

The Society

Elgar



JOURNAL

BEAU BRUMMEL

MINUET

BY

EDWARD ELGAR



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*** GERALD LAWRENCE AS BEAU BRUMMEL

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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: Gerald Lawrence in his Beau Brummel costume, from Messrs. William Elkin's
published piano arrangement of the Minuet (Arthur Reynolds Collection).*

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Illustrations (pictures, short music examples) are welcome, but *please ensure* they are pertinent, cued into the text, and have captions.

Presentation of written text:

Subheadings: longer articles benefit from judicious use of these.

Dates: use the form 2 June 1857. Decades: 1930s, no apostrophe.

Plurals: no apostrophe (CDs not CD's).

Foreign words: if well established in English (sic, crescendo) in Roman, otherwise italics.

Numbers: spell out up to and including twenty, then 21 (etc.) in figures.

Quotations: in 'single quotes' as standard. Double quotes for quotes within quotes.

Longer quotations in a separate paragraph, *not* in italic, *not* in quotes; please leave a blank line before and after.

Emphasis: ensure emphasis is attributed as '[original emphasis]' or '[my emphasis]'. Emphasized text *italic*.

References: Please position footnote markers *after* punctuation – wherever possible at the end of a sentence.

In footnotes, please adhere as far as possible to these forms (more fully expounded in the longer version of these notes):

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.

Titles that are 'generic' in Roman: e.g. Violin Concerto. Others in *italics* (e.g. *Sea Pictures*; the *Musical Times*). Units within a longer work in single quotes, e.g. 'Sanctus fortis' from *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Editorial

If this issue has a theme then it is of the benefit of the attic as a dumping ground for all those family papers that we can't bear to discard (or sort through!). Robert Kay has contributed an in-depth article on the *Beau Brummel* music, which reveals that the only fragment of Elgar's original theatre score so far to see the light of day was discovered in such a place at the bottom of a pile of manuscripts in a tin chest. Elgar had given it to a friend, probably around 1930. The article on Rosa Newmarch draws heavily on unpublished letters from Elgar. These were discovered among her papers when her family were clearing out their attic, and might well have been binned had not her grand-daughter realised their importance. They were subsequently acquired by the Elgar Birthplace Museum. Rescued with them was a veritable treasure trove of letters from Balakirev, Bantock, Cui, Grieg, George Grove, Janacek, Scriabin and Sibelius.

There must be a sporting chance that the rest of the *Beau Brummel* music is resting peacefully in an attic somewhere. Sadly it's not in mine, but the many people with Elgarian connections who read this may just be inspired to pull down the loft ladder - you never know what you may find.

The essays on the Second Symphony in the August edition of the *Journal* provoked a varied response from readers, both positive and negative, which have been passed on to the authors. Whilst it is not appropriate or, indeed, particularly helpful, to reproduce them here, one in particular got me thinking once again about the scope of the *Journal*. In my first editorial I said that I was 'attracted by essays that set the music within the context of the period and the circumstances in which it was written. This must not mean that the analytical side of music is neglected: our understanding is deepened if we get a chance to look 'under the bonnet'. Those on the symphony reflected this: not only that, by offering hypotheses than I had not previously considered, they made me think about and appreciate Elgar's achievement even more. My correspondent, however, told me: 'The barrage of technicalities I skipped', adding 'I would prefer not to dismiss the past as if it were a moth-eaten rag of underwear I had found in a cheap second-hand chest-of-drawers.' Now I must admit that I, too, glossed over some of the 'technicalities', but while I didn't totally agree with every single nuance of the essays, I found them tremendously stimulating and thought provoking - not merely provoking!

Part of the genius of great music like Elgar's Second Symphony lies in its ability to make people respond to it in very different ways: we are surely the poorer if we dismiss out of hand any response that does not coincide with our own.

Finally, I'd like to draw your attention to a landmark set of Elgar recordings - his acoustic recordings of 1914-1925, quite miraculously restored by Lani Spahr. These old records have somehow been persuaded to reveal the unique musical experiences that have lain hidden in their grooves for nigh on a century. In the same way that EMI's restoration of the electrical recordings was arguably the most important Elgar set of the 20th century, Lani's puts down an early marker as the most important of the 21st.

Martin Bird

Gerald Lawrence, Elgar and the missing *Beau Brummel* Music

Robert Kay

Introduction

Elgar's music for the stage play *Beau Brummel* has been missing since its final performance in October 1929. This article outlines the circumstances surrounding the play's creation and describes the main protagonists. Research for this article has not resulted in the rediscovery of the manuscript, but suggestions are made concerning both this and also the possible scope of the music.

Beginnings

By 1928 Elgar could reasonably have considered his composing career to have been over. After the Great War public opinion had moved away from his music. The death of his wife in 1920 had dealt him a massive psychological blow, and in the intervening period he had composed little, with nothing achieved in the last four years other than two part-songs and the two-minute *Civic Fanfare*. Recording projects and playing the rôle of a respected country gentleman kept him nicely occupied.

Elgar was, however, always willing to oblige. The only two works of any consequence which he had composed since 1920 – *The Empire March/Pageant of Empire* and the *Arthur* incidental music – had been composed as much out of a sense of cooperation as from any strong artistic imperative. And in 1928 he received a request from the actor-manager Gerald Lawrence to supply music for a play entitled *Beau Brummel*.¹

Elgar replied in positive spirit:

I will see what can be done: if not too much music is required I hope I may manage it.

Some sources state that Lawrence 'commissioned' the music, but this is not entirely accurate:

I had never met Sir Edward, until one day he called on me quite unawares and said that he would like to write the incidental music for my next production – if I didn't mind. Needless to say I didn't mind! When I recovered from my astonishment, I realised that he really meant it: and when, some months later, I had definitely decided on this new version of 'Beau Brummel', I went to stay with the great composer at his home at Stratford-on-Avon and we made all the arrangements. The music is exquisite.²

1 The correct spelling is *Brummell*, but the title may have been deliberately mis-spelled to avoid confusion with the recently-released film.

2 *Natal Witness*, 12 August 1929. This suggests that Elgar had ideas, but was no longer capable of abstract creativity and needed an external stimulus. It also explains why he was so relaxed about the matter of a composition fee.

It is likely that the original introduction came through a mutual friend, Sir Frank Benson,³ whose theatre company had played in the first performance of *Grania and Diarmid* in 1901. Elgar's initial letter to Lawrence included a friendly greeting to Benson.

Negotiations

Beau Brummel was a new play, specially written for Lawrence by an obscure playwright named Bertram Paget Matthews. He had enjoyed some success in the Edwardian era,⁴ but by 1928 had faded from view. The *Evening Standard* described him as 'an invalid living in Kent' and he in fact died only eighteen months later.

Beau Brummel was probably Matthews' swansong as a writer, and he was almost pathetically grateful for his brief association with Elgar:

I must thank you for having written the beautiful music you did to 'Beau Brummel'. Though I know my great good luck is owing entirely to your friendly feeling towards Mr Lawrence – and who could help like him? – yet I am no less grateful to you.

Nevertheless, Matthews had once tasted success. It would appear that Gerald Lawrence had cannily engaged the services of a playwright and a composer who had both achieved recognition but were now in eclipse – and thus obtained a quality product at a bargain price. Terms were offered, but Elgar neither demanded nor received any direct fee for his work:

As to the financial side of the matter we will, when we meet, talk it over; naturally I will keep the copyright & performing rights of anything I write, but my terms with you for producing will not necessarily arise, unless you have a great success; then we might consider a performing fee or something of the kind.

Lawrence was appreciative of Elgar's generosity:

I will say one word, and that is that I think it is one of the kindest and most generous actions ever perpetrated.

In the mid-1920s Lawrence had enjoyed considerable acclaim with his West End production of Booth Tarkington's play *Monsieur Beaucaire*, with himself in the leading rôle. By commissioning *Beau Brummel* – another romantic costume drama set among the Regency *beau monde* – he was obviously hoping to repeat his success, with the crucial difference that he controlled the rights to the entire production and could expect greater financial reward if the play took off.⁵ These hopes were destined to remain unfulfilled.

3 Francis Robert Benson (1858-1939), eminent Shakespearian. He retired from the stage in 1933. Lawrence was a member of his entourage in 1893-1895, and in 1927 collaborated with Benson in promoting a troupe called 'The Bensonians'.

4 *The Cheat* played in the U.K. and Australia/NZ in 1909-10. *The Fighting Chance* (*The Cheat* revised) and *The Grand Seigneur* played in the West End in 1910 and 1913 respectively.

5 The playscript is marked 'property of Gerald Lawrence' and while some originated on Matthews' own typewriter, the majority is typed on another machine (presumably Lawrence's). This suggests that Lawrence had purchased not only copyright of the play itself but also rights for future performance – also that he acted as the ailing Matthews' amanuensis and was closely involved in the play's development.

The play

Matthews was not the first dramatist to tackle Beau Brummell's career. *Beau Brummell, King of Caen*, by W.B. Blanchard, was put on in London in 1859, and *Beau Brummell* (1890) by the American Clyde Fitch had enjoyed considerable success on both sides of the Atlantic. A film starring John Barrymore and Mary Astor had also appeared in 1924.

George Bryan Brummell (1778-1840) was a friend of the Prince Regent (later King George IV) and is credited with having invented the modern men's tailored suit. After Eton and Oxford he cut an expensive dash through Regency London, being considered the ultimate arbiter of fashion. In 1811 he fell out with the Regent and was later forced to flee to France to avoid being imprisoned for debt. The death of George IV allowed Brummell's friends to set him up as British Consul in Caen. He died penniless in 1840.

These historical facts were used by Matthews as scaffolding for a fictional plot in which Brummell's love for a woman results in his losing firstly her hand in marriage, then the friendship of the Regent, his position at Court, and finally his liberty. The first Act depicts Brummell as a paragon of virtue, defending Lady Mary Mayne against the unwanted attentions of the villainous Lord Harding. In Act 2 he refuses to betray Lady Mary when she is forced into a compromising situation, earning the enmity of the Regent in the process. Subsequently he rescues Lady Mary from kidnap by Lord Harding, who then persuades the Regent to banish Brummell to France.

Act 4 finds Brummell starving in a garret in Caen,⁶ still attended by his faithful servant Mortimer, but fast failing in mind and body. Lady Mary is long dead, but Brummell is visited by her daughter whom he mistakes for his lost lady-love. The daughter realises Brummell's error but, to avoid disillusioning him, plays along with the deception. In the final moments of the play Brummell goes to meet his Maker, happy in the belief that he and Lady Mary are united at last.

As a vehicle for the lead actor the part of Beau Brummell is highly effective, occasionally witty, in Act 4 extremely moving, and afforded Lawrence ample opportunities for his skill. There is a strong idealistic message that wealth and social position are as nothing compared with love and adherence to the highest principles. However, most of the remaining *dramatis personae* are not strongly drawn and apart from the hero few have any redeeming features, being either out-and-out villains, drunkards and/or society fools. The play was billed as a 'Romantic Costume Drama', but much of the action has unpleasant consequences and the atmosphere veers between burlesque and tragedy. These factors may have militated against success: newspaper reviews were generally appreciative, but following the initial run the play appears never to have been revived.⁷

Creativity

Following receipt of the playscript, Elgar began to have ideas ...

Thank you for sending the play which I have read with great interest; I note what you say about some alterations. The last scene is good, but I fear such a very sad ending may prevent its achieving the popularity it seems to deserve ... As to music, I could furnish you with a soulful Minuet which cd. run throughout the play & anything else required.

6 Paris in the original script. The name of the play was also altered: 'A Gentleman' and 'When Men Wore Swords' being earlier, discarded, titles.

7 The play was never published and survives only in the British Library. Elgar's personal copy is lost.

... and Lawrence reacted with enthusiasm to Elgar's involvement:

I cannot find words in which to tell you how glad I am, and how proud I am to think you will do this music.

Between May and September 1928, in letters and meetings, Elgar and Lawrence discussed both the music itself and its relationship to the play as a whole. Composition was completed by mid-October, the venue chosen being the Theatre Royal, Birmingham, which according to Lawrence possessed 'a reputable orchestra'.

On 4 October Lawrence wrote:

Will your music transcribers send business things to me at Imperial House, 84 Regent Street.

... indicating that Elgar had engaged copyists to prepare the orchestral parts.⁸ Elgar agreed to conduct the First Night, and also organised the orchestral rehearsals, which commenced at the end of October.

The script only mentions 'music' at the outset and during Brummell's death soliloquy. The *Minuet* – which appears to have had some overriding dramatic and musical significance – was intended to be played at the end of Act 1. This is the point at which Brummell loses the opportunity to marry Lady Mary, so it is possible that, far from depicting high society, the *Minuet* music was intended to signify frustration and loss – emotions to which Elgar was no stranger.

Surviving correspondence contains but few clues as to whether the *Brummell* music contained much more than the *Minuet* itself. The indications are that it did – the fact of the *Minuet* 'running throughout' the score implies that Elgar was thinking in terms of motivic treatment. A letter from Lawrence referred to the 'Brummell themes', while one from Wulstan Atkins implied that the music was quite extensive. The orchestra of fourteen players at the theatre was augmented to twenty for the occasion.

Prior to the First Night Elgar set about exploiting the *Minuet* commercially as a flagship item. During the play's opening run, Elgar sent a freshly-prepared orchestral score of the *Minuet* to his publishers Elkin's, who fixed up a pianist-editor to prepare a pianoforte arrangement. A recording session was set up with His Master's Voice. Elgar also promised Elkin's a *Beau Brummell Suite* to be supplied at a later date.

It must be clearly understood at this point that the *Minuet* orchestral score sent to Elkin's was an entirely different item from the score used by the theatre conductor. In other words, there is no validity in the theory that Elkin's were sent the entire stage score which they then proceeded to lose. This argument will be developed further in due course.

The cast⁹ was a mixed bag. Some were known to Lawrence via his association with Sir Frank Benson and the 'Bensonian' theatre company. A few later enjoyed successful careers, for example Dennis Roberts, who understudied Lawrence in the title rôle: he became a stalwart of the pre-war Royal Shakespeare Company. Young Ralph Richardson joined the cast in 1929 and went on to greatness, while Madge Compton, co-starring as Lady Mary Mayne, became well-known on the stage. Gerald Lawrence himself had a great future behind him, but was nevertheless highly respected

8 Lawrence is referring to the copyists' invoices for work done – the address given is that of his accountant.

9 The producer was H.A. Sainsbury (1869-1939), an actor (specialising in the rôle of Sherlock Holmes), playwright and authority on the work of Sir Henry Irving.

by his peers, and his performance in the title rôle won him much press and audience approval. The majority of the *Beau Brummel* cast, however, may fairly be described as ‘journeyman’ actors, several of whom were approaching the end of their careers.

The dress rehearsal was, as often happens before a successful First Night, a shambles:

Everything that could possibly go wrong went wrong. Misfortune culminated with the collapse of the scenery at the end of Act II. This caused me to go completely off the deep end for about a minute, and I do not think I repeated myself. At the end of this outburst Elgar said: ‘Gerald, you have not left one word for me to say to the orchestra!’

Gerald Lawrence had masterminded the première of a new play, with incidental music by England’s leading composer, at a prestige venue with the hope of a West End run to come. At that point he stood on the threshold of his crowning achievement as an actor-manager. The collaboration between composer and actor had been cordial and admirably smooth, marred only by the fatal illness of Lawrence’s sister-in-law which led to some meetings being cancelled. Worse was to follow.

The actor-manager and his family

In normal circumstances – if the *Beau Brummel* music had survived – Gerald Lawrence would be relegated to the status of a bit-player in the narrative. However, as the majority of the stage score is lost, and was last heard of in Lawrence’s possession, one must examine his personal history in some detail in order to explore all possibilities as to the music’s whereabouts.

Gerald Leslie Lawrence was born in London on 23 March, 1873. A competent violinist in his youth, he was a protégé of Sir Henry Irving and Sir Frank Benson, making his acting début in 1893. He appeared in a number of silent films and also on the radio, participating in the first broadcast performance of a complete, dramatised Shakespeare play in 1923. He served in the RNVR in the Great War, and later became an actor-manager, having made his début as a producer in 1909. Lawrence made his final stage appearance in 1938 and the next year moved to Devon, but later returned to London where in retirement he continued to be a respected member of the acting fraternity. He died in 1957.

Lawrence’s marital history is complicated but has some relevance to *Beau Brummel*. His first wife was Lilian Braithwaite¹⁰ and their daughter Joyce¹¹ was born in 1898. The marriage ended in divorce, and in 1906 Lawrence married an American actress, Fay Davis.¹² After her death he married Madge Compton,¹³ his co-star of twenty years previously.

10 Lawrence had met Florence Lilian Braithwaite (1873-1948) when both were members of Frank Benson’s company. They married in 1897 and divorced a few years later. She went on to be a major West End star and a favourite of Noel Coward. She was made DBE in 1943.

11 Joyce Lilian Lawrence (1898-1993) changed her name to ‘Joyce Carey’, as whom she had a long and successful career. She also was associated with Noel Coward and made her final acting appearance at the age of 90.

12 Fay Davis (1872-1945) had originally come to the UK in 1895 with a touring theatre company. She and Lawrence appeared in many productions together. After a successful career on both sides of the Atlantic, she retired in 1933 and later moved with Lawrence to Exmouth (UK) where she died in February 1945.

13 Madge Mussared (1890-1969: ‘stage’ date of birth 1893) had a long career as ‘Madge Compton’, playing into the 1950s. Her first husband died in 1949 and she married Lawrence a few weeks later.



Fig. 1. Gerald Lawrence and family clockwise from top left. (a) Fay Davis (second wife) (b) Madge Compton (third wife) (c) Lawrence as instrumentalist: he was a competent violinist (d) Lawrence with his daughter Joyce Carey by his first wife Lilian Braithwaite (Bristol Theatre Collection).

Lawrence's career seems never quite to have taken off in spite of the fact that he was well-equipped as an actor and was in the right places at the right time. He was very handsome, and one review of *Beau Brummel* snidely suggested that he owed his success on the stage as much to his looks as to his acting ability. Clairvoyants examining photographs of Lawrence may discern a slight timidity about the eyes, and this, coupled with the possibility that he was dominated by women,¹⁴ may have been a factor in his failing to achieve greatness in the theatre.

Owing to the fact that *Beau Brummel* is missing and that correspondence between Lawrence and Elgar apparently indicated that he had refused to give the music back, Gerald Lawrence has hitherto been viewed by Elgarians as something of the villain of the piece. As will be seen, this is inaccurate and grossly unjust. Judging by comments on his character from contemporaries, and in his dealings and correspondence with Elgar, Lawrence comes across as courteous, generous, straightforward and genuinely thrilled by his association with England's foremost composer.

The First Night

Although *Beau Brummel* was premièred at a provincial, rather than West End, theatre, the First Night on Monday 5 November 1928 was a prestige event. The Theatre Royal, located in the centre of Birmingham, was the foremost of the city's various acting venues. Gerald Lawrence, although not a star, was noted for his abilities and professionalism. Finally – and this made a considerable impact – there was the ageing composer-conductor, the most famous musician of his era. Although he had also personally conducted the theatre orchestra at the First Night of *Arthur* in London in 1923, the première of *Beau Brummel* (thanks in no small part to Lawrence's effective publicity machine¹⁵) turned out to be a much more high-profile affair which signalled to music-lovers that Elgar was emerging from his long artistic hibernation.

The result was that the First Night received wide press coverage. The *Birmingham Post* carried a long, flattering and well-informed article which will be considered in detail later. Other Birmingham newspapers were also in attendance. But there were also the *Daily Telegraph*, the *Evening Standard* and the *Musical Times*, three respected journals from the capital. *Stage* magazine and the *Yorkshire Post* were present, plus a now defunct weekly, the *Sunday Referee*. Reservations were expressed about the quality of the orchestra,¹⁶ but opinions of the



Fig. 2. Programme cover for the Birmingham First Night (Arthur Reynolds Collection).

- 14 His first two wives were each slightly older than him, and all three ladies appear to have been extremely good-looking and of formidably strong character.
- 15 This was masterminded by P. Eugene Hatton, an actor who doubled as Lawrence's Press Officer.
- 16 'The only flaw lay in the weakness of the orchestra. What is the use of securing the best music unless the means are provided for an adequate performance?' (*Musical Times*, Dec. 1928, p 1124)

music, of the play itself and of the efforts of the cast were uniformly favourable.

Judging by the reviews, the play went down well with the audience, the *Yorkshire Post* describing a five-minute ovation during which 'Sir Edward was obliged to mount the stage'. Lawrence himself, in what was a very exacting part but one nevertheless tailor-made for his own particular strengths as an actor, came in for particular acclaim. The date, venue and composer-conductor have been dutifully cited by the standard Elgar reference books. When it was realised that the music was missing, these dictionary entries were in a way misleading: although they were not strictly obliged to do so, lexicographically speaking, none mentioned that Lawrence had arranged not only for the play to run in Birmingham, but to tour the provinces and then to go abroad.

The tour: U.K.

Immediately following the Last Night in Birmingham, the troupe would have been packing bags and props and preparing themselves for their provincial tour. *Beau Brummel* reopened on Monday 12 November 1928 at the Grand Theatre, Hull and over the next four weeks played in Walsall, Grimsby, Exeter and Cheltenham¹⁷, concluding on Saturday 15 December.

Advance publicity comprised articles in local newspapers, while in the block advertisements Elgar's name featured prominently. Reviewers, however, made little comment on his contribution, except for the Cheltenham correspondent:

The Elgar music has delicate charm and appropriateness. It is almost entirely designed to produce atmospheric effects, these generally so delicate that the music never interferes with the spoken word (there being no singing). In the Minuet of the masked fête Sir Edward has accepted his chance and given us a dainty little work, entirely Elgarian in texture. One can regret that the entr'acte music is not Elgarian: something big by Elgar in these would have given the music distinction.

The Cheltenham programme shows that the intervals contained music by German, Schubert and Finck. Possibly this was also done elsewhere: scene changes in those days were slow, and Elgar had apparently only written short introductions to Acts 2, 3 and 4.

The tour resumed in January 1929 with *Brummel* sharing the week's run with *Monsieur Beaucaire*. Immediately after Christmas Lawrence had mounted *Beaucaire* at the Embassy Theatre, Swiss Cottage¹⁸ – this enabled him to make the slightly misleading claim in subsequent publicity that the tour featured a 'West End cast' (*Brummel* never made London in spite of press announcements that it would do so 'as soon as a theatre became available'). Tunbridge Wells, Richmond (Surrey), Great Malvern and Bedford were visited. One noteworthy newcomer to the cast was Ralph Richardson, then a virtual unknown, playing Lord Harding.

As before, Elgar's name featured in advance publicity, and the play was well liked by audiences although only one newspaper review specifically mentioned the music.¹⁹ The final Last Night of *Beau Brummel* in England took place at the Royal County Theatre, Bedford, on Saturday 23 February 1929, following which the actors returned to London to prepare for their sea voyage.

As a result of copyists' errors the orchestral parts quickly got into a poor state, Lawrence

17 Elgar attended one of the Cheltenham performances, at Lawrence's invitation.

18 This theatre was used for *Brummel* rehearsals prior to Birmingham.

19 'Fitting incidental music, composed by Sir Edward Elgar, makes the play a finished whole.' (*Richmond and Twickenham Times*, 9 February 1929).

WEEK COMMENCING DECEMBER 10th, 1928.

ONCE NIGHTLY AT 7.45.

MATINEE: SATURDAY AT 2.30

GERALD LAWRENCE presents

“BEAU BRUMMEL”

Characters in order of appearance:—

Lord Mayne.....FREDERIC TOMLIN
 Mistress Prudence Free.....MARY MOUSLEY
 Mr. Bagwig.....ALAN SAUNDERS
 Mr. Christopher Woodland.....WYLLIE BLANE
 Captain Bannister.....RITA ROBERTS
 Lord Mayne's Butler.....DENNIS ROBERTS
 Lord Mayne's Footman.....H. WOKRALL THOMPSON
 Lady Mary Mayne.....MADGE COMPTON
 The Duke of Richmond.....GERALD LAWRENCE
 The Marquis of Blandford.....ARNEST HOLLWAY
 Mistress Strange.....MAJORIE MARTIN
 Larkin (a Tradesman).....ALAN SAWFORD DYE
 Hatler.....FREDERICK HALL
 Tailor.....LILA ALLEN
 Mortimer.....J. HARTLET
 Post Boy.....JOHN CRAWFORD
 Monsieur Chauvin (French Landlord).....GEORGE WEBB
 Mary Woodland.....MADGE COMPTON

Additional Characters in Act 1.

Columbine.....ESME CUMMINGS
 Gipsy.....MAJORIE MARTIN
 Punchinello.....MOLLY SIMPSON
 Harlequin.....ARTHUR WEBB
 Knight Templar.....F. WILLIAM THOMPSON
GEORGE HUBERT

SYNOPSIS OF SCENERY.
Act 1 Masque Fete in the Italian Garden at Lord Mayne's Country Seat, near Bath, 1818. Designed and Painted by Bruce Smith.
Act 2 Brummel's Rooms, St. James', London.
Act 3 Scene 1.....A Room at Mayne's Hall
 Scene 2.....The Same
Act 4.....A Garret in Caen, 1840

Scenery (Acts 1, 3 and 4) Designed and Painted by Evelyn Hart. Costumes by L. H. Nathans. Wings by H. S. Lyons. Floral Decorations by R. Windram. The Minuet in Act 1 is published by Elkin & Co., Kingly Street, London, W. 1.

Producer.....H. A. SAINTSBURY.
 INCIDENTAL MUSIC BY SIR EDWARD ELGAR, O.M.K.C.V.O.
 General Manager.....FRANK S. JUSTINS
 Stage Manager.....DENNIS ROBERTS
 Asst. Stage Managers.....RITA JAMES & ALAN SAWFORD DYE
 Press Representative.....F. EUGENE HATTON
 (For Mr. Gerald Lawrence).

PROGRAMME OF MUSIC. — Orchestra under the Direction of ALFRED C. TOONE.

Selection "Merrie England" Ed. German
 Selection "Lilac Time" Schubert

Week Commencing December 17th, THEATRE CLOSED. Re-opening on BOXING DAY, December 26th.
 EVERY EVENING AT 7.30.

REG. A. MADDOX presents his Second Xmas pantomime. A New and Up-to-Date version of
 “CINDERELLA”

Fig. 3. Cast list for the Cheltenham production, showing interval music (Bristol Theatre Collection).

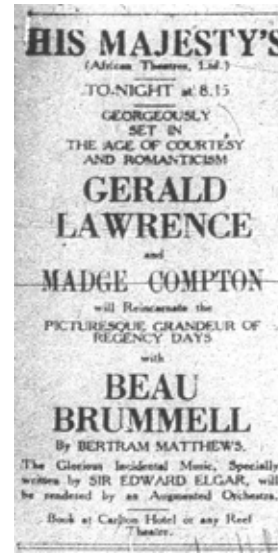


Fig. 4. First night in Johannesburg (*The Star*, 19 August 1929).

confessing that ‘your adorable music is breaking my heart and increasing my vocabulary,’ and ‘calling in a very good man’ to sort things out before the Cheltenham run. But there is no question of the music having been ‘lost in transit’ during the tour. It would have been as well looked after as the playscripts: a member of the company would have acted as music librarian, gathering up the instrumental parts and conducting score as soon as possible after the last chord, checking them for completeness and putting them in a container for loading onto the next train. As the tour appears not to have had its own designated Musical Director,²⁰ Lawrence himself, who was also a musician, may have shouldered these librarianship duties.

Many years later, efforts were made by Elgarians to contact musicians and theatre personnel in the Birmingham area in the hope of finding clues to *Beau Brummel*’s whereabouts. For obvious reasons this was a futile exercise: even if investigations had been extended to the other theatres, their chances of success would have been remote, as all but three of the ten UK venues have since been converted or demolished.²¹

The tour: South Africa

On 8 March 1929 Lawrence’s party set sail aboard the liner *Balmoral Castle*, bound for Cape Town. Arriving on the 25th they immediately made the 800-mile journey to Johannesburg, where their season opened on Monday 1 April.

Beau Brummel did not feature in the first part of the tour, which comprised a strenuous four-month journey round South Africa and Southern Rhodesia. Lawrence had taken with him several plays with a Restoration/Regency flavour – *Monsieur Beaucaire*, *The School For Scandal*, *David Garrick* and a modern one-acter entitled *13 Simon Street* – and this package was presented in runs of between three days (in Pietermaritzburg) and six weeks (Johannesburg).

Newspaper reviews were enthusiastic, with one mentioning the ‘Minuet at the end of the first Act’ of *The School for Scandal* (for which no music had been designated). So possibly either Elgar’s *Brummel* music or Frederick Rosse’s 1902 score for *Monsieur Beaucaire* was doing double duty.

The second part of the tour consisted exclusively of *Beau Brummel*, performed at selected venues and omitting the up-country locations. The first performance of the *Beau Brummel* music outside the UK took place at His Majesty’s Theatre, Johannesburg on Monday 19 August 1929. Three weeks in Johannesburg were followed by four days in Pretoria, three days in Bloemfontein and three days in Port Elizabeth, the company finally returning for nine days in Cape Town.

Elgar’s name was mentioned in the advance publicity for each

20 Two surviving programmes, from Birmingham and Walsall, mention no conductor (other than Elgar on the First Night). The ‘very good man’ was probably Alfred C. Toone (1872-1947), a freelance musician based in London who is named as conductor in the Cheltenham programme.

21 The survivors are Richmond, Cheltenham (now the Everyman Theatre) and Malvern (now the Festival Theatre).

production, the Cape Town public being tempted by some mild hyperbole.²² South African reviews of the production were generally complimentary, Gerald Lawrence and Madge Compton attracting much praise. The *Johannesburg Star* praised Elgar's 'delightful incidental music', commenting on the 'haunting memory of many of the lovely wisps of melody'. The *Cape Argus* was respectful towards the music but dismissive of the playscript, considering it lacking in merit and only saved by a Herculean feat of professionalism by Lawrence. The cast was also described as 'a bit rough', so perhaps the strains of a long tour, and possibly multi-tasking,²³ were beginning to tell.

Lawrence's letters from South Africa said that audiences for *Beau Brummel* had been appreciative but sparse, and criticised the quality of the local musicians:

The Theatre orchestras here are even worse than they are in the smallest English towns I never heard anything quite so abominable.

... even though he had previously brought the Exeter orchestra to the brink of mutiny by publicly disparaging their playing after one performance. From Johannesburg he indicated that he might shorten the music or omit it altogether ...

The Orchestra has worked very hard and your delightful music is just and only just recognisable – I am cutting all the music out when we leave here, as they cannot for some reason let me retain the services of our present conductor,²⁴ and I am not going to allow it to be murdered.

... and the next week's performance, in Pretoria, did not feature the music, which was withdrawn 'for practical reasons', to the disappointment of the first-night audience. The Bloemfontein and Port Elizabeth performances were probably also given without music. However, for Cape Town an 'Augmented Orchestra' was engaged, as in Birmingham, and the music was well received.

On Thursday 3 October 1929 the curtain of the Opera House, Cape Town was rung down for the last time on *Beau Brummel* and the following day the weary thespians boarded the liner for the homeward voyage. On the 21st the *Kenilworth Castle* docked at Southampton and the play's travels were over. The music's peregrinations, it appears, were not.

Break for commercials

It is convenient to pause at this point and examine two commercial matters: the publication of the *Minuet*, and the question of how *Beau Brummel*'s run was financed.

Elgar's publisher at the time was Elkin & Co. Ltd., which specialised in popular and light classics. The first mention of *Brummel* is in September 1928, but things only got under way in November, when the firm's proprietor, William Elkin, wrote:

Dear Elgar,
A line to acknowledge receipt of your note with MS. As we arranged, I am sending this on at once to Ernest Austin.

22 'A fragrant Old World atmosphere together with music that is exquisitely beautiful' (*Cape Argus* preview, 24 September 1929).

23 Ralph Richardson left the tour before *Brummel* commenced. In South Africa the part of Lord Harding was played by John Lancaster, and other actors played doubled parts.

24 Named as Mr. Cecil White by the *Rand Daily Mail*.

This appears to refer to the manuscript orchestral full score of the *Minuet*, Ernest Austin having been entrusted with the piano arrangement.

Austin completed his task in only three days, and by 13 December Elkin's had also produced hand-copied orchestral parts for Elgar's recording session on the 19th. The piano version was published shortly afterwards, as was an arrangement for piano duet (also by Austin), an organ version (by Purcell J. Mansfield), a version in Braille and a set of printed orchestral parts.²⁵

The *Minuet* was originally scored for a fairly small ensemble, and for the commercial publication the orchestration was 'beefed-up' to that of a standard symphony orchestra.²⁶ A few bars were deleted and a quiet ending substituted for the stage version's impassioned chords. Elgar prepared this revised score prior to the stage run, so from this point onwards the *Minuet* existed in two original manuscript versions.

Elgar was not satisfied with the recording of the *Minuet*, describing it as 'heavy'.²⁷ However, he had not demanded a royalty for the stage run and had already received advance publication royalties from Elkin's. Consequently, record sales were his only means of earning more money from *Brummel*, and by March 1929 he was leaning on HMV to release the *Minuet* while the theatre run was still fresh in the public's mind:

Cannot something be done about bringing out the Beau Brummel Minuet? ... Any small or large advt. which the play in the provinces might have given us is, I fear lost.

The record was issued later the same month.²⁸ Elgar conducted a new recording, more satisfactory in all respects, on 4 November, but as the original performance had already been issued this later version was not released until the mid-1970s.²⁹

Two of Lawrence's recent ventures had been the West End production of *Monsieur Beaucaire* in 1926 and a collaboration with Sir Frank Benson in 1927-8. In both cases, Limited Liability Companies had been set up to provide security and financial flexibility.

Beaucaire Limited (Company 198423) was funded by Lawrence himself and also by his friends and relations: its objective seems partly to have been the acquisition of the rights of *Beaucaire* from Lawrence's business partner. Set up in July 1924, the company was wound up in 1926: no debts

25 No printed full score was ever published. The commercial orchestral set comprised a Piano-Conductor score (condensed score on two staves) plus the printed parts.

26 The original scoring was for Flute, Oboe, two Clarinets, Bassoon, two Cornets, two Trombones, Drums, Harp (*tacet* in the *Minuet*) and Strings. The Elkin edition omits the Harp and adds Flute II, Oboe II, Bassoon II, Horns I & II and Trombone III.

27 The performance is indeed extremely leaden. It also omits the central repeat, thereby compromising the structural balance of the piece.

28 As the fill-up side for the His Master's Voice 78s of *Wand of Youth*. The sleeve note for the *Minuet* states that *Beau Brummel* was premièred by Sir Barry Jackson's company at the Birmingham Repertory Theatre. This is totally incorrect and contributed to subsequent misunderstandings as to the music's whereabouts (this theatre still exists as the Birmingham Old Rep).

29 A dotted-quaver figure in the Cornet part, between Bars 22 and 32, is audible on the first recording but not on the second – it appears in the 'stage' *Minuet* MS, but not in any of the published material, while in the MS of the 'concert' version it is pasted-over with sticky tape. Either Elgar made a late alteration for artistic reasons, or the figure was omitted from the piano and other arrangements (which post-dated the first recording) on the grounds of being awkward to play, the printed parts and the 'concert' MS then being altered to maintain consistency.

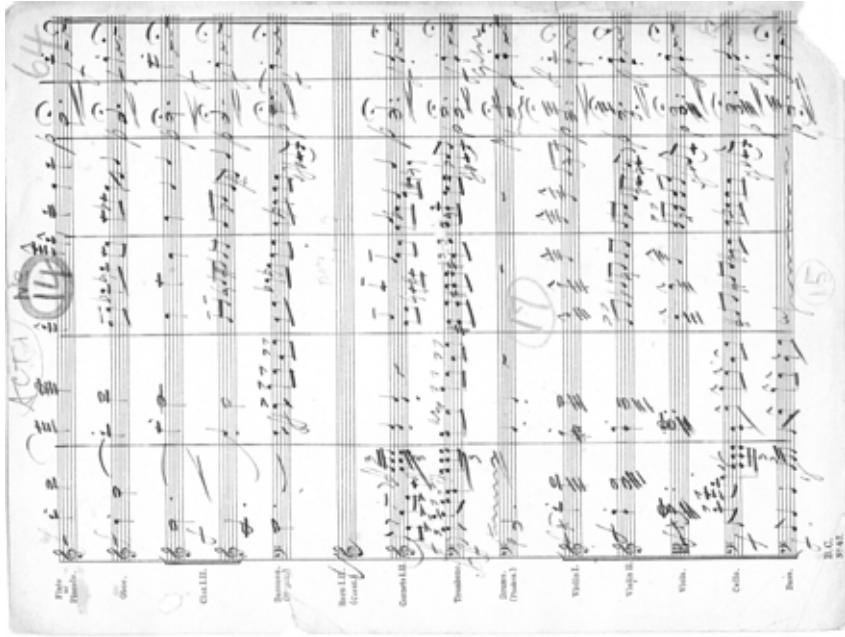
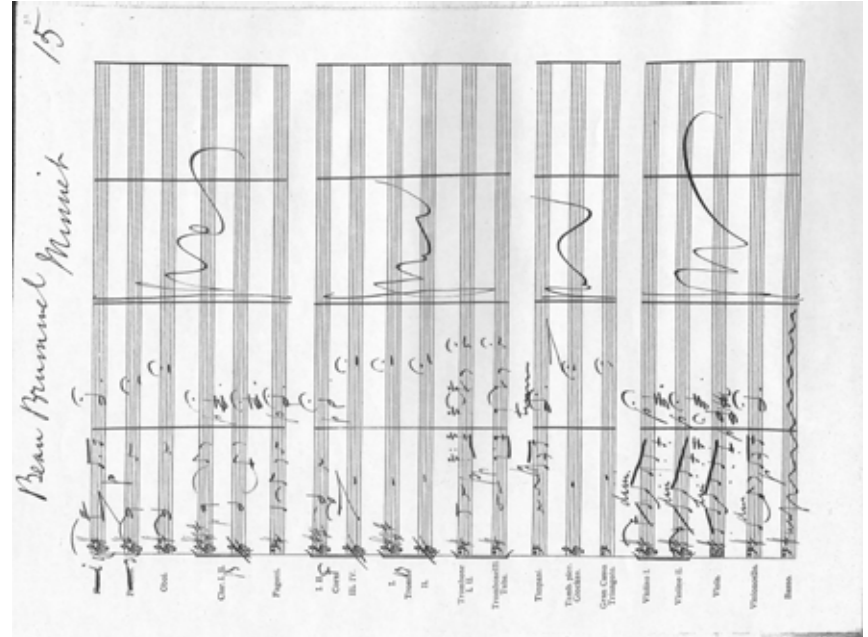
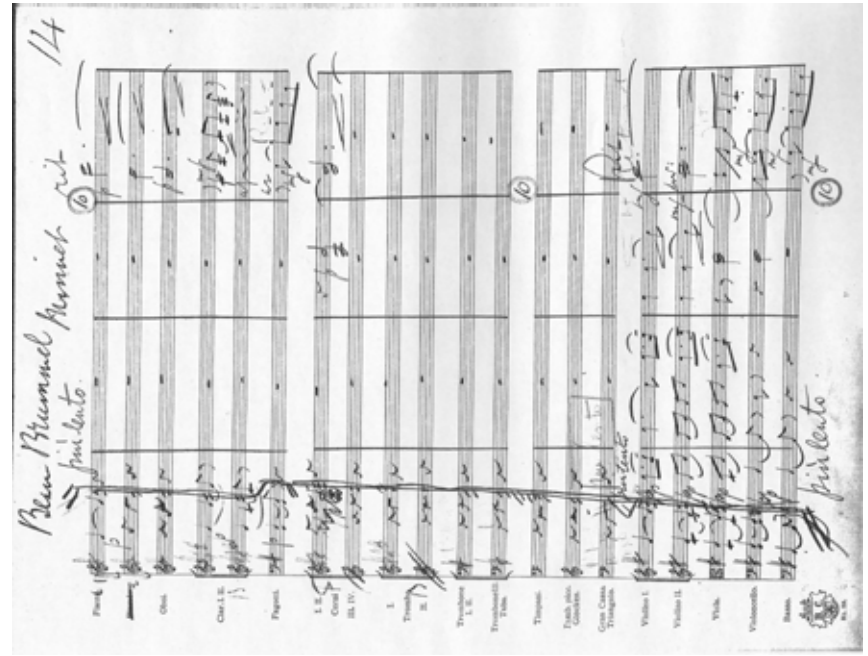


Fig. 5. The last two pages each of the 'stage' and 'concert' versions of the Minuet, showing different endings. It will be noted that the final page of the 'stage' version uses pre-printed MS paper, whereas all but one of the previous pages have instrument names handwritten: this suggests that the loud ending may have been a late alteration. (Stage version - Private collection. Concert version - British Library).



were recorded at closure, so the operation was presumably profitable. Sir Frank Benson And Gerald Lawrence Limited (224296), on the other hand, had outstanding debts on winding-up: it appears to have been disguised charity, providing Lawrence's old mentor with an income at a time when he was financially in low water. Lawrence alone provided the funds: set up in September 1927, the company was dissolved in June 1928 with Lawrence having expended between £900 and £1900 of his own money.³⁰

Lawrence was willing to pay Elgar a fee for his work:

Now a very important thing – I am doing this play entirely off my own bat, so will you ask your secretary to let me know about the financial end of things, that I may see what I can do.

Lawrence was evidently funding *Brummel* himself, with no investment from outsiders. No Limited Company has been traced, so Lawrence must have operated as a private individual. This is indicated by the by-line 'Gerald Lawrence Presents' on the playbills – if several 'angels' had been involved a Limited Company would have been used, with a different business name.

Unfortunately *Brummel* appears not to have matched financial to artistic success. The pre-Christmas run made a loss and the *Malvern Gazette* mentioned sparse attendance owing to bad weather. Lawrence had hopes for the overseas tour, however ...

The Lord be thanked, I am going to make some money in Africa instead of losing it – it will be a change for me!³¹

... and judging by the newspaper reports from South Africa, full houses were not infrequent. The tour was funded by the Independent Variety Theatres' Association and the Cape Town-based African Theatres Ltd., who presumably³² hired Lawrence's troupe for an agreed fee. There is also evidence that each actor was entitled to a share of box-office. This would have guaranteed a profit for all concerned. The tour was hard work, but it seems likely that Lawrence did well out of the South African venture:

The lack of any kind of art out here is appalling. We have not done at all badly considering things generally.

Le Veuf Sous Leur Toit

Following Lawrence's return to England, neither he nor Elgar appears to have made much effort to repatriate the *Beau Brummel* materials to Worcester. In January 1930 Lawrence attended a rehearsal in the Queen's Hall at which Elgar was conducting³³, and from his subsequent letter of thanks it seems that he was still attempting to fix up a West End run for the play. In this circumstance it

30 Confusingly, a company called Beau Brummel (1928) Limited was also incorporated at the time of *Brummel*'s performances: this was nothing to do with Lawrence, being a men's valetting operation.

31 Lawrence sold his brand-new American car shortly before departing for South Africa, so may have been short of funds.

32 The corporate records of African Theatres Ltd. were lost when the company was taken over in the 1950s.

33 Lawrence went out of his way to show his appreciation, giving Elgar some Georgian silver after the First Night, making efforts to locate a record cabinet, and sending him a Kaross (fur coat) from Johannesburg. Elgar responded with letters and invitations and seemed genuinely grateful for Lawrence's solicitousness.

would have made sense for him to hold on to the music, as Elgar's name would have added lustre to any prospective production.

Eventually it became apparent that Lawrence's efforts had failed, and a London run was not going to materialise. On 7 June 1930 Elgar wrote to Lawrence asking him to return at least the full score, if not necessarily the orchestral parts (the 'stuff'):

Where is the 'material' of the Beau Brummel music? I shd. like to have the full score when convenient: of course the 'stuff' will be always at your disposal but I fear, seeing the trend of popular taste that the chance of production must be somewhat remote.

It is not evident why Elgar suddenly decided that he needed the music back. He had by that time made a return to larger-scale composition with *The Severn Suite*, and perhaps he envisaged further projects for which the *Brummel* music could be cannibalised. Possibly he wished simply to tidy up a loose end. Whatever the reason, on 23 June, evidently having received no reply, he wrote with greater urgency:

I have heard nothing about the M.S. it is really serious if the original score was left in Birmingham: please stir up Mr. --- (Meecham³⁴ I think) &, if necessary, I wd. drive over & enquire.

Why Elgar thought that the score had been left in Birmingham, given that he knew the show had toured England and South Africa, is unclear. A conversation with Lawrence may have raised this possibility. Whatever the reason, Lawrence did not reply until 13 July:

My dear Elgar
So many thanks for your kindness.

Your sympathy helps and Fay and I are grateful to you.

All happiness –
yours ever
Gerald Lawrence.

... and at this point the *Beau Brummel* saga ended. No further correspondence survives.

Scholars reading these last three letters have taken the final one to have been a delaying tactic on Lawrence's part: determined to keep the music for himself, he was playing for time, hoping that Elgar would eventually lose interest. The truth, unfortunately, is infinitely worse.

Although it is well-known that Lawrence was the father of the actress Joyce Carey (by his marriage to Lilian Braithwaite), it has hitherto escaped the attention of historians that his marriage to Fay Davis had also produced results: Marjorie Fay Lawrence, born 1 July 1908. She had fallen in love at the age of 17 with Eardley Cotterill (*recte* Cottrell), an engineer³⁵ whom the Lawrences regarded as an unsuitable match. Shortly after her 21st birthday, and while Lawrence was still on tour with *Beau Brummel* in South Africa, the young couple had married, but incompatibility had quickly set in and the relationship had foundered, Marjorie ruling out any possibility of reconciliation. By July 1930 she was again living under her parents' roof in London.

34 A Mr. Cornelius Meachem (1875-1958) is listed in the Birmingham Census as a music teacher, and in *Kelly's Directory* as a violinist. If not a member of the theatre orchestra, he may have been engaged to supervise preparation of the orchestral parts – a task for which the full score would have been needed.

35 He worked in the scientific department at His Master's Voice.

On 6 July 1930 Lawrence was working in his upstairs study when he heard the sound of firing, and he ran downstairs to find Marjorie dead, and Cotterill dying, of gunshot wounds. The distraught husband had shot his wife and then turned his gun on himself.

This explains the gap in the correspondence at the beginning of July 1930, and also Lawrence's final letter. Although by that stage of his life Elgar appeared to be emotionally inarticulate,³⁶ he was nevertheless capable of expressing powerful feelings in his letters.³⁷ The shooting made national headlines: Elgar had evidently expressed his condolences in the deepest possible terms. Judging by Lawrence's reply, Elgar had done exactly the right thing at a time of extreme distress.

In this crisis, Elgar presumably felt that it would not have been humane to chivy Lawrence for the return of the *Brummel* materials. In any event, nothing further was done. No sign of the MS was found in Elgar's effects at his death, and subsequent efforts to trace the music were to no avail.

The exchange of letters was, however, important in two respects. Firstly, Lawrence was given leave to keep the orchestral parts if not the full score. Secondly, the absence of further letters suggests that the full score had indeed been left in Birmingham, and that Elgar did in fact motor over to Birmingham and retrieve it.³⁸ Having done so, he would then have had no need for the orchestral parts and dealings with Lawrence would quite naturally have petered out. It thus became possible that the full score and the orchestral parts had become geographically separated – giving the music two independent chances of survival.³⁹ This possibility became a virtual certainty seventy-six years later.



Fig. 6. The shooting (*News Chronicle*, 7 July 1930).

36 See the pen-portrait by Bernard Wratten in Moore: *Elgar on Record* (London 1974) p.58.

37 See Elgar's letter of 13 January 1931 regarding the death of T. Osmond Williams, quoted in Moore, *op.cit.* pp.124-5.

38 If the full score remained in Birmingham, one might wonder how the conductor managed when on tour. Two possibilities are (a) Elgar's own manuscript piano score (short score) was used: this would have been quite sufficient, especially for any conductor who was not *au fait* with the art of reading a full score, (b) A conductor was dispensed with, the leader (Violin I) giving the other players the necessary cues. Both options are common practice in theatre music. Option (a) would also mean that in the absence of competent players (e.g. in South Africa) a pianist could always provide an adequate accompaniment – in fact, given the conditions, the provision of a piano score would have been an essential insurance policy.

39 Even without a score it is possible to reconstruct the music in its entirety, given a complete set of orchestral parts and sufficient patience. There are distinguished precedents for this (e.g. Rachmaninov Symphony No.1).

2006 – reappearance of a fragment

By the beginning of the twenty-first century the received opinion about *Beau Brummel* was that it was a totally lost work of little significance, consisting of the *Minuet* (which had in any case been published in its 'concert' version) and possibly a few pastiche genre pieces. Efforts to trace the music in Birmingham had proved fruitless, and as the Theatre Royal had been demolished in the 1950s the chances of the music being found in a locked cupboard had also vanished. An event then occurred which prompted reassessment of this position.

In 2006 a rare-manuscripts dealer in Cheltenham advertised on his website Elgar's manuscript full score of the *Minuet* in its original, stage, version.⁴⁰ After various negotiations the score was sold to a private collector in the UK.

This fragment, comprising pages 50 to 64 of the stage full score, was found at the bottom of the proverbial tin trunk, under a pile of unpublished manuscripts of music by an amateur composer who was a friend of Elgar at the time of *Brummel's* composition. He was Isaiah Burnell (1872-1959), former Head of Music at Bromsgrove School, the trunk having remained in the possession of his son's family.⁴¹

Burnell had originally written to Elgar in 1925, asking for his support for a fundraising venture on behalf of the local Choral Society. A friendship developed, as evidenced by subsequent correspondence, and in early 1929 Elgar attended a performance of *King Olaf* in Bromsgrove Parish Church, conducted by Burnell and also featuring a performance of the latter's Overture in E minor.

Burnell's letters give the impression that he was a man to whom Elgar would have taken instantly: unpretentious, a highly capable musician at local level, and his letters a mixture of deference and acid wit. By 1932 Burnell had acquired the status of a personal friend, being invited to tea on more than one occasion.

The reappearance of the stage *Minuet* immediately invalidated any theory that Gerald Lawrence had held on to the entire musical materials. For part of the full score to be in Burnell's possession, it must at some point following the stage run have been returned to Elgar and then given away by him voluntarily. Either Lawrence returned it, or Elgar retrieved it himself from Birmingham in June 1930. In either case, the reasonable conclusion is that the complete full score was returned (or retrieved), and Elgar later gifted the *Minuet* to Burnell, retaining the remainder for his own use.

There is only one possible scenario that preserves sanity while explaining the fact that Elgar had separated out the *Minuet*, but that the rest of the full score was not found among his effects.

By this stage of his life, Elgar's energies were waning. He was engaged on several large projects⁴² which, while they may have been complete in his own head, nevertheless had to be brought to concrete fruition at a time when his health was in a declining (unknown to him, terminal) state. Later he found himself being pressurised by the BBC and HMV to complete the Third Symphony. At the same time, he had two (counting *Beau Brummel*, if present, three) orchestral scores on his hands of unpublished stage works⁴³ which would have required considerable editorial work to adapt them for concert performance. Accordingly, he gave the two scores to the conductor

40 A montage of this score can be found at www.manuscripts.co.uk.

41 The Burnell family have confirmed that they do not possess any other *Beau Brummel* material.

42 Symphony No.3, the Piano Concerto and *The Spanish Lady*.

43 *The Starlight Express* and *Arthur*.

Joseph Lewis,⁴⁴ asking him to compile Suites from them.

This was done by Lewis for *The Starlight Express* but not for *Arthur*. Lewis, however, held on to the *Arthur* manuscript and later gave it to his conducting pupil Alan Barlow.⁴⁵ In 1973 an LP recording was made of Barlow's transcription of sections of the *Arthur* music.⁴⁶ The *Arthur* score was later sold by him to the British Library.

If Elgar was by that time prepared to delegate to third parties the task of arranging his stage works for concert performance, this introduces the possibility that he may have given the *Brummel* score to a colleague with expertise as a music editor or arranger – and, as with *Arthur*, failed to document the fact. However, as the *Minuet* had already been published as an orchestral item and in various arrangements, there would have been no need to hand this over – the work had already been done.

The question then arises as to who this colleague might have been. One who was a friend is more likely, as if the score had been given to a stranger or to a publisher, the transfer would have been formally documented.

As *Arthur* is known to have been given to Joseph Lewis, and yet that transfer went undocumented, Lewis is a strong possibility: nothing would have been more natural for Elgar to have given Lewis all three 'dud' scores at the same time. Other possibilities are Ivor Atkins (organist of Worcester Cathedral, who in 1932 had arranged *The Severn Suite* for organ) or W.H.Reed, who was almost certainly responsible for completing *Mina* for HMV to record just before Elgar's death.

There is an intriguing letter in October 1932 from Elgar to Carice stating 'Percy and Burnell here yesterday'. 'Percy' is presumably Percy Hull (organist of Hereford Cathedral).⁴⁷ Could Elgar have given the remainder of the *Brummel* score to Hull with a request to arrange it for organ, while giving Burnell the *Minuet* (which had already been thus arranged) as a friendly gesture, over the same tea-table?

Speculation – the music

In the absence of the score itself, the extent and significance of the music must remain a matter of conjecture. Four clues exist – the hints given in Elgar's letters, the descriptions of the music contained in the press reviews, the surviving material, and knowledge of Elgar's other stage music.

Elgar's previous forays into incidental music comprise *Grania and Diarmid* from 1901, and two late works: *The Starlight Express* (1916) and *Arthur* (1923). Little of *Grania* survives and was in any case composed much earlier in Elgar's career, while *Starlight Express* has elements of a sung musical. The music for *Arthur*, however, points to what *Beau Brummel* may have contained: there is no singing, but in addition to substantial scene introductions – which essentially tell in advance the story of the action – the *Arthur* music is motivic in construction, each leading character having his/her own sharply-differentiated musical signature.

44 Joseph Lewis (1878-1954) joined the BBC in 1923. He later became Professor of Conducting at the Guildhall School of Music. He made few recordings but was well-known as a conductor of orchestras and choral societies.

45 Alan Barlow (1927-2010), pupil of Joseph Lewis at Guildhall, later of Igor Markevitch. Freelance conductor in London, conductor of the Jacques Orchestra. Also EMI sound engineer. Barlow's widow confirmed (interview 12 July 2011) that he was given the *Arthur* MS by Joseph Lewis in the early 1950s.

46 Originally issued on Polydor LP, still available on CD (Chandos).

47 Other, less likely, candidates are Percy Pitt (1869-Nov.1932) and Percy Young (1912-2004). Hull (1878-1968) was a friend of over 35 years' standing.

Surviving correspondence gives little indication of *Brummel*'s musical scope, although there is a general impression that the music was not negligible: several letters hint at considerable variety within the score. The few sketches⁴⁸ are also not very informative, although one is struck by the fact that none of them resemble the *Minuet* and all give the hint of some riches in store.

More interesting are the reviews of the First Night. The *Daily Telegraph* commented on 'the many fine points of Elgar's score: the vivacious introduction, the charming Minuet, or when the orchestra accompanies the action with some sweet melody.' The *Evening Standard* went further:

Elgar's music colours and reinforces the unforgettable quality of the story. Intimate, subdued and wholly charming, it never rides above its true business of suggesting and sustaining atmosphere. A Minuet of elegant filigree is used as a frequently recurring theme for the strings, which are made to chuckle and laugh and murmur when they seem to run in a subtle and sardonic undercurrent of humour.

But the strongest sidelight on Elgar's score was cast by Mr. A.J.Sheldon's review in the *Birmingham Post*, which is so telling as to be worth quoting in its entirety:

Since the Violoncello Concerto Sir Edward Elgar's muse has been silent, and one began to fear that no more music would come from his pen. He has broken silence, however, and in the way least expected.

Some of the incidental music to 'Beau Brummel' will find its way into the concert-room. Sir Edward can still draw on a store of melodies of the characteristic Elgarian type – so characteristic, indeed, that a mere phrase can be said to declare its origin. Their character, of course is not entirely derived from the melodic outline, for their sequential treatment and harmonic progression contribute towards their individuality. A Prelude of some length leads into the first act, and there are shorter introductions to the later acts. Much music, however, is heard in association with action, to sustain an atmosphere or heighten the tension of a dramatic moment. The music to the second act, indeed, plays a more than incidental part, for the act is unified through the music as well as through the action. But the play as a whole is musically unified through a minuet in whose courtly eighteenth-century strains one seems to catch a suggestion that in Beau Brummel a period found the last of its representative types. The period of the play is 1818; therefore, when in one of the entr'actes the music breaks into a gay waltz, there is no sense of anachronism. The minuet is certain to find its way into the concert room, and a fine suite could be made from music scored with masterly economy of means and the art of a great mind taking its ease in small things. *Mélodrame* is a feature of the play, and the music accompanying Brummel's fine death-scene enhances its poignancy; its wistfulness carries a reminder of the marvellous music for Falstaff's dying moments in Sir Edward's tone-poem. A musical quality in Mr. Lawrence's voice and beautiful diction and enunciation were an added grace here.

This review is extraordinarily revealing. It states unequivocally that the music was substantial in scope and played an essential part in illuminating the drama of the entire play. The statement that the music could be made into a Suite indicates that there was much more material, capable of standing on its own, than simply the *Minuet*. The idea of the drama being 'unified through the

48 Elgar's creative process involved an initial stage with ideas jotted down at random, followed by preparation of a short (piano) score on two staves, with instrumental indications and rehearsal figures. Such scores survive for *Arthur* and also for *The Severn Suite*, the next large-scale work after *Beau Brummel*. Surviving *Brummel* sketches, however, comprise only a few pages of initial scribbles (some located in the *Spanish Lady* sketchbooks). Unless Elgar changed his methods for *Brummel*, it is likely that he prepared a piano score for this work also: that this score does not survive with the sketches suggests that it was indeed taken on tour and used by the conductor or theatre pianist (see footnote 38).

music as well as through the action' indicates that Elgar had employed *leitmotif* technique, as he had in *Arthur*. The comparison with *Falstaff* is even more suggestive – Elgar's Symphonic Study is arguably his masterpiece as well as being a complex intellectual construction. Furthermore, *Falstaff* was not available on disc until 1932 and Sheldon must have been sufficiently erudite to have known it solely via live performances and analysis of the printed score. The overall impression is that the *Beau Brummel* score was a considerable achievement in terms of length, content and relevance to the action, and the *Birmingham Post* review must be accorded due weight when assessing *Brummel's* likely musical worth.

Other local reviewers were equally informative:

Sir Edward, whose every appearance was greeted with an ovation, created a delightful musical atmosphere. The story is embellished with much music: not only overtures to every Act, in the composer's best vein, but also with dances and 'atmosphere' compositions, discreetly rendered so as not to impair the clearness of the dialogue (a virtue in which so many operatic composers since Wagner have been sadly wanting). The brightest music, in the third Act, had the character of programme music, whose irresistible rhythm carried us along the High Road with Beau Brummel and his servant. The music with its delicate suggestiveness also played a large part in heightening the effect of the death scene in the last Act. Mr. Lawrence's speaking here took on an illusive quality and was beautifully adjusted to the musical rhythm.

The review in the *Musical Times* was in similar vein:

Elgar's opportunities were, of course, strictly limited. Brief preludes, a minuet, music *en sourdine* to accompany the most important and pathetic dialogues. The result is a pattern of what incidental music should be. It never disturbs the action; it never intrudes, yet it had not only charm and merit but characteristic individuality. The most touching and effective scene is the last, where Beau Brummel, now an old man, dies in exile and in poverty. He sees, as if in a dream, the ghosts of his past; he hears the sound of the violins of the assembly rooms where he used to lead the dance; he believes the woman he loved so well is at his side; he thinks the Regent, once his friend, is coming for him. But a greater Being has come, and Beau Brummel must follow. It is in this scene (which made a deep impression at Birmingham) that the discreet, wistful Elgarian melodies, played so softly that every whispered word of the actor is heard distinctly, tell with greatest effect. The minuet danced in the first Act has evolved to music that has grace and originality, and a most laudable economy of effect is evident everywhere.

Again, this indicates that *Brummel* had received a worthy musical framework, in terms of both length and complexity. 'Evolved to music that has grace and originality' suggests that the *Minuet* acted as seed-corn for music that by Act 4 had moved onto a higher plane, while 'the result is a pattern of what incidental music should be' reinforces the impression given by *Arthur* – that in an era before television and purpose-built film scores, Elgar had mastered, seemingly from nowhere, both the art and the principles of incidental music for the theatre.

The South African reviewers also appreciated the music, the *Rand Daily Mail* picking up the point about motivic construction ...

The music of Sir Edward Elgar is far ahead of the play, indeed, is masterly. I liked the way it was synchronised with the line and situation.

... while from Birmingham the *Sunday Referee* made a forecast that now seems grimly ironic:

The Elgarian music proved to be well up to the genius mark of that master. It is safe to assume that this score of Sir Edward's will be published in due course.

It is unlikely that when composing the *Brummel* music Elgar would have regressed intellectually from the level attained in *Arthur* – with their undercurrents of love and betrayal the plays have much in common. The notion that the *Minuet* was the only part of the musical structure that mattered arose out of the historical accident of it having been the only section of the music which made publication, and because it was one of Elgar's earliest ideas for the play and is mentioned in a surviving letter.

One final point should be noted. The play comprised four Acts, and Elgar had already reached page 64 by the end of Act 1. The entire score must have run to well over 100 pages – a very substantial body of music.⁴⁹

Conclusion – the possible fate of the Beau Brummel manuscripts

The following reasonable suggestions can be made as to the fate of the *Beau Brummel* music after the South African tour had concluded.

It was lost or thrown away after the tour.

This has been known to happen, particularly in the case of film music. It would not, however, explain the reappearance of the *Minuet* stage score.

The music was lost after the first week's run in Birmingham.

This is the assumption upon which previous searches for the materials have been based. The music, however, was mentioned in newspaper reviews of the later performances and this, plus the fact of the survival of the stage *Minuet*, rules this theory out of court.

Both score and parts were returned to Elgar, who destroyed them.

As there seemed only the remotest likelihood that *Brummel* would ever be revived on stage, Elgar could well have destroyed the orchestral parts – they merely duplicated the content of the full score, and as the music would not have been suitable for concert performance without editing, the parts would have been effectively useless. It is most unlikely that he destroyed the score itself – it would probably have contained material suitable for further exploitation, and Elgar seems to have been meticulous about retaining his own manuscript material, even juvenile scraps.

Elgar recycled the Brummel material into a later work, and then destroyed the score because it had become superfluous.

This is theoretically possible, but is cancelled by the fact that none of Elgar's subsequent completed orchestral works⁵⁰ contain music remotely resembling the surviving *Brummel* sketches. As Elgar

49 Elgar appears to have written *Arthur* (113 pages of music) in about two months in 1923. He had five months in which to compose *Brummel*.

50 *The Severn Suite, Nursery Suite, Pomp & Circumstance 5, Mina. The Severn Suite* was completed by mid-1930: *Nursery Suite* was composed over 1930/31 but nowhere resembles either the *Brummel* sketches or the *Minuet*.

may have intended to utilise *Brummel* music in *The Spanish Lady*, the fact of that latter work remaining unfinished is a further argument against Elgar having destroyed the *Brummel* material.

The score was given to Elkin's (who had been promised a Brummel Suite) and was then lost.

Again, possible but unlikely. The 'concert' MS score of the *Minuet*, which was given to Elkin's, survives in the British Library (it carries Elkin's company stamp). Elkin's were taken over in the 1960s, but by Novello's – and Novello's would not have failed to recognise the significance of an Elgar manuscript.

Elgar gave the full score to another publisher (e.g. Keith Prowse) who then lost it.

As Elgar had promised a *Brummel* Suite to Elkin's, it would have been uncharacteristically underhand on his part to assign it elsewhere: and if the *Minuet* (Elkin's publication) had formed an underlying basis for the thematic material questions of copyright infringement might have arisen. For these reasons this theory does not convince. Similarly if Elgar had based *Nursery Suite* (a Keith Prowse publication) on *Brummel*, then destroyed the latter to cover his tracks, this would have involved him committing several pusillanimous acts simultaneously and is in this author's opinion one for the conspiracy theorists.

Lawrence returned the full score, but kept the 'stuff'.

This is the most likely possibility as regards the performing materials (orchestral parts and possibly a piano score). Unless Lawrence destroyed them (given the circumstances of Marjorie's death this is psychologically by no means unlikely), or mislaid them during one of his numerous house moves, the materials could either have been given away or formed part of his Estate at death.

If Lawrence did retain the 'stuff' (it must be remembered that this was with Elgar's permission), he would have valued it as an item of some personal significance, given his reverence for Elgar and the fact that he was himself a musician *manqué*. Fay Davis predeceased Lawrence, but Joyce Carey later came into possession of the Elgar-Lawrence correspondence (this indicates that Lawrence's *Brummel* materials were not destroyed by wartime bombing). These letters were purchased from her heirs by the Elgar Foundation in 1999: the inventory of her possessions at death did not, however, include any other music-related material. It is not known whether Lawrence donated any papers to a theatrical archive, but his Estate was left to Madge Compton, so the beneficiaries of her Will are also possibilities.⁵¹

Although the performing materials possibly included Elgar's manuscript piano score, the orchestral parts were prepared by copyists and would not necessarily have been in Elgar's handwriting. Their survival would therefore depend upon any subsequent owner or music dealer being sufficiently knowledgeable to recognise their importance.

51 A letter from Carey in the Mander and Mitchenson Archive (Bristol Theatre Collection), apparently from the early 1970s, mentions the Elgar correspondence. Carey may have received the letters from executors following Compton's death in 1969. No letter of sympathy survives, so either Lawrence destroyed it or Elgar conveyed his feelings verbally.

Elgar retrieved the full score from Birmingham himself or it was returned by Lawrence: Elgar then giving the Minuet to Burnell and the remainder, undocumented, to a colleague for editing.

As far as the full score is concerned, this is the most likely scenario. Joseph Lewis has to be considered a candidate, as do his conducting pupils at Guildhall. Any member of Elgar's circle of latter-day professional colleagues could be included: but whoever the recipient, this theory raises the possibility that the remainder of the full score may today still reside, unrecognised,⁵² as part of the effects of this person's descendants.

* * * * *

Attributions and acknowledgements

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Robert Kay is a proprietor of Acuta Music, publishers of music from Elgar's final compositional period. The latest Acuta edition, comprising the 'stage' and 'concert' scores of the Beau Brummel Minuet, together with a critical commentary and comparison of the two versions, has just been published and will be reviewed in a future edition of the Journal.

52 There is no composer's signature anywhere on the *Arthur* full score.



Beau Brummel conference, Summer 1928: Gerald Lawrence with Elgar at Tiddington (Arthur Reynolds Collection)

As this issue was closing for press we had the good fortune to receive these photographs, which had been given by Carice to Jerrold Northrop Moore when he was working on *Elgar: A Life in Photographs* (London: Oxford University Press, 1972).

The photographer and date are unknown, but Elgar's diary for 1928 contains the following entries:

30th July

Gerald Lawrence came re Brummel. All day.

19th September

G. Lawrence arrives at 3.30 - stayed the night - worked at the play -

20th September

G. Lawrence left at noon.

Elgar and Rosa Newmarch

Martin Bird

Rosa Newmarch (1857-1940) was a writer and translator, and tireless champion in England of numerous contemporary European composers, not least among them Sibelius and Janáček. She was the author of 23 books, and for nearly twenty years wrote the programme notes for the Promenade Concerts. A new biography of her by Lewis Stevens¹ is reviewed elsewhere in this issue. Comprehensive as that biography is, it can only touch on her dealings with Elgar, which, though relatively sparse, were of considerable significance. This essay fleshes out the bare bones of that working relationship.

First meeting

The two seem to have met first in November 1902 at the Meiningen concerts at Queen's Hall organised by Edward Speyer.

In 1901 my mind was occupied with the idea of making an effort to get the famous Meiningen Orchestra over to London, and I wrote to my friend Fritz Steinbach. There were some difficulties to be overcome: the expense, the many engagements of the orchestra all over the Continent, and, last but not least, the consent of that artistic and enlightened Prince, the venerable George, reigning Duke of Saxe-Meiningen, had to be obtained, since the orchestra was his private band. My correspondence with Steinbach went on for a full year before terms were finally settled and I could announce them to the London Committee I had in the meantime formed. The Duke at first protested against holding the concerts in November, maintaining that they must be given during the London Season, but I used the argument that the Season with its frivolities was hardly a suitable period for a serious artistic enterprise like this.²

It seems that the eleven-year-old Carice might have been the first member of the family to know of Speyer's plans. In April she had received a postcard from 'Uncle Klingsor' - Henry Ettling, wine merchant, timpanist and conjuror:

Dear Carice,

We are sitting in the open air under the fir trees in the most lovely weather. I had a visit from Fritz Steinbach to-day, he is coming to England in Novbr. with his Meiningen orchestra, will play the Variations etc. I gave him a copy of Gerontius. Is father to be in London?

1 Lewis Stevens, *An Unforgettable Woman - The Life and Times of Rosa Newmarch* (Leicester: Troubador Publishing, 2011).

2 Edward Speyer, *My life and friends* (London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1937).

Hope to see you soon, love to all
Uncle Klingsor³

Shortly before the week of concerts Elgar was on the scrounge ...

My dear Speyer:

... We are hoping to be in town for the Meiningen Concerts & we want to hear them all & cannot afford it: would it be possible for you to say a word for us to the 'Directors' - do not think of doing this if it is not quite what you wd. like to do.⁴

... and Speyer took the hint.

My dear Elgar,

... With regard to the Meiningen tickets I am very glad you have drawn my attention upon the subject. In consideration of the fact alone that an important composition of yours is performed at these concerts without any remuneration being given to you for it, the least that the Committee could do would be to offer you two tickets for the whole of the series. I have accordingly written at once to our Agents, instructing them to do so, and reminding them to be careful in selecting the best seats at their disposal.⁵

The performance of the *Variations* was on 20 November. A few weeks later Rosa Newmarch wrote to Elgar.

Dear Dr. Elgar,

Since Mrs. Henry Wood introduced me to you at the Meiningen Concerts, I take courage to send you my little volume of verse direct, instead of through her, as I always intended to do. You have given me so many moments of intense and vital interest, and so many thrills of national pride, to feel that here at last we had a musician who was himself - 'not Brahms nor another' - that I wish I could give you in return ever so faint a glow of interest.

The book is so short that even in your busy life you may find a moment to spare for it. But I do beg of you not to feel obliged to answer this letter. I know what the frittering away of time in correspondence means. Mrs. Elgar may, if she will be so kind, send me a line to acknowledge the book's safe arrival, and someday, if I have the pleasure of meeting you again, you may tell me if anything interests you in 'Horæ Amoris' A friend of mine says my sonnets are as cryptic as your Variations. I am afraid that is all they have in common.

Yours with admiration & respect
Rosa Newmarch⁶

*Horæ Amoris*⁷ (Hours of Love) is a collection of Rosa's own poems together with others by Russian poets in her translations. As we shall see, Elgar not only kept the anthology: he studied it closely.

3 Postcard from Henry Ettling to Carice, 19 April 1902, Elgar Birthplace Museum postcard album.

4 Letter to Edward Speyer, 22 October 1902, Arthur Reynolds Collection.

5 Letter from Edward Speyer, 24 October 1902, EBM letter 6553.

6 Letter from Rosa Newmarch, 16 December 1902, EBM letter 2309.

7 London: Elkin Mathews, 1903.

An Elgar biography

In 1903 the publisher John Lane invited Rosa to become the editor of a planned series entitled *Living Masters of Music*. The first volume, *Henry Wood*, was written by Rosa herself, and was published in 1904. He commissioned Robert John Buckley, music critic of the *Birmingham Gazette*, to write the next: the first biography of Elgar. Buckley was chosen as he had been writing about Elgar since 1896, when he interviewed him at Forli before the production of *Lux Christi* and *King Olaf*. In August 1904 he wrote, somewhat despairingly, to Elgar:

The book in M.S. was posted to publisher April 7, and the last proof reached me in June ... I lately pressed Lane to publish in good time for the Gloster Festival giving reasons which should have appealed to the commercial mind. He was some time in replying, & in his reply forgot to thank me for the suggestion. He was 'waiting for more advertisements for the end'.

I have not met with Lane nor with his manager [Herbert Jenkins], but my impression is that they exist to show with how little business promptness & common courtesy a publisher's business can be conducted. If ever I meet either the one or the other, those are the words they will hear from me.

On the other hand, Mrs Newmarch was a paragon of promptness in reply & delicate tact. I don't think our opinions on all things agree, but we get along famously, & many of her suggestions, especially as to deleting, were gladly adopted, & were, I think, to the general advantage. I certainly am for Mrs Newmarch who has the right sort of instincts while Lane or his lieutenant, without being positively objectionable, fail in perception of those infinitesimals in appearance, which are a reality, the true sum of the maker. There is a sort of Beef-&Beer atmosphere, a feeling that only Beef & Beer are of any consequence, & that Beef & Beer constitute the summum bonum & the whole end of Man.⁸

The book was not published until 1905. It seems that Rosa, given a free hand, would not have chosen Buckley. Her daughter Elsie recalled ...

... she had not been very happy about the authorship of the Elgar monograph, feeling that this outstanding British composer should have been written about by a writer of wide experience. 'I am not small in my views', she continues, 'or afraid of expressing my opinion as I hope you realise; but I am of the opinion that it was an error of judgement on our part to introduce a second-rate writer in the series ...'⁹

A Musical Review

On 6 December 1905 Elgar gave a lecture on the subject of 'Critics'.

E. frantically busy finishing Lecture. A. C. & May writing frantically for him. E. & A. to Birmingham. 2.25 train ... Lecture most splendid, 'great intellectual treat', Dr. Fiedler said - E. & A. to station & home at 7.5 train - Everybody pleasant & delighted.¹⁰

During the lecture, he said:

Critics of music have, in this country, a difficult task, inasmuch as their work has to be hurriedly

8 Letter from Robert Buckley, 26 August 1904. EBM letter 2956.

9 Elsie Newmarch, unpublished biography of Rosa Newmarch, quoted in Lewis Stevens, *ibid.*, 103.

10 Alice Elgar diary, 6 December 1905, Martin Bird transcript.

displayed, or in the opinion of newspaper editors, its value ceases. It is to be regretted that we have no musical review, a periodical devoting itself to the consideration of music and matters bearing upon music apart from concert-giving or concert-going. It would appear that the English people do not read much about music, except in snippets - serio-comic lectures or perhaps mangled telegraphic reports of isolated sentences from serious ones. Be this as it may, we have seen during the last thirty years, the inauguration and disappearance of several periodicals, devoting themselves to the art in the way I have mentioned:- *Concordia*, the *Musical Review* and several others. There has been no real support for these ventures, and our serious writers distribute their essays over the reviews and magazines. This dissemination would be a source of satisfaction to us if we knew that musical articles were welcomed by all Editors in the way that articles on painting and the drama are received, but except in rare cases, (there are one or two Editors who know something of music), the articles refer only to some sensation of the moment or to some special event. The whole panorama of music is not kept before us except in the columns of the Daily press. It is this combination with journalism which occasionally makes criticism fall somewhat lower than the ideal.¹¹

Rosa read these comments and wrote to Elgar in the New Year.

Dear Sir Edward Elgar,

In one of your recent University addresses you spoke of the need in England for a good musical Review. This utterance must be my excuse for troubling you with these portentous documents.

For the last two years I have been giving this question my constant consideration and I believe the time has come when such a publication might be successfully launched.

When first I took to advise Mr. John Lane as to forming a musical Department in his business, I mentioned the lack of a Review. He was interested, but naturally anxious to see how he succeeded with his musical books before committing himself to any scheme. Now that his books have proved a success in England, and a great success in America, he feels more confident in starting a musical Review with some hope of stability and commercial success. Therefore he asked me, as soon as 'Tchaikovsky' was off my hands, to furnish him with particulars of the scheme I had in my mind. The result is the enclosed proof circular of what, later on, we propose to send out to the public, and a dummy Review, showing the proposed format, type etc. Please understand the illustrations and letterpress are only taken out of other publications at the Bodley Head - they are merely used as dummy specimens and are not intended for future use.

I have no right to intrude upon your leisure in this way; but I can only say that it would be the greatest help to me in my effort to carry out a difficult and rather complicated scheme to feel that it had your sympathy, your criticism, and in the main, I hope, your approval.

My ideal - one must start with a big one and cling to all one can possibly keep of it in face of indispensable practical considerations - is to run the Review on broad independent lines. If it is to be a medium for individual expression of opinion it will be difficult entirely to eliminate individual bias, but by keeping it open to all schools this should be counterbalanced. The reasons why I think such a publication issued from the Bodley Head might be successful and influential are:-

1) Mr. Lane has undoubtedly found his way to the reading musical public. 2) He has special facilities for covering English and American interest in the Review. 3) Issued by him the publication would be independent of musical trade interests. 4) He has every facility for putting it on the market.

As to my qualifications as editor, I reckon as the chief of them the fact that I am very little associated with the criticism of the daily papers and that I stand on the border line of music and literature. Also,

11 Elgar, Birmingham Lecture 6 December 1905, reported in the *Birmingham Post* and quoted in Percy Young, Percy, *A Future for English Music, and other lectures* (London: Dobson, 1968, 163-165).

perhaps, that my reputation as a translator stands high, and foreign contributors might feel fairly confident of having their articles appear in good translations ... I wish it were possible to talk the matter over with you - that is to say if you are interested in it.

... I must apologize for writing at such length. Except yourself, no one outside the office has seen this circular or dummy specimen. I am thinking of showing one to Mr. Henry J. Wood when I see him on Sunday, because he is one of the small group of friends to whom I have already spoken of my wish to see this Review started.

Will you give me kind regards to Lady Elgar if she remembers me, and believe me,

Yours very truly,
Rosa Newmarch¹²

Elgar replied at the end of January ...

The question of the establishment of a good Review has been before me in several ways for the last two years: I am glad to hear that there is a probability of the idea becoming realised by you: under your guidance we may feel sure that the publication, in whatever form it eventually takes, will not be biased. I could have wished that a modern review cd. have done without employing the well known absurd writers on musical things; men without ideals & who never give us a 'lift' to better things, the mouthpieces of the dead academic school, but I suppose you will have to admit such things still.

As to the specimen copy: I would prefer a larger size, say royal 8vo or medium & thinner paper - the paper is excellent for a single number but is trying when a volume is collected for binding.

I need not say I will do all I can to help the circulation of the Review & wish you all success.¹³

... and received the following from Rosa.

Dear Sir Edward,

I should have answered your very kind letter at once, but I have been laid up for a day or so with a severe cold and my work and correspondence have consequently fallen into arrears.

I quite agree with you as to the lamentable lack of ideal and dryness of spirit of so many writers on musical subjects. I should certainly do all I could to eliminate this from the Review. Personally I think the people who write best about music are the people who make it. What does it matter if, like Tchaikovsky, they have their prejudices - and the courage of them? All they write about their art has a kind of living quality which is so rare among non-creative critics.

I, too, should greatly prefer a publication in size like the 'Fortnightly'. But the difficulty is that it costs too much to give more than 54 to 64 pages of printed matter, and that, in the larger size, makes the appearance of a pamphlet.

I feel much encouraged by your promise to help any enterprise. The best way in which you can do that is by letting me sometimes publish an article from your pen. I do not expect to get matters settled before the autumn, so perhaps later on I may be allowed to report progress to you.

Thank you for your kind congratulations of the completion of 'Tchaikovsky'. It might interest you to have one of the proofs of the frontispiece of which Mr. Lane had half a dozen printed separately? Please do not trouble to make any acknowledgement.

12 Letter from Rosa Newmarch, 19 January 1906, EBM letter 7567.

13 Letter to Rosa Newmarch, 30 January 1906, EBM letter 10077.

With kind regards,
yours sincerely,
Rosa Newmarch¹⁴

Sadly the hoped for Review never saw the light of day.

Symphonies

On 1 January 1909, Elgar conducted the third London performance of his new Symphony at Queen's Hall. It was the first that he had conducted himself. Naturally, comparisons were made with Richter's reading:

Dr Richter's readings have not been surpassed for breadth and dignity of conception, but the composer himself, by sweeping the performance along, and imparting to it a warmth of expression that had been wanting previously, made the points where the music seemed to make little advance far less evident than when a more deliberate and straightforward manner was adopted. The first movement, in particular, had more intensity, and so, too, had the adagio, which was found to contain a warmth of feeling unsuspected before.¹⁵

Rosa Newmarch was present at the concert and, indeed, had written the programme notes. She had taken over responsibility for providing the notes for Edgar Speyer's Queen's Hall Symphony Concerts and Promenade Concerts in 1908. Next day she wrote to Elgar ...

Dear Sir Edward,
I feel that I just want to say quietly how full of beautiful things the Symphony is when one hears it as we did yesterday. I don't think even downright misinterpretation would ever spoil the beauty of the middle movements. They are more or less safe with every one all over the world, because they must touch people's hearts, even if they are somewhat shorn of their subtlety and intimate meaning. But the Finale was a different thing in your own reading. I must confess, fine as the first performance was in many points, Richter made the finale - which I found so interesting on paper - anything but simpatico. So I went away, as one so often does after hearing a Symphony, wishing a little that it stopped at the third movement! But yesterday I felt quite differently. You have given me the Symphony whole again. A young friend of mine told me Richter had said to him of the Symphony: 'es ist Beethoven'. Of course it was his supreme word of praise and appreciation. But that was the one drawback to his interpretation, because it is another voice altogether. Something perfectly individual and a century later than Beethoven, therefore expressing thoughts and feelings undreamt of in his philosophy. It is a beautiful, penetrating, complex creation such as could only be written nowadays, and, what is best of all, such as could only have been written by you - yourself. That ought to make you very happy, because our individuality is the most precious thing we have to express here, whatever it may be merged into hereafter. And when you see so many excellent people spending their whole lives echoing somebody else!

It was very good of you to say you liked my notes. It is music that suggests so much to one's imagination and feeling, and yet a programme book ought not to be too fanciful. Also one ought to avoid sticking labels on new born works. Of course an analysis of that kind has no important effect one way or the other, but as they generally remain unchanged for years (I mean to revise mine fairly often) certain adjectives and elucidatory remarks (?) become stereotyped, and the public do get to ba-

14 Letter from Rosa Newmarch, 6 February 1906, EBM letter 7568.

15 *Monthly Musical Record*, 1 February 1909.

a-a on the same note over 'a chaste theme in D', or a figure in the lower strings which represents 'the writings of the soul' after a Christmas dinner etc.

Now, when those weeks of work and excitement are over, you will go to Italy, which soothes one in a kind of fruitful way as no other country can, and write another symphony, as beautiful as this, and quite different. But you will leave us this one to enjoy and love more and more - even better I think when the first furor has subsided. It is one of the works that has great powers of attachment, I feel sure. Please, please don't attempt to answer this, or I shall feel such an egotistical wretch. Besides we shall be meeting again before long. But there are things that cannot be rushed through in an artists' room.

With kind regards to Lady Elgar and all good wishes - which involves a great deal - for 1909.

Yours sincerely
Rosa Newmarch¹⁶

... to which Elgar could only reply:

Dear Mrs. Newmarch:
I know I am disobedient but you must forgive me for writing two words to thank you for your very beautiful letter: thank you.

Yours sincerely
Edward Elgar¹⁷

As the Second Symphony was to receive its première at another Edward Speyer event, the 1911 London Musical Festival, Rosa was again responsible for the programme notes. It should be remembered that the programme books of the time habitually contained a full musical analysis of the works in question. Given that the week's concerts also contained the premières of Percy Pitt's *English Rhapsody*, Bantock's *Dante and Beatrice* and Walford Davies's *Parthenia*, and the first performance in England of the third of Debussy's *Images, Rondes des Printemps*, Rosa's task was considerable. From New York, where he was involved in the first stages of the Sheffield Musical Union's World Tour, Elgar wrote to Alfred Littleton.

With this I send a few very rough notes which I hope will be in time for the programme book (Mrs Newmarch) Please use them as you think best - I fear they are very late & were intended for you a fortnight ago but on my return to N.Y. (between Buffalo & Cincinnati concerts) I find them still here! so I do the best I can.¹⁸

His notes were not particularly detailed: for example ...

The germ of the work is in the opening bars - these in a modified form are heard for the last time in the closing bars of the last movement. The early part of the 1st. movemnt consists of an assemblage of themes. I wish the theme at 11 to be considered (& labelled) as the second principal theme¹⁹

16 Letter from Rosa Newmarch, 2 January 1909, EBM letter 3804.

17 Letter to Rosa Newmarch, 5 January 1909, EBM letter 10078.

18 Letter to Alfred Littleton, 13 April 1911, published in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar and his Publishers* (Oxford University Press, 1987, 741).

19 Ibid.

... and ...

In the 2nd movement at 79 the feminine voice laments over the broad manly 1st theme and may not 87 be like a woman dropping a flower on the man's grave?²⁰

Back in Hereford Elgar wrote to Rosa less than a fortnight before the first performance with more details.

Dear Mrs. Newmarch:

I think you may be writing about the IInd. Symphony: if so please note the 'Cello at 28 & also at 33 now weirdly acqpd. by the Trombones.

This 'Cello passage is suggested at 117 & gradually overwhelms everything else e.g. 120 (Trombones &c).

I venture to draw your attention to this as it makes the Rondo coherent & I think the Musical Times notice does not refer to the points - but I only saw a rough proof

Very kind regards
Yours sincerely
Edward Elgar²¹

Choral Songs

In January 1914 Elgar's turned to the book of poetry that Rosa Newmarch had given him twelve years earlier. He commenced a series of Choral Songs. Alice's diary charts the progress:

20 January: E. wrote wonderful part song. Translated words from the Russian -

21 January: E. writing wonderful part song from the Russian.

22 January: E. finished his weird & wonderful part song.

25 January: E. better finishing his booful part songs & clearing up letters -

26 January: E. deep in his part songs & playing gramophone very often, delighting in it -

27 January: E. much absorbed in his part songs, finishing the Tempest at Sea - very fine.

28 January: E. very absorbed in his booful new part songs -²²

On 24 January he wrote to Rosa asking permission to use the texts.

Dear Mrs. Newmarch:

I have sketched for unaccompanied chorus settings of pp 70, - 71 - 2 & 4 of your book of poems the one you so kindly gave me. I have long wanted to use some of your poems for music & I shall be very glad if you will let me know if they are at liberty - perhaps the three I have chosen have been already set. If they are free could you very kindly let me hear on what terms I may use them?

With kind regards
Believe me to be
Yours sincerely
Edward Elgar²³

20 Ibid.

21 Letter to Rosa Newmarch, 12 May 1911, EBM letter 10079.

22 Alice Elgar diary, Martin Bird transcript.

23 Letter to Rosa Newmarch, 24 January 1914, EBM letter 10082.

Rosa's replies were sent on to Novello with his letter of 8 February, and their whereabouts is uncertain, but the gist of them may be readily ascertained from the ensuing correspondence.

Dear Mrs. Newmarch:

Very many thanks for your kind letter: the volume I have is 'Horae Amoris' I do not think it would affect Mr. Norman O'Neill's doings if my partsongs are published. I have set Death on the Hills Serenade and A Modern Greek song and should like to publish them soon. Will you therefore kindly write to Mr. Elkin Matthews as you suggest.

I have not the 'Songs to a Singer' & should be delighted to have it.²⁴

Norman O'Neill had already set some of the poems, including *Death on the Hills*.

Dear Mrs. Newmarch:

Very many thanks for your kind letter & permission to use Death on the hills & Modern Greek Song and Serenade: I will see the publishers send you one guinea for each of these & thank you for arranging the matter with Mr. Elkin Matthews.

Will you allow me to reverse the two lines (p. 74)

'Dreams all too brief
Dreams without grief'

for musical rhythmical reasons? I set them placed as above.

Can I omit the title 'A Modern Greek Song' - I really do not see the application - is there anything Greek about it? - the sapphire seas I have seen round Greece but also in other places - even America! I should like a short title or, failing that, the first line. Do you mind? I will see that Mr. Elkin Matthews permission is acknowledged on each part song. I wish you could hear some of the northern choirs (Morecambe Blackpool &c) sing these sorts of compositions.²⁵

On 8 February he wrote to Henry Clayton accepting terms for the Choral Songs, and promising to deliver the manuscripts next morning.

... With this I send the letters referring to Mrs. Newmarch's translations: she told me that Mr. Norman O'Neill had set some as songs some years ago but that no reservation was placed upon them: I wrote to Mr O'Neill practically offering to withdraw my pt songs if he felt they wd. clash with his songs, of course pointing out that they would not clash: I enclose his reply which is quite satisfactory & you might like to file it (His publishers might at some future time raise the question for instance) with the other letters. Will you send the 3 guis to Elkin Mathews for Mrs. Newmarch or shall I? You can debit me with it.

You will see what Mrs. Newmarch says about 'The Modern Greek Song' in answer to my question as to title - she leaves me to do as I like, - I said there was nothing Greek about the words & the title was too cumbersome: neither of those titles she suggests will do & I am not much in favour of 'Love's tempest', although that is more useful. 'The Tempest' alone is not enough, as I hope, for all our sakes that this big thing may be a success amongst the larger competitions. I should like to find a good title - Here again Dr. McNaught would help invaluabley.²⁶

24 Letter to Rosa Newmarch, 28 January 1914, EBM letter 10083.

25 Letter to Rosa Newmarch, 2 February 1914, EBM letter 10081.

26 Letter to Henry Clayton, 8 February 1914, Richard Westwood Brookes collection. Sadly, the Rosa Newmarch letters referred to were separated at some point before the dispersal of the Novello archive, and have not been traced.

On 1 February William McNaught had been 'to lunch & hear new booful part songs - Greatly impressed - E. & he had long talk - nice man - fine -' Now Elgar wrote to him about the songs:

My dear McNaught.

I am delighted to tell you that the firm have taken the five partsongs (Choral-songs) you were so kind as to listen to last Sunday. I am sending the M.S. tomorrow Monday & have written to Mr. Clayton saying I was asking you to cast your godfatherly eye on 'The Modern Greek Song' - we cannot call it that & Mrs Newmarch gives me full permission to do as I like regarding a title - two which she tentatively suggested will not do - you may see what I have said to Mr. Clayton about it: it wants a good solid title.²⁷



Fig. 1. Rosa Newmarch, c. 1901, reproduced by courtesy of Troubador Publishing Ltd.

... and after seeking McNaught's advice on a number of passages he concluded: 'P.S. If you do think the alterations worth making a stroke of the pen wd do it - you need not send the M.S. back.'

In April he sent the newly published songs to Rosa.

Dear Mrs. Newmarch:

At last I have the pleasure to send you the three settings of your poems which you were so kind as to send me.

I hope you may hear them sung by one of the northern choirs & not till then.²⁸

... and Rosa replied:

Dear Sir Edward,

How kind and thoughtful of you to send me the three part songs yourself. When I get home I shall have them bound up together, and then I shall ask you if you will add to my pride and pleasure in them by writing your name in them. I shall certainly take the first possible chance of hearing them well sung. Just glancing through them here, without even a piano, I can see what a fine setting you have made of 'Death of the Hills'; but I believe 'Love's Tempest' is the one that is going to thrill me most. I have always had a weakness for those two laconic verses that seem almost naively simple, and leave so much scope for emotional realisation and I see how wonderfully you have taken advantage of the mere bare suggestion of the text. But I'll say no more about them now, except to thank you again for having given such beautiful garments to my little adopted Russians.

I am finishing a long tiresome convalescence here. Scriabin imported the worst form of Russian influenza and passed it on to me!

27 Letter to William McNaught, 8 February 1914, published in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar and his Publishers* (Oxford University Press, 1987, 779)

28 Letter to Rosa Newmarch, 14 April 1914, EBM letter 10080.

With kindest regards to Lady Elgar

Yours sincerely
Rosa Newmarch²⁹

The Cello Concerto

The final known exchange of letters between Elgar and Rosa Newmarch dates from 1921. On 15 January Elgar conducted the Cello Concerto at a Queen's Hall Symphony Concert with Beatrice Harrison.

To rehearsal at 10 - Father had ¾ of an hour - splendid - Miss B. Harrison very good - On to dentist - who opened up the tooth - much better. Madge with us to concert in afternoon - Quite splendid - enjoyed it all - Great enthusiasm over Concerto - recalled - good audience - Father looked well & conducted finely. Saw Colvins & Felix Salmond - & brought him part of the way home - Very foggy.³⁰

Felix Salmond, of course, had given the first performance of the concerto, and Sidney and Frances Colvin were its dedicatees.

Rosa Newmarch had, as usual, written the programme notes. The first half of the concert comprised Bach's third *Brandenburg Concerto*, an aria from *Eugene Onegin* sung by Ben Davies, and Beethoven's Seventh Symphony, all conducted by Henry Wood.

Then came the Elgar work, with the composer himself - to whom went a great reception - conducting, and Miss Beatrice Harrison as the soloist ... It was a performance that found soloist and orchestra completely of one heart and mind, and that heart and mind wholly responsive to the appeal of the music. But very special tribute must go by right to Miss Harrison for the extraordinary delicacy and perception with which she interpreted the solo part. There was great enthusiasm, when all was over, for both her and the composer.³¹

A few weeks later Elgar wrote to Rosa ...

Dear Mrs. Newmarch:

I hoped to have seen you at Queen's Hall to thank you for the beautiful acct of the Cello concerto.

Capt. Claud Powell is including the work (soloist Miss B. Harrison) in a Concert at Guildford & I have given him your address advising him to apply to you for the use of your article.

With kind regards
Yours sincy
Edward Elgar³²

... to which she replied:

29 Letter from Rosa Newmarch, 15 April 1914, EBM letter 3895.

30 Carice diary, 15 January 1921, Martin Bird transcript.

31 *Daily Telegraph*, 17 January 1921.

32 Letter to Rosa Newmarch, 4 February 1921, EBM letter 10084. Claud Forbes Powell (1881-1959) was Principal of the County School of Music in Guildford, and conductor of the Guildford Symphony Orchestra.

Dear Sir Edward,

Thank you so much for writing. I am glad you were pleased with the notes. I thought the whole performance of the Concerto enveloped in an atmosphere of beauty; Miss Beatrice Harrison and the whole orchestra played it as though they loved it - as indeed they do, for it gives out so much that is lovely. Please do not let me be a bore with the enclosed card. I am having a small reception for Sibelius who has been bottled up in Finland through the war and revolution. I think, however, that you (wisely) eschew these kind of gatherings. But I need not say how delighted we should be to see you; In any case if your daughter is free perhaps she will look in upon us. It will not be too dull, because I expect nearly all the young people from the Finnish and Czech delegations.

Yours sincerely
Rosa Newmarch³³

The next day Sibelius arrived in England, after a journey from Helsinki that had taken a week. He lunched with Rosa at the Langham Hotel on the 8th, and on the 10th attended the reception in his honour at Claridges. Neither Elgar nor Carice were able to be present: Ivor Atkins was staying the night at Severn House before attending the Investiture next day at Buckingham Palace at which he received his knighthood from the King, and Carice had been lunching at Kitty Petre's, where she found Sam Blake among the guests. That, however, is quite another story ...

Acknowledgements: Elgar's letters to Rosa Newmarch and extracts from the dairies of Alice and Carice are reproduced by kind permission of the Elgar Will Trust. Rosa Newmarch's letters to Elgar are reproduced by kind permission of her grand-daughter, Mrs. Renée Bodimeade.

33 Letter from Rosa Newmarch, 6 February 1921, EBM letter 6118.

BOOK REVIEWS

Harry Plunket Greene: *Charles Villiers Stanford* (2nd edition, edited by George Timcke)

It is good to have a second edition of this book originally published in 1935, though I could wish the proof-reading had been more meticulous. 'Mocheles' corrects himself to Moscheles later on the same page, and it is easy to guess that Stanford did not surround himself with a 'tug' when doused with water at an examination session. Other slips can readily be corrected, but chapter numbering has been slightly changed, and I suspect that when Greene refers to 'the troubled waters of Chapter 14', he really means the new no. 13, headed 'Stanford, Parry and Elgar'. For more information on such Stanford limerick settings as 'The young lady of Joppa', with its sly digs at *Tristan* and *Tannhäuser*, it is advisable to consult Jeremy Dibble on Stanford at p. 430 rather than the editorial suggestion of p. 420.

Plunket Greene was born eight years after Elgar and had the distinguished air of an Edwardian cabinet minister or diplomat. He was among the first to give complete lieder and song recitals, and took at once to the newly opened Bechstein (now Wigmore) Hall. Hence his loving, though not uncritical, treatment of Stanford's settings of Irish melodies (both had been born in Ireland) and just appreciation of Stanford's notable corpus of songs and indeed operas. Assessment of the church music, for which Stanford is most likely to be remembered today (innumerable schoolboys will cherish for ever Stanford's Service in B flat) was entrusted to Edward Bairstow, while Thomas Dunhill dealt with such larger choral works as *Eden* (with 'book' by Robert Bridges and potential Shavian description as 'brilliant balderdash'), the seven symphonies, and considerable bulk of chamber music.

Stanford's career at Cambridge was outstanding, though increasingly he made enemies, with Arthur Mann at King's notable among them. As organist at Trinity College, he was also allowed further study in Germany. Though eventually professor of music, his main contribution was probably to the Cambridge University Musical Society. He introduced women to the chorus, brought Joseph Joachim to Cambridge both as friend and distinguished foreign visitor, and organised simultaneous honorary degrees for Boito, Bruch, Grieg (*in absentia*), Saint-Saëns, and Tchaikovsky, all of whom conducted or performed a work of his own. Cambridge became a musical Mecca when Brahms's First Symphony had its first English performance there.

At the Royal College of Music in London, he proved an outstanding teacher of composition, with Coleridge-Taylor an obvious and well-liked success. Vaughan Williams and Holst benefitted but went their own way. Arthur Bliss did likewise, after gruelling sessions that left him little gratitude. Stanford had a rasping tongue, but an essential justice shone through that won considerable devotion. Plans for wholesale reform of the institution, and



Leiston:
CompletelyNovel.com,
2011

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140881

what seemed to Parry a perverse and questionable interest in opera, did not endear him to the director. They lived either side of Kensington High Street, and Jennie Stanford had to undertake many an errand of reconciliation to Parry's home.

The three men of the troublesome Chapter 13 were all closely involved with Greene. He was married to Parry's daughter Gwendolen, sang in the first performances of *Job*, and then *The Soldier's Tent* at the same 1900 Birmingham Festival when Elgar's *Gerontius* had its disastrous première. He described the appalling dilemma he found himself in towards the end of Elgar's Part 1, when the chorus had dropped so alarmingly in pitch that he was at a loss how to negotiate the part of the Priest between singers and orchestra. He later sang Judas in *The Apostles*. With Stanford he shared the immediate successes of the *Songs of the Sea* and *Songs of the Fleet*. At Leeds in 1907 he was in at the launch of Stanford's large-scale and splendid *Stabat Mater*, collaborating with the composer in planning an effective *ppp* conclusion by allowing each singer to fade out when no more breath remained.

Maybe Elgar encoded the word 'Satanford' into the demons' chorus of *Gerontius*, though his admiration and affection for Parry never wavered. Certainly there was resentment on Stanford's side (he had a considerable reputation in Germany as symphonist and opera composer) when Richard Strauss hailed *Gerontius* so unreservedly in Düsseldorf. It did not help that Stanford had a cordial dislike of Strauss's music, famously launching a 'Strauss' orchestral rehearsal at the Royal College with *The Blue Danube* and conducting a subsequent selection of Johann's winners. The irascible Stanford may well have bridled at Elgar's contention that the centre of English musical virtue was 'somewhere further north' than London, or even Cambridge. Any doubt about Elgar's suitability for the new chair at Birmingham was certainly not lessened by Elgar's openly stated scorn for 'rhapsodies', of which Stanford had written many. Stanford was quick to anger, as Parry knew only too well, but notoriously ready to forgive. Elgar failed to understand that it was only genuine sympathy that brought Stanford to Lady Elgar's funeral; so the breach was never healed.

Robert Anderson

Lewis Stevens: *An Unforgettable Woman - The Life and Times of Rosa Newmarch*

Rosa Newmarch is a name that has a definite place in the Elgar story. She was the translator of the poems by the Russian Apollon Nikolaevich Maikov (1821-1897) set by Elgar as his *Choral Songs*, op. 72 and 73; she was the editor of John Lane's *Living Masters of Music* series, of which Robert Buckley's 1904 biography of Elgar is the second volume; and she was the writer of programme notes for concerts promoted by Sir Edward Speyer, among them the Promenade Concerts and the première of Elgar's Second Symphony.



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342 pp + xvii

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709

Yet the name of Edward Elgar does not feature prominently in this biography. This is not, let me hasten to say, because of any omission on the part of Lewis Stevens: rather it is a measure of the relatively small and unimportant part played by Elgar and his music in the life of an extraordinary woman.

The sheer volume of work achieved by many of our Victorian and Edwardian forbears never ceases to amaze me. Rosa Newmarch was one such. Not only was she a writer on music and a poet with 23 published books to her name; she was also multi-lingual and translated many Russian biographies into English. She took herself off to Russia to learn more about contemporary Russian music, and championed the music of Sibelius and Janáček. Whilst doing all this she found time to bring up a family and to assume responsibility for the family finances. She was no ordinary woman: she was certainly no ordinary woman of her time.

Lewis Stevens, a retired biochemist and Newsletter Editor of the Dvořák Society, has written a superb book full of interest and information. It draws to a considerable extent on Rosa's incomplete autobiography and an unpublished biography by her daughter Elsie. This is enhanced by considerable research of his own; the whole drawn together into a gripping and fascinating tale.

I read the book hoping to learn a little more about her place in Elgar's life. Instead I learnt a lot about someone who was working tirelessly behind the scenes of English musical life for half a century to educate the public and to promote the cause of good music. It has inspired me to write the essay on her relationship with Elgar that appears elsewhere in this issue - something that hadn't entered my head only four days ago.

Do read this book: women like Rosa are a rare phenomenon.

Martin Bird

Pippa Drummond: *The Provincial Music Festival in England, 1784-1914*

Here in Ashgate's 'Music in 19th-Century Britain' series is a fascinating volume that should be of interest to all lovers of Elgar's music. Dr. Drummond, a practising musician as well as an academic, has produced a book that not only provides a succinct musical history of the English provincial musical festival, but one that places it within the social and economic setting of the 19th century. The understanding of this wider context enables one to appreciate more fully the trials and tribulations that affected the music making of the period, and to appreciate why composers, especially British composers, produced the music they did.

The book is in two parts: the first laying out a chronological survey of the festivals, and the second dealing with various and varied common themes, such as performance practice and finance. There is a risk that a book of this nature will, of necessity, be general rather than specific; that it will not have the space needed to deal adequately with the vast range of its subject. With a hundred and thirty years to cover and perhaps a dozen or so festivals to



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Farnham 2011

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0087-5

consider in each year the sums are obvious; yet at no point does one feel that Dr. Drummond is producing merely a list of events. One is left wishing to know more about particular festivals, to be sure, but this, to my mind, is a very positive outcome, and on the way there are many insightful moments that pulled together and enhanced my somewhat patchy knowledge of the subject. An extensive bibliography caters for those who wish to read in greater depth.

Will it tell you anything you didn't know already about Elgar? Well, probably not directly. But you will gain an increased understanding of why he wrote what he did when he did - and opportunity and economics figure largely in this. One cannot separate a composer's music - even a composer of genius like Elgar - from the social and economic circumstances in which he was working, and I am grateful to Dr. Drummond for setting out those circumstances so clearly and concisely.

Richard Wiley

Jeffrey Green: *Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, a Musical Life*

'Could you please confirm the best address to send books for review with the Elgar Journal?' said the email from Pickering & Chatto. Unaccustomed to such bold requests I complied immediately, wondering what potential treasure would, in due course, drop through my letter-box. It was this biography by Jeffrey Green, 'a [sic] historian based south of London'. In his introduction, Green tells us that 'After I read the 1915 biography [by William Charles Berwick-Sayers] ... I suspected there was a different story to that told'. I suspect he is correct, but am sad to report that I soon gave up trying to unearth it from this particular book.

It is not that the research is at fault - Green has consulted numerous sources both published and unpublished - but rather that the style of writing has not enabled the essential facts to emerge from a plethora of padding and irrelevancies.

Chapter one, not unreasonably, is entitled 'The Early Years'. One paragraph starts with the sentence: 'The brown-skinned boy must have asked about his father.' The following six sentences contain a 'must have asked ...', a 'probably responded ...', an 'if he asked ...', a 'surely he must have asked ...', 'one can speculate ...', 'would have asked ...', 'must have told him ...', 'how could she have told him ...' but no concrete facts - at which point one must surely wonder (sorry) whether the entire paragraph might not have been removed or amended during editing.

I carried on to chapter two, 'The Royal College of Music', where facts were in abundance, including the scandalous tale of two Mayors of Croydon in the early 1890s which 'Coleridge-Taylor would have noted'. Maybe he did, but its relevance to his life is not apparent. I then learned that the family had moved, and that 'Construction work on the other side of the road disturbed his concentration. The years at the old home had accustomed him to the sound of the trains that now contrasted to workmen whistling and calling out, and the

hammering, sawing and the slurp of cement on bricks.' Now call me pedantic if you like, but does cement slurp? My dreams that night contained flights of fancy as to the slurping qualities of cement almost on a par with Elgar's musings on the origins of Potter's Bar. My wife's comment next morning that she would find slurping cement rather soothing restored a degree of sanity.¹

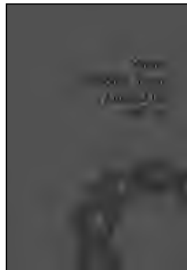
At the College (ah yes, in case you were wondering, there *is* plenty about his life at college in this chapter), I learned that Coleridge-Taylor had been working on a symphony. Stanford was impressed by the opening movement, and encouraged the young composer to complete the work and write out the parts so that the College orchestra could give it a run-through. A normal enough task for someone studying composition, yet Green feels the need to describe it thus: 'Coleridge-Taylor completed the other three sections which was laborious as the score had to be broken down into the parts written for the different instruments. No doubt he was helped by colleagues copying for the forty and more instrumentalists needing easy sight of the pages during performances.'

At which point, I'm afraid to say, the number of millimetres of slump in my shoulders increased to the point at which I could take no more. You may find the style of writing more agreeable and buy the book: or you may do what I have done and obtain the Berwick-Sayers 1915 biography (Cassell), which is available as a free download.

Postscript

A friend from Canada chanced upon a draft of this review, and asked to see the book. As luck would have it, he opened it at p.163, where Green has discovered from Michael Kennedy's *A Portrait of Elgar* that the Elgars had bought a house in Hampstead. 'It was burgled during one of his absences and, despairing of its running costs, they left in the 1920s.' Is it too much to expect that an author fully in command of his subject might have noticed that the rather more substantive reason that 'they left' was the fact that Lady Elgar had died in 1920?

Martin Bird



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¹ But only a degree. I felt obliged to investigate the matter further, and discovered to my delight that when ordering cement one should specify the number of millimetres of slump required for a particular job. (You couldn't make it up!) However, the only reference to 'slurp' that I could find was in the lyric of a Squadronaires song: 'To mix a mess o' mortar you add cement and water See the mellow roony come out, slurp, slurp, slurp'. Despite this, I've a suspicion that Green meant mortar rather than cement.



MUSIC REVIEWS

Elgar, *Music for String Orchestra*

Elgar Complete Edition Vol. 24, edited by Julian Rushton (Rickmansworth: Elgar Society Edition Ltd., 2011)

ISBN 978-1-904856-24-5.

124 pp + xxxii.

The four works in this volume have in common their orchestration, as works for Strings, but are disparate in almost every other respect. At the centre is the mighty *Introduction and Allegro* (1905), a masterpiece of string writing, beloved by audiences and greeted by performers with a mixture of admiration for its brilliance of orchestration and perhaps trepidation for its musical and technical demands. In contrast the earlier *Serenade for Strings* (1892) is a delightful smaller-scale piece, which holds no comparable technical challenges for performers. Alongside these two well-known works, the volume also contains two brief sombre and slow-moving pieces, *Elegy* (1909) and *Sospiri* (1914), which are much less familiar.

The general introduction to the Complete Edition series says it is intended for both scholarly and practical use. While I can comment on the latter, as an amateur conductor and 'cellist, it should be understood that I have insufficient musicological background to address the former. However, any reader of this new edition of Elgar's string music will appreciate the high level of dedication and detailed work clearly involved, the careful and extensive reviewing of source material, and the helpfulness of the introductory comments that are both enlightening and entertaining. The editor of this volume is helped by the fact that Elgar was meticulous in his markings of dynamics, expression and phrasing, as well as in his proof-reading, so that the previously published scores contain few errors and ambiguities. Nevertheless there are still a number of places where the editor's new corrections or suggestions will prove useful not only to the scholar, but also to the performer. As well as the rehearsal numbers/letters that are in other printed parts and scores, this edition usefully adds bar numbers throughout.

The *Introduction and Allegro* was written as a result of a proposal from the newly formed London Symphony Orchestra. August Jaeger wrote to Elgar suggesting a short five-minute work for strings, which would not detract from his 'big work' (probably the planned trilogy of which *The Apostles* was the first part). However what he got was a monumental piece for solo quartet and subdivided string orchestra, as far from a conventional Concerto Grosso as one could get. Elgar wrote to Jaeger perhaps in mock humility of 'that string thing', while commenting to Littleton at Novello's that 'it is not for amateurs but I think as there are two good tunes in it, it may be boiled down for small string orchestra'. While the first point is no doubt true (but that has not stopped amateurs from having a go), perhaps thankfully no boiled down version ever appeared. Novello did however simultaneously publish a piano

duet arrangement, at which the contemporary mind boggles!

The edition lays out the score with the quartet at the top, and the divided orchestral strings below. This is as Elgar indicated, although interestingly the autograph score was written with the solo instruments above their corresponding orchestral partners. Elgar also stipulated that the quartet should sit 'in front of the orchestra', reminding (in his meticulous way) the engraver of the parts that he should mind the page-turns because the tutti players could not turn for them. Performances, at least nowadays, tend to place the quartet around the conductor, with the main orchestra behind, for ease of communication – necessary with all the variations of tempo as well as the ensemble playing of unison passages. There are periods when the orchestral strings are no longer divided, and the edition is inconsistent as to whether a single staff or two identical lines are used. Subdividing lines which are not in fact subdivided parts is unhelpful, at least to my eye. This is exacerbated by the large vertical separation of the staves on the pages, presumably to fit the prescribed dimensions of the Complete Edition series, and the fact the divisi parts are insufficiently heavily bracketed. This sometimes makes it hard to read the music as a whole or, for example, to identify the second viola line quickly, and sometimes the visual structure of the music is obscured (as in the fugue section where the orchestral parts are mainly in unison). However, these are quibbles against which must be set the care and detail of the edition.

Elgar provided many different markings of accents (*sf*, *rfz*, *>*, tenuto lines), length (staccato daggers as well as dots), bowing, and some fingering. These are of course faithfully maintained in the current edition, and a few discrepancies carefully noted and adjusted. The bowing is useful to performers, not only in preserving Elgar's musical intentions but also in preventing the usual confusion of crossed-out/half rubbed-out mess that is the stuff of hired music parts. One example is the repeated down bows for the solo quartet from fig. 18 (bar 172), while the orchestral parts playing the same material have no such indication (in fact Elgar wanted these bowed normally). The fingering can also be also useful, for example in indicating the use of harmonics or open strings, as well as shifts for which a degree of portamento might be employed, although the final choice of fingering is often down to personal preference. One point for discussion in performance is the placing of the many grace notes, whether they are before or on the beat, and especially in the splendid opening of the work. This edition places the *sf* clearly on the main second beat in bar 1, while the Novello 1905 score puts it on the preceding grace note. In the reprise of the opening, at the end of the Introduction, the current edition places most of the *sf* on the grace notes, as does the Novello edition. A conductor has to make a choice, but it would seem peculiar if these two passages were realised differently.

While the new edition of *Introduction and Allegro* perhaps adds rather little for a performer compared to the original Novello score, the new edition of *Serenade for Strings* adds much more compared to the Breitkopf & Härtel 1893 edition. It is amusing to read, incidentally, that Novello refused to publish the work, saying that such pieces were 'unsaleable'. Here there are many

more discrepancies between sources, ambiguities and uncertainties, and clear errors. The new edition provides an extensive list, and the justification for the final choice. It includes missing sforzandi, dynamics and slurs, misplaced hairpin crescendo, but not any note corrections. Many of these are useful clarifications for performers, although it is shame that Elgar did not provide many bowing indications. The *Serenade* is also better set on the pages, with two sets of staves per page and less vertical separation, and only subdividing parts when necessary. The likely origins of the piece as ‘Three pieces for String Orchestra’ (1888) are discussed, although this work’s last movement (marked Presto) is certainly not the *Serenade*’s eventual third movement. The latter originally had a different ending in G major, whereas in its final version the opening movement makes its return first in E minor and then E major. It is tantalising that Elgar may have contemplated a fourth movement, perhaps the Presto from the Three Pieces, but this never came to fruition.

Elegy was composed in response to a request from the Worshipful Company of Musicians for an appropriate Dirge to play at funerals of their members. Elgar wrote in self-deprecating style: ‘Here is the little Elegy you asked for - if it will not do, never mind - tear it up. It is not very original I fear but it is well meant.’ Novello published it as ‘Elegy’, but the title ‘Dirge’ was used by the Worshipful Company. This new edition clarifies a few details in this seldom-performed piece, notably the placing of one ritenuto and one morendo marking which differ between sources.

Elgar wrote *Sospiri* (Italian: Sighs) for strings and harp as an elaboration of the version for violin and piano published by Breitkopf & Härtel at the same time. Elgar included an *ad libitum* part for ‘harmonium or organ’ and indicated ‘harp or piano’. Although Elgar may have been willing to compromise to make its performance more likely, it is hard to imagine that this reflective piece, with its Mahlerian intervals, would survive the percussiveness of a piano even with soft pedal firmly down. Again the new edition makes a few minor clarifications. This short 34-bar piece is rather rarely played. Let us hope that this new, effectively definitive, edition of Elgar’s string music will help to promote performances of both *Elegy* and *Sospiri*.

Simon Thompson

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CD REVIEWS

The Complete Recordings of Sir Edward Elgar, 1914-1925

Various artists, conducted by Sir Edward Elgar



Imagine what you could do if you could travel back through time. As a lover of Elgar’s music, wouldn’t it be great to be able to be present at an Elgar première, and one conducted by the composer himself? Let’s see what we can arrange.

It’s 21 January, 1914, and there’s something going on in City Road, just along from the Barbican. Come on, it’s only five minutes walk from the Underground Electric Railways Company’s station at Old Street: their Chairman, Edgar Speyer, is a friend of the Elgars. Wrap up warm, though, as it’s an overcast, dull, misty sort of day, the temperature’s only just above freezing, and there’s an east wind. We’re in luck: Elgar’s been rehearsing a little orchestra, and he’s about to conduct the first performance of *Carissima* - he only finished checking the parts yesterday.

OK, I accept that that’s wishful thinking: but what if a recording of the event existed - one so good that you really felt you were there, savouring the unique and unforgettable atmosphere of the occasion? Well it does. Yes, truly. And, no, I didn’t think it possible either until I listened to the first track of this remarkable set of CDs.

I’ve known the Elgar acoustic recordings for a long time. I had some of the original 78s, and I avidly awaited each Pearl transfer to LP and bought it immediately. They always sounded - well, like acoustic 78s; muffled, distant, scratchy, hissy, distorted - in short, a complete and utter travesty. I persevered with them, as I realised that these strange sounds were all I was ever going to hear of Elgar conducting between 1914 and 1925, and made the best of it. Pearl transferred them afresh to CD, and the results were similar, only louder.

Now I know that people have said for years that there was always more in these old recordings than could be extracted from the equipment of the time: for example, the bass response was found to go way below that expected. I know, too, that with modern computer technology, keen ears and supreme musicality, people like Mike Dutton regularly make them into something really rather fine. So when I started listening to this set I was prepared for greater dynamic range, elimination of scratches, and all the usual things. What I was totally unprepared for was the revelation that, while working on these purely physical attributes, Lani Spahr had discovered a previously unheard and unsuspected emotional side to the performances. Listening to *Carissima*, what came flooding out of the speakers was the tenderness of the performance, the subtlety of the playing, and the sheer love of a couple of dozen hardened professional musicians for their composer/conductor. It was quite astonishing. There would seem to be no logical explanation as to why

Music & Arts

CD-1257 (4 CDs)

these old 78s should suddenly reveal a hidden emotional content - but it's there, and it's pure magic.

Suddenly there is no real bar to the enjoyment of these historic documents as musical experiences – none. I compared these new restorations with the Pearl CDs. The *Gramophone* review of the time summed them up succinctly: 'there is that extra presence and life in the new transfers. Filtering has been kept to a minimum, good copies have been used, and again the quality of sound is open and straightforward, with no computerization.' The downside of Pearl's non-interventionist approach is that we hear the scratches and wear of nearly a century of use mixed in with the rasp of needle upon shellac: not quite what the engineers of the day – nor Elgar, for that matter – had in mind.

The Fringes of the Fleet gave me the opportunity to see what Mike Dutton had achieved when he restored those records for issue with the Elgar Editions book *Oh My Horses!* In reducing background noise to a bare minimum he produced a result that has marginally less immediacy and presence than Lani's, but nevertheless one that is very impressive. The contrast with Andrew Rose's recent restoration of *Enigma* and the Second Symphony on the Pristine label could scarcely be more stark. Here 'XR remastering' has produced a glassy, top heavy, sound, with the upper strings sounding as if they had been replaced by a synthesizer: most unpleasant and, moreover, unmusical.

But it is Lani Spahr's achievements that we are concerned with here and, thanks to him, what riches we can now enjoy. *The Fringes of the Fleet*, with Charles Mott and friends, is an 'original cast recording' from the London Coliseum: *The Starlight Express* is another. Marie Hall was a talented child who had to help support her family by playing the violin. Her harpist father was successfully prosecuted for making her work rather than sending her to school. Elgar, as is well known, gave her violin lessons, and the good citizens of Malvern set up a fund to help nurture her talent. Money well spent! Now we can enjoy her playing of her former teacher's Violin Concerto in a recording made only six years after its first performance. Henry Ainley, a leading Shakespearian actor, recorded Emile Cammaerts' tribute to Belgium, *Carillon*, little over a month after its first performance by Cammaerts' wife, Tita Brand. Two days before that première he had written to Elgar:

My dear Elgar

Your letter touched me deeply, and I am proud you wished me to speak to your 'Carillon'. Even Tita Brand shall not prevent me doing it for you. I shall be there tomorrow at 12 noon, and thank you: Most sincerely yours

Henry Ainley¹

And these treats keep coming: the Cello Concerto, recorded within two months of its first performance; *Polonia* and *The Sanguine Fan* recorded with a few years of their composition; Elgar's only recording of *Sea Pictures*.

1 Letter from Henry Ainley, 5 December 1914, Elgar Birthplace Museum letter 3703.

But weren't all these works cut to fit onto a commercially viable number of discs? Well, initially, yes, and the concertos, especially, suffer from this. But the Second Symphony is complete, *Enigma* and *In the South* virtually so, and the salon pieces and *The Wand of Youth* come in four minute chunks anyway.

The delights of the orchestral playing are undeniably mixed, and the wonderful restoration is something of a two-edged sword here. The wind playing is almost always distinguished, as is the brass. At its best the string playing is first-rate, with a wonderful sense of line, and good ensemble. At its worst it can be a considerable scramble, with every man for himself (and in those days when only a few string players could be crammed round the recording horn there weren't very many men anyway). *In the South* demonstrates both sides of the coin: Elgar whips through the overture in a mere 16 minutes – and little more than a minute's music is cut. The opening section is, to be honest, seat-of-the-pants stuff, yet Elgar is merely observing his own marking: Vivace, dotted minim = 63. The *Canto Popolare* section, by contrast, is beautifully poised, with solo viola playing to die for. And for those who don't believe orchestral players of the time used vibrato, just listen to the wonderfully warm vibrato employed here. Actually, just listen to the range of different vibrato styles employed throughout the set: here is a master-class in period string-playing, with a recording quality that enables every last nuance to come across with clarity.

The CDs are accompanied by a substantial booklet, with extensive notes by Andrew Neill. Elgarians also owe an enormous debt of gratitude to Arthur Reynolds, who has lent all the records for this set, which are from Elgar's personal collection. The whole enterprise is a total success, and truly one beyond our wildest dreams. These always were historic documents – now they are much more than that.

But let us get back in our time machine and drop in at Severn House a week after that first recording session.

Much milder - A. & C. into town. A. bought furry coat. Hopes E. will like it. When A. returned - He said "Come in & sit down" & then played Gramophone record just come of 'Carissima'. Most lovely exquisite record - pray it may go on -²

My sentiments exactly.

Martin Bird

2 Alice Elgar diary, 28 January 1924, Martin Bird transcript.



Hänssler Classics
CD 93.191

Overture *In the South*, Introduction and Allegro for strings, Variations for orchestra (*Enigma*)

Radio-Sinfonieorchester Stuttgart des SWR conducted by Roger Norrington

I used to think that Elgar would have really arrived when foreign orchestras and recording companies started recording his music. That has well and truly happened over the last few years, and one only has to look at Diary Dates on the Elgar Society website to see what is being done abroad - in Germany alone several major Elgar works are being performed within a couple of months this winter. This recording is another example, although I know the conductor this time is English. Norrington, who made his name in early music, is stepping down from his post with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra this year. He is well-known (notorious?) for his application of so-called authentic performing style to his performances, often meaning that strings, for example, play without vibrato. This can lead to clarity of texture, but whether it is authentic for Elgar I begin to doubt. Norrington raised a few flutters in the dove-cote with his performance of the First Symphony at a recent Proms concert. I'm fairly sure that the orchestra perform in a style that Elgar would not recognise - I certainly would not want to return to the portamento-rich playing of one hundred years ago, with slides and swoops all over the place. Yet vibrato, and some judicious portamenti, do add warmth and sonority to Elgar's opulent string textures, and that's what I fear is often missing here.

The overture *In the South* and the *Enigma Variations* were recorded at public performances. The acoustic is warm and clear, and Hänssler's recording captures faithfully the detail of the orchestration. This is a fine orchestra, and there are some lovely woodwind passages, with, especially in the Overture, notable contributions from clarinet and horn. Timpani and bass drum are well caught, especially in the brazen 'Roman' section. But this is all too slow, as is the second group of themes, and fails to capture the implacable rhythmic tread of this section. On the other hand the *Canto Popolare* part is lovely, with solo viola etched on a shimmering background of high divided violins and harp, although I could have done with a more prominent glockenspiel here. But this exciting work doesn't catch fire, largely because the tempi are too lethargic - it lacks the nervy, restless electricity that courses through this music.

Some of the same problems bedevil the *Introduction and Allegro*. The opening, with the lovely viola theme, is again all too slow, although Norrington finds a much happier tempo for the Allegro section. But he should remember that *nobilmente* does not mean slow down (Figs. 12 and 27); the fugue is clean but cautious, and the opening viola theme, when it returns resplendent in rich, glowing string textures (Fig. 30) suffers again from etiolated string sound.

For this same problem, listen to the opening of the *Enigma Variations*. Some may enjoy this sound more than I do, but it leads to an unremarkable

performance. It is OK, there is nothing dramatically wrong with it, and a live audience would go away quite happy, I'm sure. But there is too much competition in this repertoire for this to be recommendable. If you want the same programme (plus *Sospiri*), go to wonderful performances by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and John Eliot Gardiner on DG 463 265-2, or any number of other discs. I'm really sorry not to be more enthusiastic about this CD: Norrington, after all, has brought a lot of Elgar to his Stuttgart audiences, and for that we must be grateful.

Barry Collett

Piano Quintet in A minor, Seven Songs (*The Shepherd's Song; Pleading; Like to the Damask Rose; Is She Not Passing Fair?; Speak, Music; Rondel; Queen Mary's Song*), Three Movements for Piano Trio (ed. Paul Adrian Rooke)

The Schubert Ensemble, Gould Piano Trio, Felicity Lott (soprano), Joseph Middleton (piano)



Champs Hill Records
CHRC027

This nicely produced CD comes under the title 'Elgar in Sussex', although only the Quintet stems from there, with evocative photographs of the landscape that he came to love. The Piano Quintet, the major work on the disc, is the most disappointing of the performances. It was originally recorded in 2001 and appeared on the ASV label in a mixed bag of Elgar works. The Schubert Ensemble is a fine and highly regarded chamber group, but I do not think they are at their best here. Various things disappoint; the 'Spanish' theme, swaying in thirds on the two violins, is too brisk and matter-of-fact for my taste, not languorous enough; the strummed chords on pizzicato first violin and cello at Fig. 19 don't make their effect, and although the string quartet is brightly lit the piano often sounds curiously recessed. I know the piano is one of five equal instruments, but a comparison with the following Piano Trio movements shows how well the piano can be recorded alongside stringed instruments. I should in fairness say that the thunderous piano chords after Fig. 12 do make their full impact. The glorious slow movement seems to me to be too cool at first, but at Fig. 36, that magical easing into E major for the return of the opening theme, the power of the music at last catches hold of the performers, and from there till the movement's end the commitment and passion is well to the fore. My main complaint about the Finale is again the muted piano sound. Surely the figuration at the start of the Allegro should be clearer, such passages as the syncopated chords before 65, marked *forte*, *animando* and accented, should have more heft to them, as should the closing pages of the work. With sensible speeds throughout this is by no means a disaster, but there is more to this wonderful work than this performance reveals. Go to the recent Piers Lane/Goldner Quartet on Hyperion CDA 67857, or Lincoln Centre Chamber Music Society Ensemble (CMS Studio 82505) for more revealing interpretations.

The rest of the disc is a delight. The songs are perhaps the least regarded

part of Elgar's output, although there are some gems here. The complete songs are beautifully performed by Amanda Roocroft, Konrad Jarnot and the pianist Reinild Mees on two Channel Classics discs (CCS SA 27507 and CCS SA 28610) - CDs which ought to be in every Elgarian's collection. But if you only want a selection of the songs, the present disc offers seven of his finest and best known songs. Felicity Lott's diction is impeccable throughout (the words are given in the booklet), and she communicates wonderfully well, sounding as though she really is enjoying singing them. *Like to the Damask Rose* is suitably dramatic, *Is She Not Passing Fair* has excellent rhythmic impetus, and she takes the alternative high notes at the end, and *Speak, Music*, with its flowing but bizarre 15/8 time signature, sounds utterly natural and unforced. Joseph Middleton adds sterling support in Elgar's characteristic and idiosyncratic piano parts.

It may be that in 1920 Elgar was considering writing a Piano Trio to add to his other chamber works, but the death of Lady Elgar destroyed that particular creative impulse. At any rate he recopied an earlier manuscript, and the remaining fragments are good enough to suggest another great Elgarian 'Might-Have-Been'. The composer Paul Adrian Rooke has edited the movement, in-filling where necessary, and the resulting piece is an excellent dramatic, if necessarily truncated, movement. The following Minuet and Trio dates from Elgar's time in the Yorkshire Dales in the 1880s with his friend Dr Buck, and this performance has an infectious and jaunty swing that is most appealing. The Trio section much later was reworked for small orchestra as *Rosemary*. The Finale is the *March for the Grafton Family* from 1924, a recasting for piano trio of the Empire March. The piano writing is very much a piano reduction of the orchestral music - I doubt whether Elgar would have left it like that if he had considered the work for publication, and although one misses the glitter and swagger of the original orchestration it makes a fitting conclusion to these disparate pieces - not Elgar's Piano Trio, but a charming collection of three unrelated pieces that make an effective concert work. The performance, and recording, is first rate throughout.

Barry Collett



Symphony No. 1, Symphony No. 2, Cello Concerto, Violin Concerto, Falstaff, Overture *In the South*, Cockaigne, Dream Children, Nursery Suite, The Wand of Youth, Suite 1, Pomp and Circumstance Marches 1-5, Variations for orchestra (*Enigma*)

Pablo Casals, Alfredo Campoli, BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult

Regis

RRC5010 (5 CDs)

Here, on the face of it, is an irresistible bargain - five well-filled CDs of Adrian Boult conducting Elgar in the 1940s and '50s at a little over £2 per disc. I, for one, could not resist and happily entered my credit card details on the screen, even though I was sure I would already have these performances in earlier incarnations on LP or cassette.

The documentation is less than comprehensive: indeed it is not apparent from the box exactly what works are included and in what recordings. That is only revealed in the accompanying notes. What we have is the Decca recording of the Violin Concerto, the Pye/Nixa recording of the Second Symphony and the long-familiar Casals recording of the Cello Concerto with the BBC Symphony Orchestra. These are placed with the HMV LPO recordings from the late '40s and early '50s that were reissued on LP and cassette in the 1980s in a rather fine boxed set.

The very considerable plus side to the current release is the quality of the music making. You don't need me to tell you that Boult's Elgar has an unforced, natural quality to it - the music seemingly speaking for itself with an inherent sense of inevitability. Despite half a century of trying, I've never got on with Campoli's sound in the Violin Concerto - cloyingly sweet to my ears - nor Casals' playing of the Cello Concerto, but readily admit that many think differently. The fact is that within five minutes of the start of the first CD (the First Symphony) I was totally immersed in the music-making.

On the debit side is the quality of the sound. The notes make no reference to the recordings being licensed from the original companies, so I presume they are transfers from commercially issued material. The Violin Concerto has that familiar glassy, early Decca sound, and other comparisons reveal a close resemblance to LP issues. It can never be described as bad, still less unacceptable (although in the last movement of the First Symphony there are some very strange noises in the background at one point), but it has to be admitted that most of these performances have been issued in other CD versions that sound as if considerably greater care and resources had been applied. Testament have issued some of the HMV recordings, First Hand Records the Pye, and the concerto performances have also been available elsewhere: but not at this price. You pay your money and you take your choice. If you insist on the best possible sound from these performances (and they deserve it), then go to Testament and the others: if your ear is one that readily adjusts to less than perfect sound, then the bargain price of this set may prove terminally attractive.

Martin Bird

Symphony No. 1, Symphony No. 2, Overture *In the South*, Pomp and Circumstance Marches 1 and 4

Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Giuseppe Sinopoli



The Italian maestro Giuseppe Sinopoli was nothing if not controversial. He trained, and qualified, as a doctor before studying composition and conducting in Venice and Vienna. His passion was for the late Romantic period, and he brought a doctor's analytical eye to the scores he conducted, dissecting them in minute detail and shining a light on obscure counter-melodies or hidden touches of orchestration. The results were either revelatory or a travesty, according to one's point of view. What is certain is that he treated Elgar's

Deutsche Grammophon
453 103-2

scores with the same respect as his beloved Verdi, Wagner, Mahler and Strauss, and he conducted them across Europe with the major orchestras. His sudden and unexpected death in 2001 at the age of 55 robbed us of a committed and international Elgarian, perhaps the first Italian to take Elgar to heart (although I'm not forgetting Toscanini's performances of the *Enigma Variations* and *Introduction and Allegro*).

Now Deutsche Grammophon has issued this double CD set, originally recorded in the late 1980s. It's not the complete Sinopoli Elgar - there is an *Enigma Variations*, *Serenade for Strings* and a Cello Concerto with Mischa Maisky. I must confess my heart sank when I saw the timings for the Symphonies - over 55 minutes for the First Symphony and over 65 (65!!) for the Second. Bryden Thomson's performances on Chandos are put right out of court for me by his lethargic (sluggish?) tempi - they lack that element of nervy, restless tension that Boult and Solti bring to them. And yet, despite all that, I found listening to these CDs a refreshing experience. I'll say at once that the playing of the Philharmonia Orchestra is fabulous, and DG's recording catches it with warmth, clarity and a resplendent richness of tone. If Sinopoli's tempi are controversial he is in total control of all the rhythmic subtleties of the scores, the playing never falters even in the slowest passages, and so paradoxically it never sounds too slow.

The First Symphony I can recommend without qualification. The first movement's gear changes at Figs. 9 and 17 (from 2/2 to 6/4 and from 2/2 to 3/2) which can often sound awkward, are here handled with total naturalness, and the closing pages (from Fig. 53) are beautiful in their dreamlike radiance. The scherzo is suitably rumbustious, although I'd like to hear more of the cymbals and side drum - they don't have a lot to do but they sound curiously recessed, my only complaint about the sound picture. The slow movement is a true *Adagio*, and the emergence of the hushed new theme at Fig. 104 is breath-catching, a real tribute to the quality of the orchestral playing, as are the beautifully judged muted trombones at the end. The Finale's steady pace allows the orchestral detail to be clearly heard; the wonderful G flat major passage for divided strings and harps is exquisite, and then momentum builds till the amazing passage (Fig. 146) where the main motto theme struggles through, with most of the orchestra hurling themselves against it. The ending is truly triumphant.

The Second Symphony's performance courts more controversy. All the speeds are leisurely, although it is wonderful to hear such cleanly articulated orchestral detail, and the ear is constantly caught by details of orchestration one has never noticed before - the pianissimo *ponticello* cellos four bars after Fig. 22, for example, or the tiny trumpet motif just before Fig. 150 in the Finale. And Sinopoli notices that, two bars after Fig. 65, the first and third trombones are the only ones in the orchestra to be marked *tenuto* when everyone else comes off - I have never heard that effect before. Other notable touches abound; the almost hallucinatory web of sound conjured up in those dreamlike passages after Fig. 24, the real warmth of the string playing at the beginning of the slow movement and the atmosphere of funereal gloom

conjured up by the wailing oboes, the sparkle and clarity of the scherzo, the richness of the playing in the Finale, with the horns in particular covering themselves with glory. And notice how Sinopoli brings out the trumpets, playing in their lowest register, to bolster the third and fourth horns just after Fig. 160, thus making sure the melody continues to be prominent against an increasingly elaborate counter-theme. If one only had to have one recording of this work this wouldn't be my first choice. I would go to Boult, Solti, Slatkin, or Andrew Davis, but if you need a complementary disc that has one marvelling anew at the wonders of this marvellous score, then Sinopoli's your man.

The Overture *In the South*, coupled with the First Symphony, finds Sinopoli revelling in Italian sunshine. Like the Symphonies, this is a heavyweight performance, sonorous and full blooded. The 'Roman' section is slowish, but has more forward momentum than the recent Norrington recording, and the 'Canto Popolare' makes its usual magical effect, with some lovely pianissimo playing. The Second Symphony disc is completed with *Pomp and Circumstance* Marches nos. 1 and 4. The First gets off to a cracking start, really brisk and breezy, and the Trio section is lovingly played, but I do wish that Sinopoli, like so many conductors, had not slowed down so much for this Trio section. It is marked *largamente* (broadly), but to me that signifies a small slackening of pace, not a hymn-like dirge. The same happens in no. 4, where the Trio section is marked *Nobilmente* but also *L'istesso tempo*, so no slowing down is necessary. But buy these discs and be invigorated, inspired or infuriated, but above all excited by this wonderful music.

Barry Collett

Readers may be interested in some comparisons of timing. But the clock doesn't reveal everything. Some conductors can get away with leisurely Elgarian tempi (Barbirolli could) while with others the tempo sags disastrously. I think Sinopoli gets away with it too.

Symphony No. 1

Sinopoli 55.18; Brabbins 49.03; C. Davis (Dresden Staatskapelle) 50.35, (LSO) 54.48; Otaka 53.48; Solti 48.43; Tate 54.37; Elgar 46.30.

Symphony No 2

Sinopoli 65.22; Boult (1956) 52.33; A. Davis 56.23; Gibson 51.49; Slatkin 54.49; Solti 51.22; Svetlanov 53.06; Elgar sped through in 47.00!



Hyperion
CDA67839

Vaughan Williams: Suite for viola and small orchestra, *Flos Campi*

McEwen: Viola Concerto

Lawrence Power, BBC National Orchestra and Chorus of Wales conducted by Martyn Brabbins

As with any CD featuring the viola that is reviewed in these pages, the link with Elgar is Lionel Tertis, that tireless cajoler of composers. John Blackwood McEwen (1868-1948) was Professor of Harmony and Composition at the Royal Academy of Music from 1898, and was Principal there from 1924 until 1936. His concerto of 1901 was the 24 year old Tertis's first major commission. While by no means music of the highest quality, it is a thoroughly professional piece of work. To my ears the middle movement, *Allegretto grazioso*, is the highlight: to quote from Lewis Foreman's booklet notes, 'good-mannered fairy music, very much of its time.'

With Vaughan Williams, of course, we find ourselves very much at the top of the tree. It is somehow hard to believe that he was born less than 15 years after Elgar. Elgar was firmly rooted in the Victorian and Edwardian tradition throughout his life: Vaughan Williams broke free from that tradition with the end of the Great War. *Flos Campi* dates from 1925, and whenever I hear it I am struck by how 'modern' it sounds. One can imagine Tertis's reaction when first told about it – 'I've had this great idea, Li - I'm going to set some verses from the *Song of Songs*, you're going to be the soloist, and the choir's going to 'la-la-la' throughout ...' – yet what results is a supreme example both of Vaughan Williams's genius and his originality.

His Suite for viola was written in 1934. I had the good fortune to be at school with the virtuoso violist Donald McVay, and can still remember his stunning playing of the *Moto perpetuo* from this Suite on his Tertis-model viola. Lawrence Power's playing matches my memory and, indeed, is top-notch throughout the CD. Add some lovely playing and singing from the BBC Wales forces, a conductor who, like Vernon Handley, has the ability to make music that must have been unfamiliar to all come alive, and splendid recording quality, and the result is a disc of very great distinction.

Martin Bird



Naxos
8.572452

Stanford, Piano Trio No. 1 in E flat major, Legend, Six Irish Fantasies (Nos. 3 and 5), Piano Quartet No. 2 in C minor

Gould Piano Trio, David Adams (viola)

Stanford's chamber music has, over recent years, been quite well served by the recording companies. As well as recordings from Naxos, there have been a number of discs from Hyperion including a particularly rewarding release of the fine D minor piano quintet and the even finer two viola string quintet. This latest Naxos disc offers the Piano Trio No. 1 in E flat major op 35 and no fewer than four premiere recordings: three pieces for violin and piano and the

late Piano Quartet No. 2 in C minor op. 133. The Piano Trio was completed and given its first performance in 1889 when Stanford was already a dominant figure in British music holding the posts of Professor of Music at Cambridge and Professor of Composition at the Royal College of Music. Its expansive *allegro grazioso* opens with a gently flowing Brahmsian theme introduced by violin and cello. This gives way to dramatic passages leading to the gracious, slightly whimsical, second theme. The opening theme is prominent in the development and in the recapitulation there are some imaginative re-orchestrations including a delightful sequence when the piano takes up the second theme with pizzicato accompaniment from violin and cello. The movement seems destined for a welcome quiet ending when a sudden heroic flourish rounds off proceedings. The second movement is varied in mood and has some attractive rhythmic features. The third movement is a *Menuetto* in name only. Its broad three-in-a-bar momentum has some kinship with the first movement while effective use is made of a more martial sequence and a unifying five-note motive. It ends with a gentle blending of the martial theme and the five-note figure. The dramatic opening of the last movement leads to a quite turbulent main theme and much use is made of dotted rhythms and repeated powerful chords shared between the strings and the piano. I found the movement enjoyable but less interesting than the others and never quite living up to its *con fuoco* marking. The Gould Piano Trio plays superbly with impeccable ensemble and intonation. Lucy Gould, playing with clean, bold tone, is well to the fore and I felt the need for a slightly more forward balance for the superb Alice Neary on cello.

The pieces for violin and piano - the moving *Legend*, lively *Jig* and haunting *Hush Song* - have a strong Irish flavour and this gives them immediate appeal and stronger individuality than the larger works. Lucy Gould plays brilliantly in the faster music and most beautifully in the slower works, with particularly lovely muted tone in *Hush Song*. Benjamin Firth is perhaps a little too insistent in this last piece seeming to want to push the music on a shade.

The unpublished Piano Quartet had its first performance in 1914 and had to wait until 2010 for its second performance when revived by the Gould Piano Trio. (It is edited from the autograph manuscript by Professor Jeremy Dibble who contributes the informative liner notes.) It is a darker work than the trio. A dramatic opening and powerful outbursts from the piano lead to the surging, turbulent main theme. An attractive second theme has a distinct likeness to 'I dream of Jeannie with the light brown hair' - though Stanford's theme never quite makes it to 'hair'. This theme appears in many guises: gentle and musing, surging and passionate, subdued and mysterious. There is a troubled and anxious version in the minor and a rhapsodic version for piano leads to thunderous chords and a heroic virtuoso flourish from the strings which ends the movement. The richly developed main theme in the slow movement has a slightly Irish flavour and the fleet third movement moves swiftly through varied moods - anxious, dramatic, carefree - while the sturdy trio section is buoyed up by some engaging ripples from the piano. The finale,

with a broad opening melody on the cello, has a more consistently confident mood. An interesting feature is a number of powerful chordal outbursts, first on the strings, then on the piano and then shared between the two groups. There are occasional reflective passages in the movement which give some relief from the grand gestures and thunderous piano writing.

This is very enjoyable disc and though the most appealing music is in the violin and piano pieces the larger works repay repeated listening. The Gould Piano Trio plays superbly and David Adams - better known to me as a violinist - brings rich and imaginative viola playing to the Piano Quartet. Interesting music, fine playing and recording and a bargain price make this a highly recommendable CD.

Richard Spenceley

All these CDs (except the Stanford and the Vaughan Williams/McEwen) are available now from the Elgar Birthplace Museum. Remember that buying from the Birthplace is a way of contributing directly towards its finances at this difficult economic time. You may shop online at: www.elgarfoundation.org/index.php/the-elgar-shop/cds

100 YEARS AGO ...

After the Three Choirs Festival the Elgars started to pack up Plâs Gwyn in preparation for their move to London. Elgar's contribution was put succinctly by Alice: 'E. cleared up the Ark -' (his chemistry laboratory). He went to London on 7 October, which was to be their main base for the remainder of 1911. Alice joined him on the 10th, where she found him 'drefful giddy & sick'. Dr. Abbot Anderson was summoned, and got him fit enough to set off for Turin on the 14th, where he was to conduct two concerts with Toscanini's orchestra in connection with the Turin International Exhibition. Alice described their journey to Carice: 'Faser looked very pulled down but Dr. said yes so we fled - Journey lovely to Boulogne - Horrid to Paris but there met a Cookoo [representative of Thomas Cook!] who rushed us into a taxi & at the risk of many lives caught the train'. The concerts 'were a signal success' and the Elgar arrived back in London on 22 October.

Next day 'E. had his first Symphony Concert' as Principal Conductor of the L.S.O., which included the Violin Concerto with Kreisler and Brahms's Third Symphony. They then headed to Carrow Abbey for the Norwich Festival, at which Elgar conducted *The Kingdom* on the 27th, receiving 'a mighty reception at the close'.

Returning to London at the end of the month, they moved into Hyde Park Mansions, where 'the Ranee [of Sarawak - Margaret Brooke] has most kindly lent us her little flat ... there are still legal points mortgages on Kelston side quarrelling &c - & we cannot yet know when we may go in - It is so trying.' While completion of the Severn House purchase dragged on, Elgar was busy conducting the LSO, and deputising for Landon Ronald with the New Symphony Orchestra. On 17 November 'A. to see Mr. Arnould - Hopes were held out that we might have the house in ten days or so.'

On the 21st, Alice returned to Plâs Gwyn, on which the *Hereford Journal* mused that a future generation might 'place a tablet inscribed "Here lived Sir Edward Elgar"'. Elgar headed for Manchester, where he was to conduct the Hallé Orchestra. On his return he went to Frank Schuster, leaving Alice 'thinking & thinking about E. Busy paying books & bills & preparing house'.

At the beginning of December Elgar conducted in London, Liverpool and Oxford, telling Carice on the 4th that there was 'no news about the house but there's a meeting of rogues thieves & liars at twelve o'clock today & we shall see.' A fortnight later he wrote again: 'I cannot tell you of the confusion about the house - & all must be decided tomorrow - I fear there is little chance of our 'completing' this week.' The purchase was finally completed on 22 December, and the Elgars went to Brighton where the Beresfords had lent them their house in Brunswick Terrace. On Christmas Day Alice told Troyte Griffith that 'the furniture is to begin to go in on Wednesday - It will be rather chaotic for a time ... This is a beautiful house full of the most beautiful things Lady Charlie has kindly lent us facing the Sea, the sun has been pouring in all day after deluges & gale - I am spending the day in bed trying to get rid of a haunting cold.' Mina Beresford, meanwhile, had written from Cannes to enquire 'if you have set the house on fire (or not)'.

The long awaited day arrived on 1 January when 'Entered E.'s own House - May it be happy & beautiful for him'. Music, too, became a profitable business, and Elgar 'agreed with the Coliseum to write the Music to a Masque - this for a Sum down & half profits'.

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