaisberg could readily call upon at short notice to complete the score and produce orchestral parts. With recording sessions already scheduled for 8 February at Abbey Road (albeit with a different conductor), Murray was the obvious choice to complete the orchestration which he would then conduct at the end of the scheduled session.

The more significant question for the Complete Edition, however, is the extent to which the completed autograph score could be considered entirely to represent Elgar’s wishes. A letter which the heavily sedated Elgar asked Carice to send to Gaisberg, conveying his comments on the recording,<sup>23</sup> shows the confused state of Elgar’s mind at the time – it refers to ‘the part played by Billy Reed’ when there is no violin solo in the piece, and also mistakes the celesta part for a harp – so in no way could Elgar be considered to have supervised the completion; but other of his comments make perfect sense and nowhere does he say anything adverse about the new orchestrations. To this extent, Elgar can therefore be considered to have ‘approved’ what we believe to be the ‘Murray’ orchestration.

19 BL Add.MS 58279 ff.31–32.

20 Jerrold Northrop Moore: *Elgar and his Publishers* (Oxford University Press, 1987), p.916.

21 BL Add.MS 58067.

22 EMI Classics 7 54568 2, disc 3.

23 EB letter 10667.

It was clear that we had to include a performable score of this well known work in the Complete Edition, even though this meant a break with our stated practice of only including music composed by Elgar himself. However, the version for which parts were published by KPM is of an enhanced orchestration made by Haydn Wood for his recording made after Elgar’s death. As Elgar could not have heard that, we have chosen to publish the version which survives in Elgar’s autograph score, but with Murray’s additions distinguished from Elgar’s own contribution by a smaller font size.

### ***Publishing Puzzles: ‘May-song’ and ‘Sevillaña’***

KPM’s apparent failure to issue Elgar’s original version of *Mina* for solo piano was not the only publishing anachronism we were to encounter. W.H. Broome was an enthusiast for the then current, essentially British, Arts and Crafts movement, publishing stylish limited editions of literary productions. Sensing that there may have been a market for a short work by Elgar to be published in such an edition, Broome offered Elgar generous terms which the composer readily accepted and in return provided Broome with *May-song*, first in a version for piano, soon followed by arrangements for violin and piano and for small orchestra. All three versions were published in October 1901, printed on high quality, hand-made, paper in exemplary handsome editions using wood blocks designed by the Pre-Raphaelite artist Walter Crane. In addition, Broome had ten copies of the violin and piano score printed on vellum, using presses that had formerly belonged to William Morris’s Kelmscott Press.

Broome’s enthusiasm was not matched by his business acumen as a music publisher. The clarity of the musical scores did not compare with the quality of the artwork, and his customers were unwilling to pay the high prices the idealistic Broome had hoped for. As a result, he soon reissued all three versions in what he called ‘The Petrowsky Edition’, on less expensive paper and without the fancy art work; and in 1905 an even cheaper edition appeared under the name ‘The Morrice Music Publishing Co.’. The latter proved to be commercially rather more successful. In 1918 Broome began to foreclose his business, with many copies still unsold. They remained available from his former manageress at her private address, and Elgar kindly offered to autograph the remaining vellum copies of the violin and piano arrangement, but even in this form they continued to be available until finally put on sale at Sotheby’s in 1976.

In 1926, William Elkin bought *May-song* from Broome and reissued it under his own imprint. When we came to edit the piece for the Complete Edition, we thus found ourselves faced with a plethora of printed scores with seemingly contradictory publishing details.<sup>24</sup> The reasons for this quickly became apparent. Not only had all four editions of all three arrangements been printed from the same set of plates (until Elkin re-engraved the piano version in 1930) but quantities of stock of the Morrice edition had also passed to Elkin who had re-issued it with Morrice’s details deleted and Elkin’s superimposed. Little effort was put into updating other details, resulting in the British Library’s unlikely claim of an *Elkin* edition of the score published in 1901. But having unravelled the causes of the confusion, we were reassured that Elgar had played no part in the later editions, all of which were musically identical to the first, allowing us to move on ...

24 When originally published by Broome in 1901, the printed scores carried no plate numbers. The later Petrowsky and Morrice editions acquired plate numbers of (W.H.B.)25 with a suffix of ‘a’ for the violin and piano edition, ‘b’ for the orchestral parts and ‘c’ for the piano conductor and full score. Only after Elkin republished from new plates in 1930 were more conventional plate numbers assigned: (E. & Co.) 1555 for the piano solo arrangement, 1556 for the violin and piano score and 1557 for the orchestral material.

... to *Sevillaña*, a work with a similarly convoluted publishing history, posing more difficult questions which we have failed to resolve satisfactorily. This work of 1884 represents Elgar's earliest composition for full orchestra. It was premiered by the Worcester Philharmonic Society Orchestra under Dr William Done in the Public Hall on 1 May 1884, and also provided Elgar with his London debut as a composer when it was played by the Crystal Palace Orchestra under the redoubtable August Manns on 12 May and again in the Summer. It was also first published in 1884 in a piano arrangement by the small firm of Metzler. In November 1889 Elgar revised the orchestral work in the hope of persuading Hawkes and Son to publish it but he was unsuccessful. After further revision at the end of November 1895, the full score was eventually published by the firm of Charles Tuckwood<sup>25</sup> who by then had also taken over publication of the piano arrangement from Metzler.

The subsequent publishing history of *Sevillaña* contains two significant uncertainties, the first relating to the year of publication of the full score. Tuckwood sold his company in 1897 and, after a succession of takeovers and mergers, the rights for *Sevillaña* eventually passed to Ascherberg, Hopwood and Crew. Again each new publisher inherited its predecessor's plates and stock, adding their own covers to create a similar confusion to that described above for *May-song*. And in 1899, Elgar is recorded urging Jaeger to speed Novello's publication of *Three Characteristic Pieces* to complement the old *Sevillaña* which was being published in a revised and newly printed full score by Charles Tuckwood, seemingly two years after the latter had ceased publishing.<sup>26</sup>

Elgar's remarks are of particular interest in the light of the cover of the Tuckwood full score, which describes the score as 'No.2: Simplified Edition' but also advertises 'No.1: Original edition' and a 'Full Orchestral Score', along with individual orchestral parts priced at either 6d or 3d each. Judging by its significantly higher price, the 'Full Orchestral Score' is presumably a complete set of parts, but what is this 'Original Edition', and to what extent did it differ from the later 'Simplified Edition'? We presume that it must be the version performed in Worcester and London in 1884; but we checked with the company's current owners that Metzler, a publisher of only piano music, had not made an exception for Elgar by publishing the original orchestral version in 1884.<sup>27</sup> But it is also hard to believe that Tuckwood, a relatively small firm, would have engraved two different scores by this newly emerging composer. Was this the 'old *Sevillaña*' score which Elgar was still hoping to see published in 1899? Whatever the answer, we satisfied ourselves that this 'Original Edition' had never been published.

Without a copy, however, we assumed we would not be able to determine how Elgar's 1884 version of the work differed from the eventually published 'Simplified Edition'. We were to an extent saved by a fascinating manuscript in the British Library<sup>28</sup> comprising, in separate halves, what is obviously the torn title-page of the original 1884 version. The various disparate markings in Elgar's hand include the date 'Mar : 1 : 1884'; the address '4 Field Terrace, Worcester', the

25 Tuckwood, c.1897, plate number CT 935.

26 Jerrold Northrop Moore: *Elgar and his Publishers* (Oxford University Press, 1987), p.125.

27 Our researches failed to locate a copy of the original Metzler edition. Even Cramer Ltd, the company which had taken over Metzler in 1931, could not provide one, nor even the plate number of the score we were looking for. They were however able to confirm that Metzler published only piano music (as well as manufacturing pianos on which their music could be played), thus ruling out the possibility that the 1884 Metzler edition was in fact the 'original edition' orchestral score advertised on the cover of Tuckwood's orchestral score.

28 BL Add.MS 49973A ff.80-81.

home of Charles and Lucy Pipe with whom Elgar lodged between 1883 and 1889; and a list of early performances of work, presumably using the now lost manuscript: 'Worcester Pub Hall, May 1884; Birmingham Town Hall, 1885; Crystal Palace, 1884; Albert Palace, 1885'. There is an instrumentation list for the work which shows little difference from that of the 'Simplified Edition' in the size of orchestra: in addition to double wind, there were originally two pairs of horns (in D and B flat), no tuba (the word 'Euphonium' is crossed out and replaced by Trombone III), and only Side Drum and Gran Cassa for percussion. One of the unusual features of the published work is that it contains no part for timpani, but the cover contains a pencilled indication that Elgar may originally have included timpani, but then removed them: the note reads 'Mem. All parts to / Crystal Palace Sep.23 1886 / Cornets re-written – Side drum / Tympani cut out.' It provides no more detailed indication of the differences in the scoring of the 'Original Edition' of course, but it does give us something of a feel for it, and confirmation that in all probability it did not differ greatly from the work handed down to us.

### *Unravelling Fragments: 'Lalla Rookh' and the Suite in D*

And so to the volume's appendix, often the graveyard of short fragments of which we can make no sense and so, for the sake of completeness, we reproduce them as accurately as we can but without detailed editing or analysis, allowing others to make whatever they wish of them. But it would be foolish to ignore them. *Muleteer's Serenade* and *The Millwheel Song* were destined for the appendix of the first volume of solo songs<sup>29</sup> until, having removed the later *King Olaf* accretions, we realised that we were looking at two complete and performable songs; and a fragment in the appendix of the volume of violin music<sup>30</sup> was subsequently recognised by Barry Collett as a sketch for *The Black Knight*. But the appendix of short orchestral fragments has proved to be the most interesting and revealing of all.

Rather than ideas which Elgar jotted down but failed to develop further, most are of sketches, in some cases fully orchestrated passages, for works which he completed and which in some cases achieved a performance but were subsequently lost. All date from his early years – the 1870s and 1880s – when their broader significance as stepping stones in the development of his compositional talents could not be foreseen; and many attract passing reference in the major biographies. Now all can judge the scope of the compositional exercise he set himself as a lad of 21 years to rework Mozart's Symphony No.40;<sup>31</sup> and something of the 1879 ballet suite he planned but failed to progress beyond lengthy and clearly labelled sketches for three movements.

Our first task was to disentangle and reassemble a jumble of short sketches spread across nine pages of his 1879 sketchbook.<sup>32</sup> Each page contains between three and six sketches, all seemingly jotted down in 1879 when musical ideas were clearly flowing freely from Elgar. While sketches on an individual page are not obviously related to all others on the same page, they are related by musical content or Elgar's annotations to sketches on adjoining pages: some are clearly successive developments of the same musical idea; others are additions to, or replacements for, phrases in a longer sketch, a scheme whose continuity Elgar records by a series of crosses and asterisks. Elgar helped us with three musically dissimilar sketches on successive pages by labelling them

29 *Elgar Complete Edition* Vol.15.

30 *Elgar Complete Edition* Vol.37 pp.319-321.

31 BL Add.MS 63147 ff.13-13v.

32 BL Add.MS 63149 ff.13v-17.

as themes for the first three movements of his planned 1879 ballet suite. Such methods allowed us to aggregate the sketches on these pages into three predominant groupings, too fragmentary to develop further: the ballet music, scored for woodwind and strings; an Andantino in G minor for woodwind, horns and strings; and a work for similar forces, one sketch for which carried a large, heavy annotation in Elgar's hand. The annotation puzzled us as it appeared to read 'Lalla Rookh', a phrase with which we were unfamiliar until we turned to Wikipedia for help. A helpful article explained not only that *Lalla Rookh* was the eponymous title of a 19<sup>th</sup> century romance by Thomas Moore, but that Stanford, Schumann, Rubinstein and others had all composed works inspired by, or setting the text of, the poem.<sup>33</sup> What Wikipedia could not help us resolve was Elgar's intention for the ideas he recorded in his sketchbook but then failed to take further.

The Andantino in G minor proved easier to place as it contains phrases also to be found in the *Sérénade Mauresque*, the second of the *Three Characteristic Pieces*. A scrappy sheet in the Jesuit Archive in Mayfair headed *Scène* (*sic* – the direction of Elgar's accent is not in doubt)<sup>34</sup> also appeared to be related, less immediately through the music, which was often difficult to read with certainty, as through further Elgarian annotations recording early performances of the *Intermezzo Mauresque*, an earlier name for the *Sérénade*. But it was a lengthy manuscript full score in the Birthplace Archive<sup>35</sup> which particularly caught our attention. Annotations of 'Gavotte' and 'No.iii' pointed to an association with *Contrasts*, the Gavotte which concludes the *Three Characteristic Pieces*, yet while the music appeared to be a version of the published work, there were also differences, not least in instrumentation. The possibility that this was a compositional draft for the published work appeared to be discounted by conductor's markings, also in Elgar's hands.

Perhaps it was Elgar's further annotation of 'Introduction' on the front of the manuscript which steered us towards what we now believe the most likely explanation of this clutch of sketches. It is known that, following the commendable success of Edward German's various sets of dances, Novello suggested to Elgar that he should seek to emulate German's success. This he attempted by re-editing his 1888 Suite in D, an unpublished four-movement work now lost, to produce the simpler set of dances we now know as *Three Characteristic Pieces*. Were we looking at an Introduction which Elgar decided to remove from the *Suite in D*'s Gavotte when simplify the work for *Three Characteristic Pieces*? The likely dates of composition of the Andantino and *Scène* sketches certainly predate the composition of the Suite; and elsewhere in the sketchbooks we found another unfinished sketch of similar date, the *Pas Redouble*,<sup>36</sup> and a page with no music but a listing of Elgar's intended structure for what must surely have been the *Suite in D*.<sup>37</sup> This confirmed our understanding that it was a four-movement work comprising a Mazurka, Intermezzo, Gavotte and March, a structure which readily accommodates these four superficially unconnected sketches. The Birthplace Gavotte segues effortlessly into the Gavotte of the *Three Characteristic Pieces* and the remaining three sketches give us a far clearer understanding of the Suite before the ever-pragmatic Elgar decided to adapt into the later work which Novello published.

Which left us with only one remaining puzzle – the 'warm bath', an annotation above his sketch for the first movement of the 1879 Ballet music followed by a quaver and crotchet pointing

to the fourth bar of the sketch.<sup>38</sup> Surely an indication of his own plans (and of the dangers of leaving too little space between unconnected sketches) than an instruction to perspiring dancers.

When we embarked on the editing of this volume, we had little idea of many of the complexities we would encounter. Having reached our destination, we can look back with a degree of satisfaction at the distance we have travelled.

*The conductor David Lloyd-Jones is editor of ECE Vol.23 (Short Orchestral Works). John Norris is General Manager of the Elgar Complete Edition.*

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33 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lalla-Rookh, accessed January 2016.

34 Jesuit Archive 52/2/2/1 f.31.

35 EB MS 3.20.

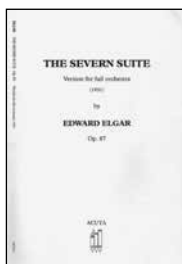
36 BL Add.MS 63150 ff.1v, 3-4.

37 BL Add.MS 49974D f.33.

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38 BL Add.MS 63149 f.17

## MUSIC REVIEWS



**Elgar: *The Severn Suite*, Op.87 – Version for full orchestra (1931)**  
Hambrook: Acuta Music, 2015

The orchestral score of *The Severn Suite* has been available in the invaluable Acuta Music Late Elgar Edition since 1991. Since then Elgar's original manuscript has re-surfaced, and is now at the British Library. Acuta's original version, which was based on the hand-written full score prepared in the 1930s by the publisher Keith Prowse, has now been updated to take account of the minor discrepancies between the manuscript and the Keith Prowse copy.

As always with the scores in this series prepared by Robert Kay and his wife, the result is magnificent. Printed on good quality A4 paper, the origination is immaculate and easy to read. I was about to comment that its tight binding, while being of no consequence when reading the score in an armchair, would make its use in performance problematical, when I noticed that a spiral-bound score 'in performing format' is available from Goodmusic Publishing, together with orchestral parts. These Kays think of everything!

An editorial preface gives brief but thorough details of the work and the sources used in the edition, and refers interested readers to Robert's article, '*The Severn Suite*: Manuscripts, Music and Myths', in this *Journal* (December 2013, Vol.18, No.3). I particularly like the fact that any necessary editorial commentary on the specifics of a particular bar or passage is given as a footnote on the appropriate page, rather than being grouped together *à la* Elgar Complete Edition. It is so much easier, particularly when listening to the piece, to refer to a footnote rather than having to turn to an endnote!

A satisfyingly light touch has been applied to editorial emendations and additions, and convincing reasons put forward for each.

To sum up: a first rate and very welcome publication.

Martin Bird

74 pp. + iv.

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978-1-873690-15-8

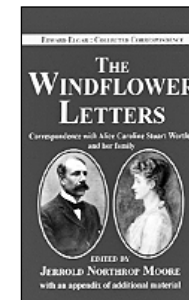
## BOOK REVIEWS

**Jerrold Northrop Moore (editor): *The Windflower Letters: Correspondence with Alice Caroline Stuart Wortley and her family***  
Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2015  
Second edition, revised and enlarged

Lytton Strachey once pointed out that 'the history of the Victorian Age will never be written: we know too much about it'. Taken literally, the same can be said about the Edwardian Age that is closer still. Many readers of this *Journal* will have known both Victorians and Edwardians. Their legacy remains powerful and in places overwhelming notwithstanding two world wars and a modern liberal consensus that now rules the country. The point for us is that, although we might feel we can almost reach out and touch these times, they remain obscured behind a veil of radically different views of the world, hearsay, conjecture and truth as told by those whose memories are inevitably fallible. What was normal or acceptable then may no longer apply to our multi-cultural world but we also have to avoid applying contemporary mores to another time. We only have to consider the row (taking place as I write) about the statue of Cecil Rhodes that adorns the front of Oriel College Oxford to have this point rammed home. Closer to home there is a photograph in this volume of the Stuart Wortley's black Aberdeen terrier who shared a name with that of the Labrador owned by Wing-Commander Guy Gibson, the hero of the Dam Busters raid. I imagine it would be difficult to explain such an appellation to an Oxford student clamouring for Rhodes's statue to be removed.

All this needs to be born in mind when we consider an artist such as Elgar, particularly when, through the diligent research of Jerrold Northrop Moore, we can have a spotlight shone on much of Elgar's life. In this case the influences of a close personal relationship. This forensic examination is not possible with many of his contemporaries such as Kipling whose wife Carrie destroyed his correspondence on his death. Such destruction is also a shadow behind this volume for most of the Windflower letters to Elgar have been destroyed. Dr Moore delicately dissects what might have happened in a short essay and in another covers the nature of the relationship between Elgar and Lady Alice Stuart of Wortley (as she became when her husband was raised to the peerage). As we know, it is clear that Elgar's relationship was of a passionate, artistic nature but almost certainly chaste. She became his 'sounding-board', his scapegoat, the person on whom he could unload his emotions as they swung from despair to elation and back again. She seems to have borne it with an extraordinary equanimity. This is an excerpt from a letter of 8 April 1911 when Elgar was staying in Cincinnati. He was not enjoying himself: 'I loathe and detest every moment of my life here! but I have lovely things to think of & shall soon be back & hope to see you. All I can do is to count the days – I despise myself for not bearing it better but I cannot help it & want to talk to you & perhaps other "educated" people – it is all so raw & silly out here.'

Tellingly, after the death of both Alice Elgar and Lord Stuart-Wortley,



492 pp + xvii

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neither party rushed to form a permanent relationship. Indeed the distance between them seemed to grow. It is important to remember that the arrival of Windflower in the lives of the Elgars was managed by the subtle genius of Alice Elgar who befriended her 'Dearest Namesake' thereby further defusing any possible impropriety.

Dr. Moore's introduction is a model of its kind as it opens a door into the Stuart Wortley family and their circle. Charles Stuart Wortley was a sensitive and accomplished amateur musician whose life was tainted by the early death of his first wife Beatrice Trollope. His second wife, Alice Caroline Millais (known as Carrie to her family) the third daughter of Sir John Everett Millais and his second wife Euphemia Gray the divorced wife of John Ruskin, is at the heart of this volume and there is no need for me to repeat the well-known tale of her importance to Elgar as a creative artist. The volume also reproduces the same photographs from the previous volume (some better reproduced than before).

In this revised edition (the original was published in 1989 by Oxford) we are assured that, in addition to corrections and adjustment of references the volume 'contains an appendix of one hundred additional letters, most previously unpublished'. There are two potential purchasers of the volume: those who have not had access to the volume before and those, who have the first edition, but wonder if they need this revised edition. The answer to those in the first category is 'yes, of course' but for those in the second it will depend on the quality and interest of those letters now published.

Elgar's correspondence with the Stuart Wortleys is not exclusively with Windflower but with her husband and their daughter, Clare. He was an instinctive communicator with children as is clear here. However, the first letter is to 'Mrs Stuart Wortley' and follows their meeting at the 1902 Sheffield Festival of which Charles and Alice Stuart Wortley were patrons (he being the local MP). It was not until 1910, after a visit to Cornwall with the Stuart Wortleys and in the midst of the composition of the Violin Concerto, that Elgar christened Alice 'Windflower'. As her daughter, Clare, stressed: 'he ... called her Windflower after the themes [of the concerto] – not the themes after her'.

Dr. Moore is, of course, the most sensitive and experienced of editors. His decisions what to cut or not to include in 1989 are thrown into relief but we now have the correspondence, albeit largely one-sided, complete. We also have other letters, where relevant, from Alice Elgar and others in their circle. The excluded letters and those that were not printed complete are contained within an Appendix beginning with a letter from Professor Charles Sanford Terry of Aberdeen University. Originally summarised by Dr Moore. We can now see what was missing. Terry has to decline an invitation from the Stuart Wortleys but goes on to praise the Concerto and its composer. This is hardly significant. However, we have letters such as that from Elgar suggesting to Windflower that she congratulate Billy Reed on the award of the M.V.O. in 1928. Reed replies saying that he 'has a shrewd suspicion that the hand of the "Master of the King's Musick" is in this somewhere.' Elgar also campaigned successfully for Herbert Brewer to be knighted whilst, in 1925, telling Windflower how he had resigned from The Athenaeum over Ramsay Macdonald whose election

to membership was standard procedure for Prime Ministers. There is a note showing that Windflower attended a concert of Elgar's E flat Symphony in 1924 that was broadcast by the B.B.C. achieving, as the critic Percy Scholes noted, 'Elgar for the Million [listeners]'.

Of course these letters are essential to our understanding of Elgar and what made this particular genius 'tick'. For completeness the avid Elgarian will want the book and he or she should not hesitate. It is beautifully produced although I prefer the cream paper of the previous version with its slightly smaller type-face. If you have this I suspect you will be content. If you do not then here is your opportunity to gain an understanding of Elgar, his world and what it is to be a creative artist.

Windflower's letter of 24 February 1934 to Carice Elgar is included in full. I will let her have the last word which should also be a clear statement as to why any reader of this review who does not have this volume should not hesitate to order it now: 'I read in the Evening Papers last night that all is over and that your beloved Father has passed to that other side.' This is the letter that contains one of the most beautiful and wise tributes to our greatest composer: 'He is our Shakespeare of Music born and died on the soil in the heart and soul of England with his love of his country, its music, and its meaning in his own heart and soul'. Precisely.

Andrew Neill

**Derek Hudson: *Norman O'Neill, A Life of Music***  
New edition prepared by Katherine Hudson and Stephen Lloyd  
Blandford Forum: EM Publishing, 2015

That indefatigable lady Em Marshall-Luck, Founder-Director of the English Music Festival, has done it again. A few months back, out of the blue, I received an email:

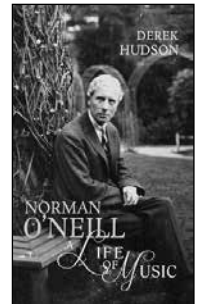
Dear Sir,

I am writing in the hope that you might like to provide a review in your Journal of the biography of the composer Norman O'Neill *Norman O'Neill: A Life of Music* by Derek Hudson which has been republished this year by EM Publishing. The book, first published in 1945, has been extensively revised by myself (Norman O'Neill's granddaughter) and Stephen Lloyd. This edition now has an extended and updated index, bibliography and discography, with new footnotes and many additional photographs.

As you may know Norman O'Neill was a friend of Elgar's – working with him on the short-lived Musical League – and he is mentioned many times throughout the book ...

Now although many CDs from EM Records have been reviewed in these pages, I was unaware of EM Publishing, and although I was aware of the existence of Norman O'Neill's biography in its original edition, I hadn't sought out a copy as I hadn't realised that its author was O'Neill's son-in-law.

Needless to say I responded in the affirmative to Katherine Hudson without delay! I knew little of her grandfather apart from what appears in *An*



208 pp + ii

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*Elgarian Who's Who*: a composer and theatre conductor, treasurer of the Royal Philharmonic Society, who had lunched with Elgar at Tiddington House in 1928. I'd transcribed the one letter from O'Neill at the Birthplace, apologising for the fact that a private conversation with Elgar had been overheard and details had appeared in the press, and knew of a few letters from Elgar somewhere in the British Library – and had mentally put him aside as a minor figure both in the Elgar story and in British music generally.

How wrong I was.

From this biography you will learn, not of a footnote of music in this country, but of an extremely talented composer, writing music for the theatre in much the same way that composers like Britten or Malcolm Arnold a generation later were to write music for films: fine and relevant music produced with a facility and professionalism that somehow belies the sheer hard work that has gone into it. And he seems to have been a fine conductor, too, able to achieve first rate results with minimal rehearsal.

How he found time to be an administrator as well I do not know. He was orchestral manager of the Philharmonic Society, and co-treasurer and then treasurer from 1916, a period at which both the Society's finances and its relations with its players were under severe strain.

Earlier he been secretary (i.e. general dogsbody) of the ill-fated Musical League, which had a President (Elgar) who was out of his depth, and a Vice-President (Delius) who was out of the country. In July 1908 O'Neill wrote to Delius:

Just a line, as I want to tell you about the M.L. committee meeting. I went up to town for it from here & very glad I was to have done so for if it had not been for Beecham, [Harry] Evans, & myself, I do not think here would be any Musical League now! –

Elgar began by finding fault with everything that had been done – He said we had not got the sympathy of the organists & bandmasters (military!) two of the most important “musical factors” in the country!!! – There are only 115 members so far – but as far as I can make out very little has been done by members of the committee to get members & Elgar said he would appeal to nobody for money – He is such an infernal ass that I should not think anybody would give him a penny! –

As Beecham said: ‘Conceivably had its two leading figures been willing to give a good deal of their time to social contacts and administrative control, something more might have come of it. But each of them thought that in giving his blessing to the affair he had done all that could be reasonably expected of him.’

Norman O'Neill had a close friendship with Delius, who was godfather to his daughter, Yvonne, and Hudson's biography sensibly includes a chapter devoted entirely to their friendship.

All in all a most excellent book, well produced and profusely illustrated: highly recommended.

Incidentally, I went on to EM Publishing's website and found (and bought!) ‘*Never Lukewarm* (EMP B001), a book of vignettes and personal reminiscences

of Sir Granville Bantock by his grandson, Cuillin Bantock’, which will be of interest to many Elgarians. As I said at the start Em Marshall-Luck has done it again.

Martin Bird

**Eric Saylor and Christopher M. Scheer (editors):**

***The Sea in the British Musical Imagination***

Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2015

In their prefatory note to this long-awaited book the editors tell how they first came up with the idea for it, some fifteen years ago, and how they ‘have spent a good deal of time since then worrying that someone else would get to it first’. Well their luck held and I am not aware of another extended study of this long-overdue subject and so this varied collection of essays is very welcome.

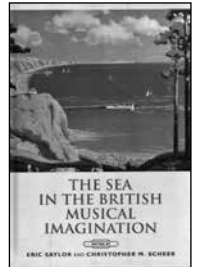
The editors have chosen to present the text in three sections: ‘The Sea as Geography’; ‘The Sea as Profession’ and ‘The Sea as Metaphor’. Four essays are allocated in each group – in the first Alyson McLamore surveys maritime music and national identity in eighteenth-century Britain, Jennifer Oates explores the history and structure of Bantock's *Hebridean* Symphony, Byron Adams uses Frank Bridge's *Lament for strings* to explore First World War issues and Christopher M. Sheer attempts to deconstruct the narrative that has been developed around Aldeburgh.

For me the articles on the sea as Profession were less interesting, dealing with sailors and music in the seventeenth century and late Victorian times, and a fascinating though totally obscure exploration of the role of Maritime radio in Evangelical Hymnody in the Scottish Fishing Industry. But here Peter Maxwell Davies's treatment of sea themes in his first two and *Antarctic* symphonies is eloquently done in Justin Vickers' essay on Maxwell Davies.

Of most interest to this reader are the composer-specific chapters, and after the fascination of part one, the third part dealing with Bax, Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Stanford is very worthwhile, and for my money it would have been very useful to have had one or two more of those, not least because Delius is barely mentioned. In an afterword Jenny Doctor writes about Grace Williams.

Here Aidan J. Thomson's study of Arnold Bax focuses on Bax's Fourth Symphony (‘Bax's “Sea Symphony”’) and in 24 heavily referenced pages provides an eloquent and wide-ranging discussion, analysing the symphony in the context of Bax's early music, and with vivid reference to his short stories. However, I have to say that occasionally I find the language that such academic discussions are pitched in today when discussing music is less than helpful, and I wonder if other readers find a sentence such as this a barrier rather than a help to understanding: ‘Thus the recursiveness of rotational form is given goal-directedness in a way that is analogous to Sibelius's use of teleological genesis.’ (p.232) Never-the-less I do hope Thomson can be encouraged to write about Bax's whole output in this vein as, over-all, this is an illuminating and timely study, and it is good to have a new voice exploring his music.

In writing about Stanford and Vaughan Williams Eric Saylor focuses on the



288 pp + xviii

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1910 Leeds Festival where both Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet* and Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* were first heard. In relating them to the political situation four years before the outbreak of War, 'the pieces' political messages were not enough to salvage or damn either one, even at a time of heightened sensitivity to a topic that gripped the public's imagination' (p.222). In discussing the reception of Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet* in the context of 1910 and not beyond rather limits the story, for the reception of Stanford's songs during the First World War was really their high point, the last song, 'Farewell', finding an all too practical use. After the War the fact that *Songs of the Fleet* were twice recorded in the days of 78s, while *A Sea Symphony* had to wait until the early 1950s for its first appearance on disc rather underlines how slow can be complete acceptance of new repertoire. Of course in the long term *A Sea Symphony* became an established corner stone of the British choral repertoire while Stanford's songs faded from view for many years.

However, of most specific interest to readers of the *Elgar Society Journal* will be Charles Edward McGuire's fascinating study of *Sea Pictures* under the title 'Three Journeys, Two Paths: Locating the Lyric and Dramatic in Elgar's Sea Pictures'. I wonder if readers sympathise with my personal irritation when critics and historians used to write dismissively of this wonderful work, so it is good to find it has a champion in McGuire. McGuire does not adopt a biographical interpretation of *Sea Pictures*, as he tells us he is not building on persuasive discussions of the music by Patrick Little, Trevor Hold and Stephen Banfield. Instead McGuire write that he 'will examine the three journeys represented throughout the work: the physical one ... the metaphysical journey ... and the aesthetic journey, from lyric and static to dramatic and narrative'. In describing aspects of a sea journey or sea journeys he finds that this allowed 'Elgar to invoke a series of cultural topics that would have resonated with audiences of the day. The near-cinematic orchestration presents the passion, wonder, and fear of an ocean journey that was a common experience for Elgar's contemporaries' (p.181).

Although not discussed by McGuire, at this point it is worth imagining whether the nature of the voice has an important role in colouring our reaction to *Sea Pictures*. We have been brought up to think of the songs as a cycle for a lower female voice, associated with Clara Butt. However, the cycle when sung by a man surely takes on a new complexion. McGuire does not mention this but the issue first dawned on me when Martin Yates orchestrated Elgar's *Pageant of Empire* songs for recording by Dutton Epoch. I asked baritone Roderick Williams if he would be willing to record *Sea Pictures* as the coupling, and when the two cycles were heard together with the orchestra, a new sensibility was immediately apparent in the older work. This was music of voyage and exploration, music informed by Elgar's Imperial sensibilities.

There are extensive footnotes to individual chapters, but no general bibliography, and I have to say it would have been useful to have had a convenient bibliography which would have summarised all the sources used in one place. Nevertheless this is a good read, and a valuable and stimulating exploration of a fascinating subject. Recommended.

Lewis Foreman

## CD REVIEWS

*Sea Pictures, Polonia, Pomp and Circumstance Marches Nos.1-5*  
Alice Coote (mezzo-soprano); Hallé Orchestra, conducted by Sir Mark Elder



Hallé

CD HLL 7536

This disc is not only an example of how one of Europe's finest orchestras working with a long-standing musical director flourishes when playing unfamiliar music (yes most of those Marches are unfamiliar) but also how the partnership challenges players and audiences alike. There is also an example, in the notes, of the clarity of writing and thought of one of the great writers on Elgar's music, Michael Kennedy. Listen and you will hear how the Elder/Hallé team work comfortably and naturally together. Read the notes and you will realise why Michael Kennedy is so missed. His passion for the music that he loved and in which he believed is burned into the pages!

How often do you listen to the complete 'P&C' Marches without a break? How often have you heard them played live, in succession? 'Rarely' is probably the answer to the first question and 'no' is almost certainly the answer to the second. This is where recordings come in providing the listener with the opportunity to hear the Marches in what is a far from usual way (except on CD). Nevertheless, the idea of listening to five substantial marches – without a break – all for a large orchestra is daunting. However, this is Elgar and each March is different and each March sounds different. This is particularly the case with the fourth with its trio tune so often compared to that of the first. For me, the differences are emphasised in these magnificent performances by Sir Mark Elder and his orchestra.

The first March is, of course, cursed by its association with the last night of the proms and the words by Benson that have been stuck to its great tune. It needs some sort of liberation and this recording goes some way to achieving this by the simple process of sticking to Elgar's markings: *largamente* with the emphasis *legato e cantabile*. The tune is not *largo* or even *adagio* and played like this in the recording it is freed from 'land of hope and glory' and flows naturally from the preceding material. What about the reprise I wondered: would it slow, would it accommodate the words in the heads of many a listener? The answer is an emphatic no. The music again speaks for itself (this time *molto maestoso*). It is liberated from the excrescences of imperial rhetoric, flowing naturally into the challenging conclusion.

The second March is in complete contrast and has suffered because of its proximity (from the start) to its D minor predecessor. But what a wonderful piece of pure music it is moving forward delicately (almost a dance) without the weight of a big tune to frustrate its progress. This performance is a great advocate for the music as it is for the strangest of the five, No 3 in C minor. This is complex music; beginning mysteriously *ppp* but almost contrarily *con fuoco* (*fiery*). The March never really settles down even when the *cantabile*



melody is played and repeated *grandioso* as, almost drunkenly, it heads for the abrupt ending. Elder and his forces get it right, allowing the mercurial nature of the music to speak for itself, the varying tempi making complete sense, the uncertainty in the music never dispelled.

Other than the trio tune, the first March is a restless affair. The fourth begins *Allegro* (like No.1) but with the addition of *marziale* making the music more considered than the first with its addition of *con fuoco*. In the trio, the differences to the first march become marked. The tune is *nobilmemte* but, crucially *L'istesso tempo*. In other words the temptation to slow down should be resisted which is the case here. Despite the *nobilmemte* marking the tune is more straight-forward than that for the first march. It seems lighter and, this is what comes over here: the 'noble' melody enchanting the listener. I would not call the trio in the first march enchanting; it is much fiercer and direct.

It would be a daring move to end a concert with all the marches played in order. However, the five 'movements' offer such a contrast and to hear them straight in the Bridgewater Hall would be special event – the Albert Hall left behind 200 miles and 100 years away! Michael Kennedy in his notes reminds us that Stanford thought the second march in A major the finest of the five but the fifth in C major runs it close. This is no after-thought in 1929 from a composer devoid of ideas.

*Polonia* is a work of which I have become extremely fond. Michael Kennedy wrote in his notes: 'It is time someone spoke up for *Polonia*.' This is what this recording does allowing Elgar's imaginative and powerful orchestration to shine as this mixture of Polish melodies and Elgarian material mixes happily together in 'a tone-poem lasting nearly 15 minutes'.

So to *Sea Pictures*; five songs of great variety musically, brilliantly orchestrated and, through Elgar's choice of poems, an eclectic mix of emotions. The varying demands the cycle make on the singer, usually a mezzo-soprano, are considerable: from the inwardness of 'Sea Slumber Song' to the visionary climax of 'The Swimmer'. Alice Coote is the latest in a distinguished line of mezzos to have recorded the songs and, inevitably, she will be judged against her peers. I am going to avoid making comparisons and try and judge the interpretation on its merits. Sir Mark and the Hallé know Miss Coote well and it this part of the recording is exemplary with the Hallé revelling in the orchestration such as in the 'elfin music' in the first song which is exquisitely played.

I doubt that Alice Coote's performance will appeal to every listener. I found it somewhat 'knowing' or contrived. The seductive tone she adopts from the opening lines is surprising and at odds with what comes next. I played it again to check what I had heard for the voice sounds almost disembodied. I did not change my view after a second hearing. Her diction throughout is exemplary although this can, at times, make everything seem just a little too careful. Coote manages the climaxes in 'Sabbath Morning at Sea' and 'The Swimmer' with ease but allows brittleness in her tone to creep in on occasions as at 4 bars after J in 'Sea Slumber Song' and, in the last song at the words 'winding sheet' (2 bars before O).

Many readers will have their favourite recordings of these works. Other than those by Elgar, I have favoured Tod Handley's set of Marches with the L.P.O. but my allegiance has now moved east from Liverpool to Manchester. Alice Coote's interpretation of *Sea Pictures* is definitely worth hearing but there are some idiosyncrasies that I found irritating but which others might not even notice.

The sound for the recordings is warm (in both venues – BBC Mediacity for *Polonia* and the Marches and Hallé St Peters Ancoats for *Sea Pictures*) and clear. Different production teams operated in the separate venues but there is little difference in the sound.

Andrew Neill

**Elgar: Cello Concerto**  
**Walton: Cello Concerto**  
**Gustav Holst: Invocation**  
**Imogen Holst: The fall of the leaf**

Steven Isserlis (cello); Philharmonia Orchestra, conducted by Paavo Järvi



Full marks to Hyperion and, in particular, to Steven Isserlis for the unexpected and imaginative repertoire on this disc: and I refer not to the Elgar and Walton concertos but to the 'cello pieces by the Holsts, father and daughter, which somehow escape mention on the front of the booklet.

You'll forgive me, then, if I start with what, to me, were two unknown works by the Holsts. The unaccompanied *The fall of the leaf*, was written in 1963 for an old friend, Pamela Hind o'Malley. A set of studies, or variations, on a theme by the late 16<sup>th</sup> century composer Martin Peerson, it was played by Isserlis at Imogen Holst's seventieth birthday concert in 1977. Here he plays it sensitively yet with considerable emotion.

Gustav Holst's *Invocation* was written in 1911, and remained unpublished at the time of his death. Isserlis eventually received Imogen's approval to perform it, in an arrangement with piano, at the 1980 Aldeburgh Festival, and has now recorded it in its original form with orchestra. First performed by May Mukle and the New Symphony Orchestra conducted by Landon Ronald in a concert that also contained Thomas Dunhill's 1910 'Capricious Variations on Salley in our Alley' (future repertoire for Hyperion?), *The Times* said that it was 'effectively scored in a conventional way, but the matter does not sound very new, and the whole work has less individuality than some other of Mr. Von Holst's compositions'. It is surely far more than that: its scoring clearly comes from the composer of *The Planets*, and in its eight or so minutes it covers a vast range of highly evocative moods, pensive and dreamy. Placed between the Elgar and Walton concertos on the disc, it proves an ideal stylistic link.

Walton's concerto, written for Gregor Piatigorsky, has received a number of fine recordings in recent years and this is up there with the best of them.

Hyperion  
CDA 68077

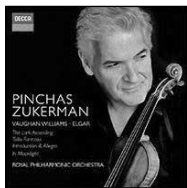
In terms of sheer virtuosity it might well have never been bettered, especially in the second movement, *Allegro appassionato*, which I have rarely heard played with such apparent ease. Turn to the dedicatee's recording, made shortly after the work's première in 1957, and one hears all too readily what a stiff technical challenge the concerto presents. I felt that at the very opening Isserlis was trying to put more into the music than was perhaps there: all seemed a little laboured and to be holding back the ticking quavers of the orchestral accompaniment. To my surprise I found it was played faster than on other recordings: a clear example of pace not being the same thing as speed.

Elgar's concerto is performed both at the right pace and at the right speeds. Isserlis and the conductor, Paavo Järvi, clearly believe that Elgar knew what he was doing with regard to his markings of speed and expression, and demonstrate that a performance that feels entirely natural and unforced can be produced when the markings are followed rather than ignored. And those markings, too, allow for playing of considerable power and emotion while giving a firm sense of structure to the whole. This must rank as one of the finest of the many performances of the concerto that I have heard.

The recording team have, as ever when one sees the name of Andrew Keener as producer, delivered an excellently balanced recording of clarity and bite, though in the unaccompanied work the microphone has picked up rather too much of Isserlis's breathing for my liking.

The icing on the cake comes in the form of booklet notes by Isserlis himself, giving not only a 'cellist's insight into the music, but some fascinating anecdotes of his relationships with Imogen Holst and Piatigorsky.

Richard Wiley



**Elgar: *Serenade for Strings, Introduction and Allegro, Salut d'amour, Chanson de Matin, Chanson de Nuit, Canto Popolare***  
**Vaughan Williams: *The Lark Ascending, Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis***

Pinchas Zukerman (violin and viola); Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Pinchas Zukerman

Decca  
478 0386

I have long enjoyed Zukerman's performance of the Violin Concerto with Daniel Barenboim, so was attracted by the prospect of hearing him conduct Elgar. I parted with some blue magnetic money, and this CD arrived a couple of days ago, just in time for me to write some thoughts for the *Journal*. My immediate reaction is that Zukerman fares rather better with Vaughan Williams than he does with Elgar.

The disc opens with *The Lark Ascending*. When a Lark is reviewed by a Bird I can do no better than to quote from an Elgar letter that is causing merriment among the grandchildren at the moment and say that the performance is 'eggxemplary – I could hardly say hennything else'. Zukerman's playing

is magical, particularly so in the initial phrases as the violin flutters to the heights over a still and perfectly balanced accompaniment in the strings. Here is playing of poise, presence and perfection. The Royal Philharmonic works with Zukerman as if in chamber music, with a real sense of engagement and awareness of what everyone is doing. The recording is clear yet by no means lacking in atmosphere, with a particularly well-balanced (i.e., one can hear it!) double bass line

The *Tallis Fantasia* is just as good, with the recording clearly differentiating between solo quartet, the distant second orchestra, and the main orchestra, yet blending the sound perfectly. Incidentally, I'd never paid much attention before to Vaughan Williams' instructions about who should be playing what and where:

The Second Orchestra consists of 2 First Violin players, 2 Second Violin players, 2 Viola players, 2 Cello players, and 1 C'Bass player. These should be taken from the 3<sup>rd</sup> desk of each group (or in the case of the C'Bass by the 1<sup>st</sup> player of the 2<sup>nd</sup> desk), and should, if possible, be placed apart from the First Orchestra. If this is not practicable, they should play sitting in their normal places. The Solo parts are to be played by the leader in each group.

Whatever! Zukerman's handling of line and his sense of climax, aided by Decca's exemplary recording, makes this a performance to savour.

All the more sad, then to turn to the Elgar and find the performances much more of a curate's egg (sorry, I shall stop larking about and cease these silly comments). To go through them in the order in which they appear on the disc:

The *Serenade for Strings* receives a fabulous performance, full of energy and the joys of spring. Too often I find this simple piece overburdened by a conductor's desire to extract every last ounce of emotion. When played, as here, with a lightness of touch and a sense of movement, one listens with a permanent smile.

It is followed by *Salut d'amour*, and, says Tully Potter in the notes, 'among Elgar's many arrangements of it was this one for violin and orchestra, which he himself recorded with W.H. Reed as soloist'. Well yes, he did record it in an arrangement with solo violin, but one that had far more regard for the overall balance of the piece. Listen to Elgar's later recording, and you will hear that he has taken the orchestral first violin part, which frequently divides into two, and sparingly allocated passages to the soloist. What Zukerman seems to have done is to take the violin part from Elgar's original version for violin and piano and play that with the orchestral version minus, for most of the time, the first violins, which rather changes the balance. And while Zukerman follows faithfully every single one of Elgar's many indications of bowing and phrasing of the theme, in doing so he manages to chop it into short, disjointed, phrases and to lose all sense of line. Go back to Elgar's recording to see how all these indications can enhance, rather than disturb, the overall arch of the theme.

The two *Chansons* are given delightful performances, once again

recognising that this is essentially ‘light’ music, albeit of an extremely high class.

Zukerman now takes up his viola and plays *Canto popolare* in a version for viola and orchestra by Julian Milone. This strikes me as an odd affair: Elgar himself produced arrangements in F major (a fourth higher than the original section from *In the South*), for violin and piano, and for small orchestra, which have been readily available for the past 100 years, so I am unconvinced by the need to produce this strange version. And it is strange, in that a variety of twiddle bits has been added to the solo part, yet the one twiddle bit that Elgar added in his violin and piano arrangement, near the end, to take the violin up an octave, has been ignored. And there can be no excuse for changing the rhythm of the second part of theme as is done so wilfully here.

But the disc ends extremely well, with a performance of the *Introduction and Allegro* which stands comparison with the best, and is again full of energy and drive. Its appearance immediately after *Canto popolare* makes one appreciate the playing of the Royal Philharmonic’s principal viola, who plays the ‘Welsh’ tune in a natural easy-going manner: indeed, the playing of the entire quartet both here and in the *Tallis Fantasia* makes it a great shame that Decca, as with Naxos in the last recording of the *Introduction and Allegro*, doesn’t see fit to name the players. A splendid and invigorating end to a disc which has undoubtedly far more plusses than minuses.

Martin Bird



**Vaughan Williams: *The Bridal Day, Epithalamion***

John Hopkins (speaker); Philip Smith (baritone); Joyful Company of Singers; Britten Sinfonia Septet (Thomas Gould, Ian Belton – Violins, Clare Finnimore – Viola, Caroline Dearnley – Cello, Roger Linley – Double Bass, Laura Lucas – Flute and Piccolo, Iain Farrington – Piano); Britten Sinfonia; conductor: Alan Tongue

Albion Records  
ALBCD 025/026  
(2 CD)

Albion Records, the recording label of the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, last featured in these pages in December 2014 with the release of Alan Tongue’s recording of the première of *A Cambridge Mass*. Now Alan has recorded (in the studio this time: London’s Henry Wood Hall) two more of the composer’s rarer works; *The Bridal Day*, a Masque adapted by Ursula Vaughan Williams from Edmund Spenser’s *Epithalamion*, dating from 1938, but not performed until it was staged and televised by the BBC in June 1953; and its subsequent 1957 re-working as the Cantata *Epithalamion*.

This is the 18<sup>th</sup> recording by the Society of the music of Vaughan Williams – a quite staggering achievement – and the first recording of *The Bridal Day*.

Equally staggering in achievement is ‘Genome’ – the BBC project to digitise the *Radio Times* magazines from 1923 to 2009 – which is now live, and can be found at <http://genome.ch.bbc.co.uk/issues>. I’m finding

it invaluable in my Elgar research, and couldn’t resist looking up the VW première. The music was in the hands of Stanford Robinson, the baritone Denis Dowling and the Wigmore Ensemble, and the narrator was none other than Cecil Day-Lewis. On stage were five actors, seven dancers, and a chorus of eighteen.

*The Bridal Day* was followed by a ‘Special Coronation Edition’ of ‘Toppers About Town’, when the ‘Television Toppers invite you to come round the town with them and visit London’s most famous rendezvous. This week they take you again to Ciro’s Club’. After such an exhausting evening it must have been nice to be able to close your eyes for the News, ‘(sound only)’, of course.

Not knowing either work, I listened first to *Epithalamion*, of which I have a vocal score. It has been recorded previously by David Willcocks with the Bach Choir, still available either as a download or in EMI’s mammoth 30-CD Vaughan Williams ‘Collector’s Edition’. It reminded me instantly of his cantata *In Windsor Forest*, adapted in 1929 from his opera *Sir John in Love* – the composer in his ‘jolly Merrie England’ style – but with unexpected hints of *A Sea Symphony*. It is very well sung by The Joyful Company of Singers – one the finest choirs around in the country today – and equally well played by the Britten Sinfonia. I will admit to being slightly disappointed by what I perceived to be a lack of phrasing, and of striving for effect, on the part of the performers, but, having listened to extracts from the Willcocks recording, suspect that the fault lies more with the composer than the performers.

Next morning I listened to *The Bridal Day*, and suddenly everything fell into place. The music, which at times sounded forced when played by a full string section, now sounded intimate and magical when played by string quintet, flute and piano, and the chorus took its rightful place as an observer and supporter of the action rather than that of its leader. That role was now in the hands of the narrator, John Hopkins, who tells the story simply and straightforwardly, yet in beautifully spoken tones. It’s rather a shame that the composer felt that the future of the piece lay within the confines of a choral cantata – in its original form it would surely not be out of place in a double bill with, for example, one of Britten’s ‘Parables for Church Performance’.

I should add that the recording is impeccable, as is the playing of the septet, whose flautist and pianist have roles of comparable importance in *Epithalamion*, and Philip Smith sings beautifully, if not always with the fervour demanded by the text.

Three hearty cheers to Alan Tongue and all concerned, and especially to the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, for giving us a chance to hear this forgotten gem.

Martin Bird

**Membership Numbers***From Stuart Freed*

Both the Hon. Secretary and the Hon. Membership Secretary in their contributions to the December 2015 News, refer to the diminishing number of Elgar Society members. Whilst there is every reason to guard against complacency and a very real need for every member do their bit to enlarge membership wherever possible, there is scant evidence to support the view that overall membership numbers have decreased to a significant degree.

On the face of it, it would appear that over the last 25 years membership has fallen and that it peaked in 2001 to 2014 at around 1650 members to its current level of around 1200. Two thousand and one was the year of our 50th anniversary celebrations, which would account for this increased figure and the gradual falling off in the following decade. However, the numbers that the Society maintained during this period are, to say the very least, suspect.

In 2010, when I became Vice-Chairman, the membership list was maintained by two different Society officers, who used different, non-compatible, software packages to record and store data and which showed two different membership totals. My first project as Vice-Chairman was to rationalise these two lists, confirm that they were accurate in terms of addresses, telephone numbers and e-mail addresses and indeed to confirm that each membership was current and that subscriptions were fully paid up. In seeking to confirm these details I found a number of entries that did not appear on both databases, many lapsed members and some whose membership appeared to continue from beyond the grave! Therefore, it is my belief that the only membership numbers that can be relied upon for accuracy are those collected and maintained from 2011 onward and that these have hovered around the 1200 mark fairly consistently.

This is, of course, a healthy number of members, but should not deter us from seeking to increase our membership wherever possible. Indeed, healthy though it may be, it still falls well below the target of 2000 set by the Chairman.

Finally, may I pay tribute to the tireless work done by David Young, our Membership Secretary, who is assisted by David Jones. Together, the two Davids ensure that the membership lists for the Society and its branches are accurately maintained and circulated, keep records of the subscriptions both paid and outstanding and ensure that members are contacted when issues arise. This can be thankless work whose value cannot be overestimated and without which the Society would be much the poorer.

The year began with Alice recovering from a taxi accident, and unable to write her diary. Elgar wrote to Windflower to say that ‘our invalid is going on all well but more fidgety at which we are not surprised – the tedium must be very great’. She was well enough for Elgar to go to Pollie’s for a week. By the middle of the month *The Starlight Express* had been ‘shortened and pulled together, and in some scenes remounted to the play’s advantage’. It was not enough to prevent it closing at the end of the month – ‘Lovely play & music enchanting killed by bad setting &c’, wrote Alice.

On 29 January *Une voix dans le désert* received its first performance, recited by Carlo Liten and sung by Olga Lynn, and given as part of Beecham’s season of opera in English. It was placed in the middle of a triple bill with *Cavalleria Rusticana* and *I Pagliacci*.

At the beginning of February Arthur Bliss received news from Alice that ‘Sir Edward [was] very occupied with writing new masterpiece’ – *The Spirit of England*, a setting of poems by Laurence Binyon. On the 11<sup>th</sup> Elgar went ‘to tea with Colvins. Caused them great joy He played some Binyon music to them – Frances so excited & delighted’. On the same day ‘Agnes Nicholls to sing Laughter music – Sang perfectly beautifully. Mr. Elkin to lunch – to talk over Star music for Gramophone’. A week later she joined Charles Mott and Elgar at the HMV studios to record extensive excerpts from *The Starlight Express*.

At the end of the month Elgar embarked on another short ‘Percy Harrison’ tour with the London Symphony Orchestra for Percy Harrison. The programme included *Carnival Romain*, *Capriccio Italien*, excerpts from *Sylvia*, and *Polonia* and *Carillon*, with Cammaerts himself reciting his poem. Ernest Newman, reviewing the concert for the *Birmingham Post*, thought that ‘The three Polish tunes in “Polonia” are not of the first or even the second order. On the whole one imagines that Elgar would have made a more impressive tribute to Poland had he ignored Polish folk-song altogether, and written straight from the depth of his own feeling as he has done in the “Carillon”’.

Two of the settings for *The Spirit of England*, those of ‘To Woman’ and ‘For the Fallen’, were now complete, and Alice took them to Novello on the 29<sup>th</sup>. They were to be performed with *The Dream of Gerontius* in May by the Leeds Choral Union in Yorkshire, and at Clara Butt’s festival performances at the Queen’s Hall.

On 5 March Elgar arrived home from the tour ‘all safe & well. D.G.’. On the 18<sup>th</sup> he and Alice went ‘to lunch with Lady Cunard – Lawrence Binyon & Sir T. Beecham there. “Thomas” afterwards ... not appealing to us at all. E. talked quite over his hearers heads! probably they did not understand ½ what he said’. Alice then went on to tea with the Colvins, ‘in a taxi which banged into another’ – she was not having the best of luck with taxis ...

At the beginning of April both Edward and Alice were unwell, but Edward resolved to go to stay with Pollie once more. He set out on the 8<sup>th</sup>, but Alice was ‘dismayed to hear by telephone from Capt. Dillon that E. was ill in the train & Capt. D. took him out at Oxford & motored him to the Acland Nursing Home’. Carice was despatched to look after her father. They returned to Severn House on the 11<sup>th</sup>, where Elgar continued to feel unwell for the rest of the month.

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