

Part-Songs 1914-1932

Songs, with or without instrumental or orchestral accompaniment, for multiple voices:

Year	Title	Words by :	Dedicated to :
1914	The Birthright	G A Stocks	
1914	The Merry Go Round	F C Fox	
1914	The Brook	E Soule	
1914	The Windlass	William Allington	
1914	Two Choral Songs, op 71	Henry Vaughan	
	1. The Shower		Miss Frances Smart
	2. The Fountain		W Mann Dyson
1914	Death on the Hills, op 72	Malkov, tr Rosa Newmarch	Lady Colvin
1914	Two Choral Songs, op 73	both tr Rosa Newmarch	
	1. Love's Tempest	Malkov	C Sanford Terry
	2. Serenade	Minski	Percy C Hull
1916	Fight for Right	W Morris	Members of the Fight for Right movement
1917	Fringes of the Fleet	R Kipling	Admiral Lord Beresford
1917	Inside the Bar	G Parker	The Four Singers
1918	Big Steamers	R Kipling	
1923	The Wanderer	the composer	
1923	Zut, Zut, Zut	the composer	
1924	Pageant of Empire	Alfred Noyes	
	5. Sailing Westward		
	7. The Immortal Legions		
	8. A Song of Union		
1925	The Herald	Alexander Smith	
1925	The Prince of Sleep	Walter de la Mare	
1928	I Sing the Birth (see Religious Works)	B Johnson	Rev H B S Fowler
1929	Good Morrow (see Religious Works)	G Gascoigne	

1932	When Swallows Fly	C Mackay	Stephen S Moore
1932	Woodland Stream	C Mackay	Stephen S Moore
1932	The Rapid Stream	C Mackay	Stephen S Moore
1932	So Many True Princesses who have Gone	John Masefield	

PART-SONGS 1914-1932 - Introduction

After *Go, Song of Mine* of 1909, Elgar did not write another part-song for over four years. During the intervening period, he was partly taken up with larger-scale works - the Violin Concerto, the Second Symphony, *The Music Makers*, *The Crown of India* and *Falstaff*.

The Wanderer and the strangely named *Zut! Zut! Zut!*, both to words he had himself penned - were for male voices only. Novello's were not impressed by the songs although, after some wrangling, they published them but a break with them, his publisher since the days when he was still a struggling provincial musician, followed in 1924.

After 1924, he was to use a range of publishers with, ironically, Novello's being offered nothing more than three further part-songs : *The Herald* in 1925 (although *The Prince of Sleep*, to words by Walter de la Mare, was published by Elkin in the same year) and the carols *I Sing the Birth* in 1928 and *Good Morrow* (written to commemorate King George V's recovery from a severe illness) in 1929.

His final vocal work, the choral ode *So Many True Princesses Who Have Gone*, to words by John Masefield, was written for a ceremony held in June 1932 for the unveiling of a memorial to Queen Alexandra. But none of the later part-songs stands comparison with those composed before the First World War.

Notes on individual songs

***The Birthright*, (1914) 3 mins 15 secs**

Words by George Alfred Stocks (1858-1934)

This piece was written for boys' voices and styled a Marching Song for Boys with an optional accompaniment for Boys' Brigade-style bugles and drums. Given the muscular Christianity nature of the words, it comes as no surprise to learn that George Stocks was sometime Headmaster of Burnley School, writing a 3-volume history of the place which was published in 1911. The music is marked In march time, with spirit, and it is one of Elgar's hearty "outdoors" works but, curiously, with no Elgarian fingerprints. Novello's also published a version for SATB in their Part-Song Book, no. 1308.

The Birthright

*British born, thy storied Past
Bids thee hold thy treasure fast,
Faint not, and whate'er betide,
Conscience be thy fearless guide.*

*If this ray from heav'n direct thee,
God shall in thy ways protect thee.*

*Prize not thou the tinsel shine,
But let ev'ry deed of thine
Spring from pure and honest heart,
See thou play the manly part.
Should it bring thee good or evil,
Speak the truth, and shame the devil.*

*Simple, courteous be thy word,
Straight and true as knightly sword.
Be for woman's honour bold,
Gentle to the weak and old –
Brother unto brother lending
Help, until the journey's ending.*

*Shun the haunts of slothful men;
Shun the lurking coward's den;
Stand thou in the light of day
Trained and keen to join the fray.
When thou layest down thy burden,
Honour's self shall be thy guerdon.*

*Serve thy God, thy king, thy land;
By thy comrade firmly stand;
Grimly fight, if Duty call,
All for each, and each for all –
Freedom's joy in life possessing,
And, in death, thy Country's blessing.*

The Merry Go Round (unison), (1914) 00 mins 30 secs

Words by Florence C. Fox (1861-1933)

The Brook (in two parts), (1914) 00 mins 50 secs

Words by Ellen Soule (?-?)

The Windlass Song, (1914) 1 min 30 secs

Words by William Allingham (1824-1889)

Three years after Elgar's fourth and final visit to the USA in 1911, he increased his part-song activity when, in 1914, the Morristown, New Jersey-based Silver Burdett Company asked him for a series of modern songs, leading to *The Merry Go Round* (unison with piano accompaniment), *The Brook* (a simple two-part song with piano accompaniment) and *The Windlass Song* (in four parts, unaccompanied). All three songs are short: *The Merry-go-round* 13 bars with two verses - the tune of this is simple and the notation unusually large, indicating that this was written for young children; *The Brook* 13 bars with three verses; and *Windlass Song* 14 bars with four verses.

The setting for SATB of *The Windlass Song* by the Irish poet and man of letters William Allingham is cheerful with characteristic suspensions leading into each "Heave O". It comes from *Day and Night Songs*, published in 1854.

Florence C. Fox was an American writer of books and poems, and lyricist of songs for children. Her children's books include "*Fox's Indian Primer*", about American Indians and how they lived.

Of Ellen Soule, the present writer can find no trace. All three songs were published in *The Progressive Music Series* in the USA in books Two (1914), Three (1915) and Four (1915) respectively.

The Merry Go Round

"Come ride, come ride"

The windmill cried,

"This merry-go-round is free;

Come breezes all,

Both great and small,

Oh, come and ride with me!"

"My bars are long,

My bolts are strong,

As round and around we go!

We ride, we ride",

The windmill cried,

"As long as winds shall blow!"

The Brook

From a fountain

In a mountain,

Drops of water ran

Trickling thro' the grasses:

So our brook began.

Slow it started;

Soon it darted,

Cool and clear and free,

Rippling over pebbles,

Hurrying to the sea.

Bubbling, singing,

Rushing, ringing,

Fleck'd with shade and sun;

Soon our pretty brooklet

To the sea has run.

The Windlass Song

*Heave at the windlass! -- Heave O, cheerly, men!
Heave all at once, with a will!*

*The tide quickly making,
Our cordage a-creaking,
The water has put on a frill,
Heave O!
Fare you well, sweethearts! -- Heave O, cheerly, men!*

*Fare you well, frolic and sport!
The good ship all ready,
Each dog-vane is steady,
The wind blowing dead out of port,
Heave O!
Once in blue water -- Heave O, cheerly, men!*

*Blow it from north or from south;
She'll stand to it tightly,
And curtsey politely,
And carry a bone in her mouth,
Heave O!
Short cruise or long cruise -- Heave O, cheerly, men!*

*Jolly Jack Tar thinks it one.
No latitude dreads he
Of White, Black, or Red Sea,
Great icebergs, or tropical sun,
Heave O!
One other turn, and Heave O, cheerly, men!*

*Heave, and good-bye to the shore!
Our money, how went it?
We shared it and spent it;
Next year we'll come back with some more,
Heave O!*

Two Choral Songs, op. 71 (1914) 6 mins 30 secs

Words by Henry Vaughan (1622-1695)

1. *The Shower* 3 mins 00 secs

2. *The Fountain* 3 mins 30 secs

After a period spent settling in to their new London home in 1912, the Elgars began to explore by car the areas to the north of Hampstead, often accompanied by Alice Stuart Wortley (Elgar's 'Windflower'). Elgar found the drives and the countryside enchanting and inspirational, producing in 1914 in quick succession a further seven part-songs, four songs for solo voice and two anthems.

William Gray McNaught (1849-1918) suggested the composer should call his opp. 71 & 73 'choral songs' to distinguish their ambitious scope, and Elgar concurred. Dr McNaught was Elgar's fellow Morecambe Festival adjudicator, a choral conductor and editor of the *Musical Times*, who had got to know Elgar through Lady Mary Lygon's Madresfield Competition Festival. That he was also choral adviser to Novello may be significant because of the mood towards Elgar at Novello. Augustus Littleton, the increasingly important younger brother of Novello's chairman, Alfred Henry Littleton (1845-1914), wrote in a letter "I don't want any more Elgar symphonies and concertos but am ready to take as many part songs as he can produce, even at exorbitant rates." For the opp. 71, 72 and 73 songs, Elgar was paid £125 guineas and an immediate royalty of 25%.

The op. 71 pair set the words of the 17th century Welsh rural mystic, Henry Vaughan, whose *Silex Scintillans* provided the texts, *The Fountain* being found in the poem 'Regeneration'. Elgar recalled his pleasurable motoring explorations by giving the songs subtitles recording the areas he had visited: *The Shower* he named *At Mill Hill*, and *The Fountain* became *At Totteridge*.

The dedicatees were old friends of the composer: *The Shower* is dedicated to Miss Frances Smart who was a neighbour of the Elgars at their home 'Forli', and *The Fountain* to W. Mann Dyson who was an old singer from Edward's Worcester Glee Club days.

The Shower

*Cloud, if as thou dost melt, and with thy train
Of drops make soft the Earth, my eyes could weep
O'er my hard heart, that's bound up and asleep;
Perhaps at last,
Some such showers past,
My God would give a sunshine after rain.*

The Fountain

*The unthrift sun shot vital gold,
A thousand, thousand pieces;
And heav'n its azure did unfold
Chequer'd with snowy fleeces;
The air was all in spice,
And ev'ry bush
A garland wore:
Thus fed my eyes,
But all the earth lay hush,
Only a little fountain lent
Some use for ears,
And on the dumb shades language spent,
The music of her tears.*

Death on the Hills, op. 72 (1914) 3 mins 45 secs

Words by Apollon Nikolayevich Maykov (1821-1897), translated by Rosa Harriet Jeaffreson Newmarch (1857-1940)

Death on the Hills is dedicated to Elgar's friend and patron Lady Frances Colvin, the wife of Sir Sidney Colvin who, together, were also the dedicatees of the Cello Concerto. Like the two part-songs of opus 73, the song is a setting of a translation of a Russian poem. It describes Death (represented by the basses) selecting its victims from a village community (the remainder of the choir) with Death's omnipresence evoked by the descending intervals constantly repeated and becoming clear with the entry of the basses.

Ivor Atkins gave a performance of *Death on the Hills* in early December 1921 and he wrote in a letter to Elgar on 8 December that "The finest piece of singing that has been ever heard in Worcester in my day was, however, that of 'Death on the Hills'. It would have thrilled you by its heartrending qualities ... It created a great sensation and everybody clamoured for a repetition but I had to be firm against that. The mood was too wonderfully realized and its effect upon people too right to allow of any repetition that night or indeed for a week." Elgar himself knew it was a fine work, writing to Alice Stuart Wortley that "It is one of the biggest things I have done".

Death On The Hills

*Why o'er the dark'ning hill-slopes
Do dusky shadows creep?
Because the wind blows keenly there,
Or rainstorms lash and leap?*

*No wind blows chill upon them,
Nor are they lash'd by rain:
'Tis Death who rides across the hills
With all his shadowy train.*

*The old bring up the cortege,
In front the young folk ride,
And on Death's saddle in a row
The babes sit side by side.*

*The young folk lift their voices,
The old folk plead with Death:
"O let us take the village-road,
Or by the brook draw breath.*

*"There let the old drink water,
There let the young folk play,
And let the little children
Run and pluck the blossoms gay."*

*[Death speaks]
"I must not pass the village
Nor halt beside the rill,
For there the wives and mothers all
Their buckets take to fill.*

*"The wife might see her husband,
The mother see her son;
So close they'd cling - their claspings
Could never be undone."*

Two Choral Songs, op. 73 (1914) 4 mins 30 secs

1. Love's Tempest 2 mins 45 secs

Words by Apollon Nikolayevich Maykov (1821-1897), translated by Rosa Harriet Jeaffreson Newmarch (1857-1940)

2. Serenade 1 min 45 secs

Words by Nikolai Maksimovich Minsky (1855-1937), translated by Rosa Harriet Jeaffreson Newmarch (1857-1940)

Dedicated to Percy C Hull

After a period spent settling in to their new London home in 1912, the Elgars began to explore by car the areas to the north of Hampstead, often accompanied by Alice Stuart Wortley ('Windflower'). Elgar found the drives and the countryside enchanting and inspirational, producing in 1914 in quick succession a further seven part-songs, four songs for solo voice and two anthems. Elgar recalled his pleasurable motoring explorations by giving his op. 71 songs and *Serenade* of op. 73 subtitles recording the areas he had visited: *Serenade* (op. 73 no. 2), he named *Hadley Green* and dedicated it to Percy Hull (1878-1968), at that time Assistant Organist to George Robertson Sinclair (1863-1917) and, after being a prisoner of war and following Sinclair's death, Organist from 1918 to 1949 at Hereford Cathedral.

Dr William Gray McNaught (1849-1918) suggested the composer should call his opp. 71 & 73 'choral songs' to distinguish their ambitious scope, and Elgar concurred. Dr McNaught was Elgar's fellow Morecambe Festival adjudicator, a choral conductor and editor of the *Musical Times*, who had got to know Elgar through Lady Mary Lygon's Madresfield Competition Festival. That he was also choral adviser to Novello may be significant because of the mood towards Elgar at Novello. Augustus Littleton, the increasingly important younger brother of Novello's chairman, Alfred Henry Littleton (1845-1914), wrote in a letter "I don't want any more Elgar symphonies and concertos but am ready to take as many part songs as he can produce, even at exorbitant rates." For the opp. 71, 72 and 73 songs, Elgar was paid £125 guineas and an immediate royalty of 25%.

The words for *Love's Tempest* (Elgar's title) were taken from Maykov's cycle *Novogrecheskiye pesni* (*Modern Greek Poems*). The song was written in January 1914 and published that same year by Novello. It was dedicated to Charles Sanford Terry, to whom Elgar wrote on 25 February 1914, "My very dear C S T, Please accept the enclosed dedication with my love ... It is a big good noise. Yours ever, Edward Elgar"

Terry (1864-1936) was Professor of History at Aberdeen University until his retirement in 1930. His academic field was particularly Scottish history of the seventeenth century although he was highly acclaimed at home and abroad for his biography of Bach that appeared in 1928. Some months after the above letter, Elgar found the first sketch of the work and sent it to Terry so that "you can now see 'how it's done'".

Love's Tempest

*Silent lay the sapphire ocean,
Till a tempest came to wake
All its roaring, seething billows
That upon earth's ramparts break.*

*Quiet was my heart within me,
Till your image, suddenly
Rising there, awoke a tumult
Wilder than the storm at sea.*

Serenade

*Dreams all too brief,
Dreams without grief,
Once they are broken, come not again.*

*Across the sky the dark clouds sweep,
And all is dark and drear above:
The bare trees toss their arms and weep,
Rest on, and do not wake, dear Love.*

*Since glad dreams haunt your slumbers deep,
Why should you scatter them in vain?*

*Happy is he, when Autumn falls,
Who feels the dream-kiss of the Spring;
And happy he in prison walls
Who dreams of freedom's rescuing;*

*But woe to him who vainly calls
Through sleepless nights for ease from pain?L*

***Fight for Right, (1916)* 2 mins 00 secs**

Words by William Morris (1834-1896)

The inspiration of 1914 to write part-songs was not to last. The First World War was only a few months away and with it came a change of mood and responsibilities, including writing patriotic works. Elgar responded in the first two years of the War with *Carillon*, *Polonia*, *Une Voix dans le Désert* and *The Spirit of England*. But 1916 was a quiet time for composition, with only *Le Drapeau Belge* and *Fight for Right*, at the request of the singer, Gervase Elwes. This firm-jawed and stirring ballad with a hearty chorus was composed for Sir Francis Younghusband's Fight for Right movement, which was intended to give a spiritual dimension to the war. It was published in 1916 and Gervase Elwes sang it at the same Royal Albert Hall concert on 28 March 1919 that witnessed Parry's *Jerusalem*.

It is a setting of six lines from Book 2 of William Morris's *The Story of Sigurd the Volsung and the Fall of the Niblungs*. Wagner-lovers will be familiar with the story, although the cod-epic style can be tedious:

He laughed and smote with the laughter and thrust up over his head
And smote the venom asunder, and clave the heart of Dread.

Fight for Right

[Quasi recit. ad lib.]

*When thou hearest the fool rejoicing, and he saith, 'It is over and past,
And the wrong was better than right, and hate turns into love at the last,
And we strove for nothing at all, and the Gods are fallen asleep;
For so good is the world a-growing that the evil good shall reap:'*

[A tempo]

*Then loosen thy sword in the scabbard and settle the helm on thine head,
For men betrayèd are mighty, and great are the wrongfully dead.*

[Chorus]

*Then loosen thy sword in the scabbard and settle the helm on thine head,
For men betrayèd are mighty, and great are the wrongfully dead.*

Fringes Of The Fleet, (1917) 16 mins 00 secs

1. *The Lowestoft Boat* 4 mins 00 secs

2. *Fate's Discourtesy* 3 mins 30 secs

3. *Submarines* 2 mins 30 secs

4. *The Sweepers* 3 mins 30 secs

Words by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

5. *Inside the Bar* 2 mins 30 secs

Words by Gilbert Parker (1862-1932)

Unsurprisingly, most of Elgar's output during the years 1914-18 reflected the great conflict then being fought. *Carillon, Une Voix dans le Désert, Le Drapeau Belge, The Spirit of England* and *Fringes of the Fleet* each comprise settings of poems relating directly or indirectly to the war. The first three are poems of a patriotic nature, intended to raise the spirits and funds for wartime charities; the poems which Elgar chose for *The Spirit of England*, taken from Laurence Binyon's book *The Winnowing Fan*, are of an altogether different nature, attempting to capture more of the realism of wartime in its many guises. But as the war dragged on, the public grew increasingly weary of the suffering and hardship, and longed for entertainments which took their minds off the conflict.

Elgar's first wartime foray into escapism, *The Starlight Express*, had not been a success. Elgar had disliked intensely the staging of the play and had refused to attend the première, despite having been down to conduct it; it closed after a short West End run. So he now looked for a happier compromise, something in a lighter vein, focusing on the potential absurdities of war but not to an extent which risked accusations of subversion. He chose four poems by the celebrated poet and novelist Rudyard Kipling, and all published in the *Daily Telegraph* in November 1915. The title of the collection was *Sea Warfare* so each lyric had a nautical theme, leading Elgar to determine on the title *Fringes of the Fleet* for the cycle. He set the poems for the unusual combination of four baritones and orchestra. They captured the mood of the times, especially because of the topicality of submarine warfare.

The first song is a breezy description of a fishing boat fitted out with guns and a random hotch-potch of a crew while the third, *Submarines*, darkens the mood with a sombre evocation of life in the depths. The final song, *Sweepers*, lightens the atmosphere as the converted trawlers-turned-minesweepers - Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock and Golden Gain - locate and destroy enemy mines in the home waters.

The first performance took place on 11 June 1917 at the Coliseum Theatre, London under Elgar's baton. The songs were dedicated to Admiral Lord Beresford, Elgar's host (and Commander in Chief of the Mediterranean Fleet from 1905-07) on his trip around the Mediterranean in 1905 that yielded the piano work *In Smyrna*.

Elgar and his four singers began the twice-daily run of performances of *Fringes of the Fleet* at the London Coliseum in June 1917, to enormous success. A fifth song, an encore for four unaccompanied baritones with words by Gilbert Parker, was subsequently added. *Inside the Bar* was dedicated to The Four Singers and received its first performance on 25 June 1917, again at the Coliseum.

The performances toured the provincial music halls that late summer and autumn until they came to an abrupt end when Kipling rather belatedly objected to his poetry being used in that way. Elgar wrote bitterly to a friend "If I do happen to write something that 'goes' with the public and by which I look like benefitting financially, some perverse fate always intervenes and stops it immediately." But Kipling's objections came too late to prevent Elgar from recording the cycle with the original four soloists in July 1917.

But it is the second song which has developed the most interesting history. Perhaps feeling cheated by Kipling's foreshortening of the cycle's life, Elgar dwelt on the theme from *Fate's Discourtesy* in the second of his five Piano Improvisations, recorded in 1929, and Anthony Payne's completion of the sixth *Pomp and Circumstance March* has revealed that Elgar planned a further use of the theme in that work also.

Barry Collett/John Norris

The Lowestoft Boat (Kipling's title: The Lowestoft Boat)

*In Lowestoft a boat was laid,
Mark well what I do say!
And she was built for the herring trade,
But she has gone a-rovin', a-rovin', a-rovin',
The Lord knows where!*

*They gave her Government coal to burn,
And a Q.F. gun at bow and stern,
And sent her out a-rovin', a-rovin', a-rovin',
The Lord knows where!*

*Her skipper was mate of a bucko ship
Which always killed one man per trip,
So he is used to rovin', rovin', rovin',
The Lord knows where!*

*Her mate was skipper of a chapel in Wales,
And so he fights in topper and tails --
Religi-ous tho' rovin', rovin', rovin',>BR> The Lord knows where!*

*Her engineer is fifty-eight,
So he's prepared to meet his fate,
Which ain't unlikely rovin', rovin', rovin',
The Lord knows where!*

*Her leading-stoker's seventeen,
So he don't know what the judgments means
Unless he cops 'em rovin', rovin', rovin',
The Lord knows where!*

*Her cook was chef in the Lost Dogs' Home,
Mark well what I do say!
And I'm sorry for Fritz when they all come
A-rovin', a-rovin', aroarin' and a-rovin',
Round the North Sea rovin',
The Lord knows where!*

Fate's Discourtesy (Kipling's title: A Song in Storm)

*Be well assured that on our side
Our challenged oceans fight,
Though headlong wind and leaping tide
Make us their sport tonight
Through force of weather, not of war,
In jeopardy we steer.
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy
Whereby it shall appear
How in all time of our distress
As in our triumph too,
The game is more than the player of the game,
And the ship is more than the crew!*

*Be well assured, though wave and wind
Have mightier blows in store,
That we who keep the watch assigned
Must stand to it the more;
And as our streaming bows dismiss
Each billow's baulked career,
Sing welcome Fate's discourtesy
Whereby it is made clear
How in all time of our distress
As in our triumph too,
The game is more than the player of the game,
And the ship is more than the crew!*

*Be well assured that on our side
Our challenged oceans fight,
Though headlong wind and leaping tide
Make us their sport to-night
Through force of weather, not of war,
In jeopardy we steer.
Then welcome Fate's discourtesy
Whereby it shall appear
How in all time of our distress
As in our triumph too,
The game is more than the player of the game,
And the ship is more than the crew!*

Submarines (Kipling's title: Tin Fish)

The ships await() us above
And ensnare us beneath.
We arise, we lie down, and we
In the belly of Death.*

*The ships have a thousand eyes
To mark where we come ...
But the mirth of a seaport dies
When our blow gets home.*

()[Kipling: destroy]*

The Sweepers (Mine Sweepers)

*Dawn off the Foreland -- the young flood making
Jumbled and short and steep --
Black in the hollows and bright where it's breaking --
Awkward water to sweep.
"Mines reported in the fairway,
"Warn all traffic and detain.
"'Sent up Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock, and Golden Gain."*

*Noon off the Foreland -- the first ebb making
Lumpy and strong in the bight.
Boom after boom, and the golf-hut shaking
And the jackdaws wild with fright!
"Mines located in the fairway,
"Boats now working up the chain,
"Sweepers -- Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock, and Golden Gain."*

*Dusk off the Foreland -- the last light going
And the traffic crowding through,
And five damned trawlers with their syreens blowing
Heading the whole review!*

"Sweep completed in the fairway.

"No more mines remain.

"Sent back Unity, Claribel, Assyrian, Stormcock, and Golden Gain."

Inside the Bar

*I knows a town, an' it's a fine town,
And many a brig goes sailin' to its quay;
I knows an inn, an' it's a fine inn,
An' a lass that's fair to see.
I knows a town, an' it's a fine town;
I knows an inn, an' it's a fine inn--
But Oh my lass, an' Oh the gay gown,
Which I have seen my pretty in!*

*I knows a port, an' it's a good port,
An' many a brig is ridin' easy there;
I knows a home, an' it's a good home,
An' a lass that's sweet an' fair.
I knows a port, an' it's a good port,
I knows a home, an' it's a good home--
But Oh the pretty that is my sort,
What's wearyin' till I come!*

*I knows a day, an' it's a fine day,
The day a sailor man comes back to town;
I knows a tide, an' it's a good tide,
The tide that gets you quick to anchors down.
I knows a day, an' it's a fine day,
I knows a tide, an' it's a good tide--
And God help the lubber, I say,
What's stole the sailor man's bride!*

Big Steamers, (1918) 4 mins 00 secs

Words by Rudyard Kipling (1865-1936)

In June 1917, *Fringes of the Fleet* premiered at the London Coliseum, to enormous success. It set poems by Rudyard Kipling and the performances toured the provincial music halls that late summer and autumn until they came to an abrupt end when Kipling rather belatedly objected to his poetry being used in that way. Elgar wrote bitterly to a friend "If I do happen to write something that 'goes' with the public and by which I look like benefitting financially, some perverse fate always intervenes and stops it immediately."

Despite this, Elgar set a further poem by Kipling, one that was first published in *A School History of England* (1911) by Kipling and C.R.L. Fletcher. Whilst it was apposite for the subsequent war, it was actually a warning to Britain to safeguard its Empire's trade by maintaining a strong navy at a time when Germany was building its own huge one. The ladies' voices ask the questions and the men's provide the responses. The song appeared in print in an edition of *Teachers' World* dated 19 June 1918.

*"Oh, where are you going to, all you Big Steamers,
 With England's own coal, up and down the salt seas?"*
*"We are going to fetch you your bread and your butter,
 Your beef, pork, and mutton, eggs, apples, and cheese."*
*"And where will you fetch it from, all you Big Steamers,
 And where shall I write you when you are away?"*
*"We fetch it from Melbourne, Quebec, and Vancouver.
 Address us at Hobart, Hong-kong, and Bombay."*
*"But if anything happened to all you Big Steamers,
 And suppose you were wrecked up and down the salt sea?"*
*"Why, you'd have no coffee or bacon for breakfast,
 And you'd have no muffins or toast for your tea."*
*"Then I'll pray for fine weather for all you Big Steamers
 For little blue billows and breezes so soft."*
*"Oh, billows and breezes don't bother Big Steamers:
 We're iron below and steel-rigging aloft."*
*"Then I'll build a new lighthouse for all you Big Steamers,
 With plenty wise pilots to pilot you through."*
*"Oh, the Channel's as bright as a ball-room already,
 And pilots are thicker than pilchards at Looe."*
*"Then what can I do for all you Big Steamers,
 Oh, what can I do for your comfort and good?"*
*"Send out your big warships to watch your big waters,
 That no one may stop us from bringing you food."*
*For the bread that you eat and the biscuits you nibble,
 The sweets that you suck and the joints that you carve,
 They are brought to you daily by All Us Big Steamers
 And if any one hinders our coming you'll starve!"*

The Wanderer, (1923) 3 mins 00 secs

Words by the Composer

Not until 1923 did Elgar return to the medium of part-song, three years after his personal world had been shattered by his wife Alice's death. Robin Legge, the Chief Critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, requested two male part-songs for the DeReszke Singers, a group of American singers under Jean DeReszke. The composer's response in July 1923 was *The Wanderer* and the strangely named *Zut! Zut! Zut!*, both to words he had himself penned and both for male voices only.

Elgar allegedly found the poem for the first song in an old Restoration anthology of *Wit and Drollery* (1661) but the words are his, described by him in a letter as "strange and weird". Novello's was not impressed by the songs and, claiming that there was no market for male voice songs, refused to meet his asking price. Eventually, after some wrangling, Elgar accepted a much reduced price and Novello's published it in 1923, but a break with them, his publisher since the days when he was still a struggling provincial musician, followed in 1924. The DeReszke Singers gave the first performance in the Wigmore Hall on 13 November 1923.

Jerold Northrop Moore describes the song thus: “A wraith of melody moving softly up and down between empty octave and skeletal harmony and a recurring drone set the five stanzas in a tiny world of variants”.

The Wanderer

*I wander through the woodlands,
Peace to you - day's a-dying;
I tune a song
The trees among,
But oft-times comes a-crying.*

*I know more than Apollo;
For, oft when he lies sleeping,
I see the stars
At mortal wars,
And the rounded welkin weeping.*

*The morn's my constant mistress,
The lovely owl my morrow;
The flaming drake
And the night-crow make
Me music, to my sorrow.*

*With a heart of furious fancies,
Whereof I am commander:
With a burning spear,
And a horse of air,
To the wilderness I wander.*

*With a knight of ghosts and shadows,
I summoned am to tourney:
Ten leagues beyond
The wide world's end:
Methinks it is no journey.*

Zut! Zut! Zut!, (1923) 2 mins 20 secs

Words by the Composer

Not until 1923, three years after his personal world had been shattered by his wife Alice's death, did Elgar return to the medium of part-song. Robin Legge, the Chief Critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, requested two male part-songs for the DeReszke Singers, a group of American singers under Jean DeReszke. The composer's response in July 1923 was *The Wanderer* and *Zut! Zut! Zut!*, both to words he had himself penned and both for male voices only.

Novello's was not impressed by the songs and, claiming that there was no market for male voice songs, refused to meet his asking price. The correspondence between the two is fascinating but more so is the private comment of Novello's music editor, John Ebenezer

West: I am sorry to say this is rather cheap for Elgar – cheap without being sufficiently interesting. Is it my judgement that's at fault, or is the composer falling off in the value of his ideas?" Eventually, after some wrangling, Elgar accepted a much reduced price but a break with Novello's, his publisher since the days when he was still a struggling provincial musician, followed in 1924.

Subtitled *Remember*, the song was described as a marching song "by Richard Mardon", who was Elgar himself. Zut! refers to the tread of the marching beat and the whole is redolent in mood of the backward-looking *The Immortal Legions* in the following year's *Pageant of Empire*.

Zut! Zut! Zut!

*Come! give it a lift, our old-time march-song,
Sing with a will!
Sing with a thrill!
Come, give it a leg, our old-time march-tune,
Grind up the hill;
Lads, 'twas a grill!
How we worked and drilled together,
And laughed and camped in foulest weather,
And fought where arms were brightly flashing,
Across the hail of bullets dashing:
Gloried in danger, our sinews tight'ning.
A firm front shewed in the cannons' light'ning
Hurrah!*

*Come! shall we forget our old-time march-song?
The lads sang it so,
Long, long ago;
No! never forget their old-time march-tune,
Sung with a go!
Straight to the foe.
How they fiercely fought for freedom,
And glad our land and proud to breed 'em,
and how they nobly died, and wondrous
Was the battle, grim and thunderous;
Glory to them and a fame transcending
The heroes of old in time unending.
Hurrah!*

Pageant of Empire, (1924) 8 mins 30 secs

1. (*Shakespeare's Kingdom*)

2. (*The Islands*)

3. (*The Blue Mountains*)

4. (*The Heart of Canada*)

5. *Sailing Westward* 2 mins 30 secs

6. (*Merchant Adventurers*)

7. *The Immortal Legions* 3 mins 00 secs

8. *A Song of Union* 3 mins 00 secs

Words by Alfred Noyes (1880-1958)

The three part-songs of 1924 were part of a cycle of eight songs (the remainder being written for solo voice) entitled *Pageant of Empire*. This was written, along with the *Empire March*, for the British Empire Exhibition due to be held at Wembley between 21 July and 30 August that year, to which many British composers and writers contributed, including two writers previously set by Elgar: Kipling and Binyon. However, it was Alfred Noyes who supplied the verses for Elgar's contributions. The latter's songs, with titles such as *Sailing Westward*, *Merchant Adventurers*, *The Cape of Good Hope*, *Shakespeare's Kingdom*, *The Islands* (New Zealand), *The Blue Mountains* (Australia) and *The Heart of Canada*, attempt to capture the vast geographical spread of the Empire but, unfortunately, neither they nor the *Empire March* captured the heart of the British public. The *Empire March* acted as a leitmotif during the evening to unite the three parts *Westward Ho!* (Canada and Newfoundland), *Eastward Ho!* (Mediterranean, Africa and India) and *Southward Ho!* (New Zealand and Australia with the *Pageant of Heroes* featuring *The Immortal Legions*). In addition, the music of *Sailing Westward* was also sung to different words as appropriate for the evening in *Indian Dawn*, *The Islands*, *The Cape of Good Hope* and *Gloriana*. Some of the music of *Sailing Westward* also reappeared at the end of *The Immortal Legions*.

Elgar also re-used some of the *Crown of India* suite for the *Early Days of India* section but, if the exhibition is now remembered through any musical connection, it is probably for the photograph of Elgar conducting the orchestra and huge choir in Wembley Stadium.

Ironically, it is not sure if all the songs were ever performed before the Pageant's huge audiences – 50,000 on the opening night and 60,000 on the last - and thereafter most of the music was lost when Enoch & Sons' premises were demolished. The music was published by Enoch but it was a commercial failure: fifty years later, most of the sheet music was still in the publisher's stock. Only *Shakespeare's Kingdom* won much popularity, which is a great pity as there are some good works alongside it. Fortunately, most of Elgar's music has now been reconstructed, and we can hear some forgotten delights.

5. *Sailing Westward*

The work opens in a chorale-like manner to introduce the hymn-like, then more flowing melody. It is a fine, typically Elgarian "outdoors" tune, a perfect reflection of the confidence of the intrepid explorers.

Sailing Westward

Hoist your sails, adventurous captains!

Out and chase the setting sun!

Boundless as the deep before you

Shines the dream that calls you on.

Sky to sky, adventurous captains,

Calls you, as the wonder grows;

Every sun-down as it deepens,

*Every sun-down as it deepens,
Reddening to an English rose.*

*Are there worlds beyond the darkness?
Westward, through the thundering gales,
Westward go the shining sailors!
Westward plunge the tattered sails!
Ocean opens out to ocean,
England fades behind them far,
Are there world beyond the darkness,
Worlds of light beyond the darkness?
England sails beyond the darkness
Westward, steering by a star.*

*Sky to sky, immortal captains,
Calls you, as the wonder grows.
Every sun-down as it deepens,
Every sun-down as it deepens,
Reddening to an English rose.*

7. The Immortal Legions

As befits its words, the setting is initially sombre and elegiac, with treading bass and drum rolls. This is the only song currently extant with Elgar's own orchestration and it has to be said there is a musical fault-line after Now the deeper trumpets roll. The words and music of *Sailing Westward* (Are there world beyond the darkness,/Worlds of light beyond the darkness?) reappear and the rest of the poem, sung to that melody, rises to a fervent climax in the paeon to those who have gone before, where the answers to those questions are found, gloriously orchestrated.

The Immortal Legions

*Now, in silence, muster round her
All the legions of her dead.
Grieving for the grief that crowned her,
England bows her glorious head.*

*Round the ever-living Mother,
Out of the forgetful grave,
Rise the legions that have saved her
Though themselves they could not save.*

*Now the living Power remembers,
Now the deeper trumpets roll.
Are there worlds beyond the darkness?
Worlds of light beyond the darkness?
And a voice beyond the darkness
Whispers to her stricken soul:*

*Mother of immortal legions,
Lift again thy glorious head.
Glory honour and thanksgiving,
Now, to our victorious dead.*

8. A Song of Union 3 mins 00 secs

This song, we are certain, was not performed at the Pageant. It is a setting of the Empire March's trio tune.

A Song of Union

*The stars that wheel around the Sun
Proclaim the law that bound them.
'Twas love that linked our realms in one
And love in joy that crowned them!*

*Then Freedom took her throne
Freedom took her throne
And peace was breathed on every sea
And music swelled around them;*

*No more the dreams of war shall sound
When hearts and realms in Love are bound:
For Love binds all in one;
Love binds all our hearts in one.*

The Herald (1925) 4 mins 15 secs

Words by Alexander Smith (1830-1867)

In the Summer of 1925, Elgar produced two songs, this and *The Prince of Sleep*, and both were on the subject of death, like their immediate predecessor from the year before, *The Immortal Legions*, and *The Wanderer* of the year before that. For a publisher, Ivor Atkins urged Elgar to consider Patersons of Glasgow or Bayley & Ferguson, as *The Herald* was "one of the most thrilling things you have done. When it does come out it ought to make a great stir."

This refers to the split with Novello's in 1924, who had reservations about publishing his part-songs (See *Zut! Zut! Zut!*) after which Elgar was to use a range of publishers. Ironically, Novello's were offered nothing more than three further part-songs, including *The Herald* for men's voices in 1925.

The Herald

*A grim old king,
Whose blood leapt madly when the trumpets brayed
To joyous battle 'mid a storm of steeds,
Won a rich kingdom on a battle day;
But in the sunset he was ebbing fast,
Ringed by his weeping lords.*

*His left hand held his white steed, to the belly splashed with blood,
That seemed to mourn him with its drooping head;
His right, his broken brand; and in his ear
His old victorious banners flap the winds.
He called his faithful herald to his side, -
"Go! tell the dead
I come."*

*With a proud smile,
The warrior with a stab let out his soul,
Which fled and shrieked through all the other world,
"Ye dead! ... My master comes!"
And there was pause
Till the great shade should enter.*

The Prince of Sleep (1925) 3 mins 45 secs

Words by Walter de la Mare (1873-1956)

In the Summer of 1925, Elgar produced two songs, this and *The Herald*, and both were on the subject of death, like their immediate predecessor from the year before, *The Immortal Legions*, and *The Wanderer* of the year before that. Michael Kennedy refers to the de la Mare setting as being "in the rapt manner he reserved for special moments of vision", a view with which it is difficult to disagree.

After 1924, when he broke with Novello's, Elgar used a range of publishers including W.W. Elkin, who published *The Prince of Sleep* in 1925. Actually Elkin had published Elgar's work before the Novello's rupture: the orchestral works, *Sospiri* and *Carissima* were both originally composed in 1913/14 at the request of the publisher for two short companion pieces to *Salut d'Amour*, and *Rosemary* eventually fulfilled the commission instead of *Sospiri*. Elkin also published during the War inter alia *Carillon* and *Une Voix dans le Désert*.

The Prince of Sleep

*I met at eve the Prince of sleep,
His was a still and lovely face;
He wander'd through a valley steep,
Lovely in a lonely place.*

*His garb was grey of lavender,
About his head a poppy wreath
Burned like dim coals,
And everywhere
The air was sweeter for his breath.*

*His twilight feet no sandals wore,
His eyes shone faint in their own flame,
Fair moths that gloomed his steps before
Seemed letters of his lovely name.*

*His house is in the mountain ways,
A phantom house of misty walls,
Whose golden flocks at evening graze,
And witch the moon with muffled calls.*

*Upwelling from his shadowy springs
Sweet waters shake a trembling sound,
There flit the hoot owl's silent wings,
There hath his web the silk worm wound.*

*Dark in his pools clear visions lurk,
And rosy, as with morning buds,
Along his dales of broom and birk
Dreams haunt his solitary woods.*

When Swallows Fly, (1932) 1 min 0 secs

The Woodland Stream, (1932) 2 mins 00 secs

The Rapid Stream, (1932) 1 min 30 secs

Words by Charles Mackay (1814-1889)

In response to a request from Stephen Moore, a young Worcester schoolmaster (and also to satisfy the publisher, Keith Prowse), Elgar wrote three unison songs for children, and they were premiered at the Worcester Schools Music Festival on 18 May 1933. Setting the Victorian poetry of Charles Mackay, and invoking the youth/age mood of the *Nursery Suite*, they were dedicated to Stephen Moore, and were published in 1933.

When Swallows Fly

*When swallows dart from cottage eaves,
And reapers bind the barley sheaves,
When peaches peep amid the leaves,
And woodbines scent the way,*

*We love to fly the smoky town,
To breathe the air of woodland brown,
To join our hands and form a ring,
To laugh and sport,
To dance and sing amid the new-mown hay.*

The Woodland Stream

*How oft along the woodland way,
Fair streamlet of the hills,
We've listen'd to the murm'ring voice
Of all the gushing rills,*

*We saw the verdure on the brink,
The grass, the ferns, the flow'rs,
We heard the song of happy birds,
That sported in thy bow'rs;*

*And when thy constant ripple show'd
In morn or evening bright,
The glory of the rising sun,
Or moon's serener light,*

*We prayed that Love on us might beam,
With radiance as divine,
And that the lustre of our lives
Might come from Heav'n, like thine.*

The Rapid Stream

*O streamlet, swiftly flowing,
Down through the cornfields going,
Stay thy course with me.
Stay thy course with me
For us the skylarks sing,
For us awakes the Spring;
There's time to spare, the earth is fair,
Why hurry to the sea?*

*The sky is bright above thee,
Silv'ry branches love thee,
Bending to the reeds;
Bending with the reeds;
No mill with busy wheel,
Or ship with ploughing keel,
With sad unrest disturbs thy breast,
Amid the flow'ry meads.*

*O streamlet, swiftly flowing,
Stay thy course with me,
There's time to spare, the earth is fair,
Why hurry to the sea?*

So Many True Princesses who have Gone (1932) 6 mins 00 secs

Words by John Masefield (1878-1967)

Elgar's late ventures into the part-song medium were commemorative works. His final vocal work was the choral ode *So Many True Princesses Who Have Gone* to words by the recently-appointed Poet Laureate John Masefield. It was written in less than a month for a ceremony held at Marlborough House, London on 8 June 1932 for the unveiling of Sir Alfred Gilbert's memorial to Queen Alexandra.

It was Masefield's first commission as Poet Laureate, and Elgar, as Master of the King's Music, was requested to set the verses in mid-May 1932, shortly before his seventy-fifth birthday. Elgar originally set the poem to an orchestral accompaniment, but due to a change of plan it was to be played by a band, with the accompaniment hurriedly re-arranged for Military Band by Captain Andrew Harris of the Welsh Guards.

Outside Marlborough House, at the beginning of the ceremony of unveiling by the King, Elgar, wearing magnificent robes, conducted the chorister children of the Chapels Royal, the choir of Westminster Abbey, and the band of the Guards in a performance of the Ode.

The orchestra and band parts have since been lost. The only manuscript of the work is in the Library of St. George's Chapel at Windsor Castle: a vocal score handwritten by the composer, which includes indications of the orchestral instrumentation.

The work starts with a short fanfare-like figure, followed by a lengthy prelude by the orchestra (or band) before the choir enters, unaccompanied, with the opening words.

So Many True Princesses who have Gone

Queen Alexandra Memorial Ode

*So many true princesses who have gone
Over the sea, as love or duty bade,
To share abroad, till Death a foreign throne,
Have given all things, and been ill repaid.*

*Hatred has followed them and bitter days.
But this most lovely woman and loved Queen
Filled all the English nation with her praise;
We gathered now to keep her memory green.*

*Here, at this place, she often sat to mark
The tide of London life go roaring by,
The day-long multitude, the lighted dark,
The night-long wheels, the glaring in the sky.*

*Now here we set memorial of her stay,
That passers-by remember with a thrill:
"This lovely princess came from far away
And won our hearts, and lives within them still".*