

*The* Elgar Society  
**Journal**

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# The Elgar Society

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# The Elgar Society Journal

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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: 'Troyte strides the Malverns', a collage of a sketch of Troyte by Victor Hume Moody superimposed on a drawing by his daughter Catherine, the author of the article beginning on page 17, of a geological formation found in the Malverns.*

## Editorial

Changes are afoot in the study of Elgar's music and his world, and for the most part healthy ones. We should all, surely, welcome the increased international and scholarly interest in our great composer. British music generally is a growth area for performance and study among the international community, and Elgar displays an appropriately high profile, not least in American scholarship. It is also good to see that performances, making the sounds Elgar conceived known to all with ears to hear, increasingly involve non-British artists. Perhaps I should say 'again' involve them, given who conducted the first performances of the *Variations* and *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Scholarly involvement is an essential prerequisite to fully informed performances; hence the revival of the Complete Edition under the auspices of the Elgar Society is the single most important enterprise of current Elgar scholarship. This is of course a home-grown affair, but the volumes should be acquired by major libraries abroad, to which institutions even busy performing artists increasingly turn for ideas.

Also within Britain, biennial conferences on 19th-century British music were formed by a scholar of American origins. More than one British university now has a centre devoted to the study of our native music, and these are matched by the recent foundation of the North American British Music Studies Association (NABSMA), from which we shall surely hear more, particularly as Charles McGuire, who is well known in Elgarian circles, is vice-president. The association is not restricted as to period, but members I have met show a strong interest in British music of the late 19th and early 20th centuries. Conferences devoted to Elgar himself are now part of the scene, and the splendid one organised last year in Stratford and at the Birthplace by Matthew Riley gave an airing to ideas that will undoubtedly appear in published form in due course: one such is included in this issue, by the American musician Edward Green.

Scholarly interest in Elgar involves some whose work may be relatively well-known to readers of the JOURNAL, but also others whose work may not have penetrated our pages. A number of books are imminent, including one each from Matthew Riley and J. P. E. Harper-Scott; the first engages with issues of nostalgia that do not seem surprising in this context, but have perhaps never before been explored in such depth, while the second, more surprisingly, is devoted to the renewed idea that, as Richard Strauss proclaimed, Elgar was in his own way a modernist. A symposium edited by Byron Adams is to be added to a series on composers and their 'world'.

When these books appear, the JOURNAL hopes to carry an authoritative review of each. But when substantial articles appear in periodicals not exclusively devoted to Elgar, or to British music, they may pass our readers by. That seems an avoidable omission in the service the JOURNAL supplies to members. The Oxford University Press journal *Music & Letters* has carried articles by Michael Allis and Brian Newbould, centred on the chamber music, and Newbould has produced three articles in recent issues of *The Musical Times*, under the general heading of 'Elgar and Academicism'. Riley, Harper-Scott, and Aidan Thompson (whose work on Elgar reception in Germany is also likely to become a book) have all had articles in the University of California periodical *19th-Century Music* – the latter pair in the same issue. I hope some of these authors will in due course provide a summary of their work, for the benefit of readers of the JOURNAL, who may then wish to turn to the articles themselves.

Meanwhile I am pleased to say that the first issue under my editorship ranges widely over issues relating to sound and geology, and Elgarian rhythm. The Chairman of the society has surpassed himself in contributing

to the article and to both review sections, and one can only hope that other members of the society will be inspired by his example. For although the editor too has supplied a short review, he hopes not to be left with too much space to fill in future issues. Any potential contributor wanting a provisional opinion or even, dare I say it, advice, is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

Julian Rushton

# Sir Edward Elgar, Master of Rhythm<sup>1</sup>

## Edward Green

The music of Edward Elgar is increasingly getting the scholarly respect it deserves. Yet there remains an imbalance in the appreciation of the composer; such is the near-silence on the subject of rhythm, that one might be excused for thinking: 'Here is a master of harmony, melody, orchestral colour and counterpoint, but a composer for whom rhythm was of secondary concern'.

Yet Elgar was a master of rhythm; and a key to seeing that can be found in one of the few passages of technical literature given to the subject. C.F. Abdy Williams in his 1909 book, *The Rhythm of Modern Music*, devotes eighteen pages to what then was a very new work, Elgar's First Symphony.<sup>2</sup> Williams is aware of the rhythmic drama that arises when irregular phrase-lengths are counterpoised against expectations of symmetry. In Elgar, he implies, these irregularities are artfully disguised; on another level – perhaps harmonic, perhaps timbral – there is dovetailing, a smoothing out of the raw underlying structural syncopation. But a raw and rather 'modern' sense of conflicting rhythm is still present. Let us consider Williams's point. For example, there are multiple ways of hearing the seven-bar phrase that opens the symphony; there are rich cross-rhythms. As can be seen in Example 1, the most fundamental cross-rhythm is between the melody, which is designed as a 3 + 4 bar structure, and that of the bass, which reverses the procedure.

Ex. 1 Symphony No. 1, opening, from bar 3

**Andante, Nobilemente e semplice** ♩ 72

The musical score shows a 7-bar phrase in 4/4 time. The melody (treble clef) is marked 'p, dolce' and the bass line (bass clef) is marked 'x'. The melody is annotated with brackets indicating phrase lengths: 3 bars (divided into two groups of 2 x 6 beats) and 4 bars (divided into two groups of 2 x 8 beats). The bass line is annotated with brackets indicating phrase lengths: 4 bars (divided into two groups of 3 x 4 beats) and 3 bars. The tempo is Andante, Nobilemente e semplice, and the time signature is 4/4.

Meanwhile, within this larger cross-rhythm are several smaller ones, contributing to the subtle yet vibrant syncopation of the music as a whole. Consider the opening three-bar phrase in the melody. Although it is notated in 4/4, we experience it as two bars of 3/2. Nor does the notated metre go unchallenged in the four-bar phrase that follows; each of its sub-phrases squarely fills two bars of 4/4. However, their internal metrics are asymmetrical, not only to the underlying metre, but to each other: 3+3+2 beats followed by 3+2+3 (marked by Elgar's accents). And as we study the bass line, we meet other signs of Elgar's rhythmic sophistication. The phrase I have marked 'x' has its own distinctive melodic profile, being entirely conjunct in an environment

otherwise doggedly disjunct. Thus it stands out to the ear, giving the bass line a delicate metric 'jolt' right in its 'work-a-day' midst. Another subtle aspect of the bass line is how asymmetrically it places its repetitions. Bar 3 (the first of the example) is repeated, note for note, in bar 7, with three bars between of new material. Part of bar 8, however, is immediately repeated in bar 9 (last bar of the example). This last repetition, incidentally, leads one to feel that this seven-bar melody is, in truth, a six-bar structure whose final gesture, Bb to Eb, was artfully stretched out by the composer to give the entire design more plasticity and rhythmic interest.

All these structural cross-rhythms give the music to this symphonic opening a quiet excitement, even as it is one of the most famous instances of Elgar's 'noble' style – a style generally seen as emphasizing dignity and a kind of Edwardian symmetry. What we have, however, is an almost constant irregularity within a regular frame. Interestingly, the reverse procedure occurs as the Allegro to the symphony breaks out (Example 2). Now turbulence – especially of a tonal nature – is contained within clearly symmetrical 2-bar phrasing (marked by brackets).

Ex. 2 Symphony No. 1

**Allegro** 104

In these short examples, we see something central about the rhythmic art of Elgar: he brings together turbulence and order, restlessness and dignity. Let us turn now to what is perhaps his most popular work: the first *Pomp and Circumstance* march. It seems to contradict the thesis – for where is the asymmetry here? Is it not – necessarily, being a march – ‘four square’? The piece begins with decisive energy: five statements of a core motivic idea: a scalar ascent up a third (Example 3). The repetitions make for symmetry; however each statement begins by tottering over the bar-line, and each ends on a dissonance.<sup>3</sup> These are musical factors which work against the simple feeling of symmetrical balance. Moreover, the prosody of this motivic cell – a choriamb [- ◡ ◡ -] – is unusual, making for a jolt each time one foot meets the next: the jolt of consecutive accents. Elgar then continues by diminution – tightening his last statement (bars 6-7), then restating it twice, the last repetition (basses) being altered, then extended by two further ascending quavers. This variation is then repeated in sequence (at the odd interval of the tritone, starting on E natural), with the sequence adding yet another quaver, thus creating even more asymmetry. Yet it arrives at a firm, clear cadence in D major.<sup>4</sup> So after much tossing about in tonal space, at last we know where we are, and the march proper commences in dignified (yet jaunty) two-bar phrases. Yet, how was this symmetry arrived at? Through a tonal side-slip; for though we have arrived in D major, everything preceding it has made us expect Bb.

Ex. 3 'Pomp and Circumstance' No. 1, opening

To feel a solid cadence and yet be surprised is to experience opposites simultaneously. And this, I am arguing, is the critical thing in Elgar's rhythmic mastery: his ability to put opposites together. 'Rhythm', the American philosopher Eli Siegel observed, 'is any instance of change and sameness seen at once'; and in a lecture of 1966, in which he dealt with poetic *and* musical rhythm, he noted: 'The best rhythms have both what you expect and what you don't. In all being pleased there is the recurrent and the unexpected'. For rhythm, he explained, is not merely an abstract matter; it corresponds to what is yearned for by the self of every person.

Eli Siegel was the founder of Aesthetic Realism, and a central statement of this philosophy, which he began to teach in 1941, is this: 'All beauty is a making one of opposites, and the making one of opposites is what we are going after in ourselves'.<sup>5</sup> I know of no deeper or more scientific statement of aesthetics. It has universal accuracy. For example, in his classic text *Self and World*, he writes of how happiness for a self is characterized by a state of 'dynamic tranquillity'. We desire both excitement and calm. On a large scale, this march brings these elemental aspects of rhythm together: the jaunty tumult of the opening, and the serene, noble motion of the *Largamente*.

But any composer may start rapidly and follow with a contrasting slower section. So what is present in Elgar's technique that signals unusual rhythmic mastery? Literally, the 'making one' of opposites. The march proper begins by inverting the core motif and placing it firmly on the beat (see the end of Example 3). Both in terms of metric stability and melodic direction, this is transformation by opposition. Later, the composer extends his motif; above a newly shaped ascending figure he creates a violin counterpoint that descends a full seventh (shown by a dotted slur: Example 4 (a)). This is yet another sign of Elgar's love for embedding asymmetry into what otherwise might appear merely symmetrical; for let us compare this descent to the opening of the piece. There, in serried (as opposed to direct) motion, the music rises a seventh, from E flat to high D (see Example 3). And it takes five rather than four bars. Meanwhile, this counter melody is essentially a 'way-station', preparing us for the great tune – 'Such a tune comes only once a lifetime' Elgar said – of the *Largamente*, which similarly spans a descending seventh, only now over seven bars (Example 4 (b)). This calm descent is interrupted by two swifter ascending patterns, plainly reminders of the opening motif.

Ex. 4 'Pomp and Circumstance' No. 1

(a) Counterpoint in main section

(b) Trio

Before leaving this march, I'd like to note a particularly fine rhythmic detail. Each time Elgar makes his



transition from Bb to D, it is accomplished by a rising scale figure. But the figure subtly changes. First it requires a time span of ten quavers (see Example 3). Later, the time span remains, but one pitch (the C#) is absent, thereby smoothing out the passage (Example 5 (a)). Just before the grand restatement of the *Largamente*, Elgar spreads out and takes a full seventeen quavers of time span (Example 5(b)). And in the midst of the work, a rapid chromatic scale rises from A to D in a time span of merely 8½ quavers (Example 5(c)). This passage is the fastest in terms of surface rhythm, but can also be considered the slowest since, in terms of underlying harmonic rhythm, it implies no modulation.

Ex. 5 'Pomp and Circumstance' No. 1, rising figures

(a) *(poco allargando)*  
*sf* *sf* *pesante*

(b) *(poco allargando)*  
*sf* *sf* *pesante*

(c) *sf* *pesante*

When it comes to 'modern music' there is a tendency to associate rhythmic mastery with unusual forms of metric organization, such as the frequent changes of time-signature in the work of Stravinsky. I hope I have just indicated how, within the framework of traditional metre, Elgar created highly irregular structures.

Nevertheless, he was hardly averse to more obvious metrical experiments. Some of these concern motivic prosody. The theme to the 'Enigma' variations, for example, is designed in 'reversible' rhythmic cells—alternating minor and major 'Ionic' feet: short-short-Long-Long / Long-Long-short-short. And a study of the composition as a whole reveals many passages organized in 'mirror' rhythms.

As for experiments of time-signature, some are overt, some hidden. Scene four of *Caractacus* is set entirely in a notated 7/4 which, when analysed, reveals constant structural syncopation against its firm septuple framework. On the other hand, as Robin Holloway has noted, underlying the 'Pipe and Viol' from *The Black Knight* are unnotated structures in 13/4; while in E.D.U., finale to the 'Enigma' variations, Rushton has mentioned groupings in fives going across the prevailing notated duple metre.<sup>6</sup>

Yet perhaps the finest instance of Elgar's use of unusual metres is to be found in a song rarely cited in scholarly literature: his 1902 setting of Arthur C. Benson's 'Speak, Music!' It is in 15/8 for all but one of its 25 bars; here is the ground plan in the form of a table (Example 6). There is substantial irregularity here, yet Elgar manages it with suavity. In considering the song as a whole, notice how fluently Elgar switches from a 3+2 organization of his compound metre (this metric design predominates in stanzas one and three: Example 7 (a)), to the 2+3 organization which largely characterizes the middle stanza (Example 7 (b)) and the 'extension' to the third, which seems to function as the coda' to the entire song.

### 'Speak Music!'

		Syllables		Tonality
Piano Intro	1 bar	—		A major
1st Stanza	6 bars	8, 6, 6, 8	6, 3	A 5 D major
2nd Stanza	8 bars	8, 8, 6, 8, 8, 8,	6, 3	D major (touch of minor)
( 3rd Stanza*	5 $\frac{2}{5}$ bars	9, 13, 6, 4		A 5 D major
( 3rd Stanza (extension)	3 $\frac{2}{5}$ bars		6, 3	A major

\* 3rd measure of stanza is in 9/8; therefore this is equivalent to 5 measures of 15/8.

### Ex. 7 (a) 'Speak, Music!'

**Allegretto comodo** ♩ = 72

The musical score for Ex. 7 (a) is written in treble and bass clefs with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a time signature of 15/8. The tempo is marked 'Allegretto comodo' with a quarter note equal to 72 beats. The score includes a piano introduction, a first stanza of 6 bars, a second stanza of 8 bars, and a third stanza of 5 and two-fifths bars. The music is marked 'dolce' and 'p' (piano). The score shows a melodic line in the treble clef and a bass line in the bass clef, with a grand staff bracket on the left.

### Ex. 7 (b) 'Speak, Music!', stanza 2:

The musical score for Ex. 7 (b) is a vocal line in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps and a time signature of 15/8. It begins with a piano (p) dynamic. The score includes a first stanza of 6 bars, a second stanza of 8 bars, and a third stanza of 5 and two-fifths bars. The music is marked 'allarg.' (ritardando) and 'a tempo'. The score shows a melodic line in the treble clef.

Rest, rest! ah, I am fain of it!—

*cantabile*



Without going into the details of Benson's text, it is apparent that music is being described as having the power to evoke and satisfy opposing desires. It brings 'Fancies too fleet for me', strings which 'thrill', voices which 'soar', and yet it is a source of quietude: the speaker, 'wondering, wandering', asks music to bring longed-for rest. 'Art', as Eli Siegel wrote in his essay 'Conflict as Possibility', 'presents reality in its wholeness, in the togetherness of its basic oppositions. Art makes conflict sensible'. In this song, and in general in Elgar, we meet a sonic embodiment and resolution of the conflict between confidence and hesitancy; between the desire actively to engage life – be swept by it – and to retire from it; to burst forth with energy, and to contract. These contradictions were in Elgar's life, too, although that is not my subject at present.

Perhaps nowhere are they more strikingly presented than in the opening movement of the Piano Quintet. Percy Young suggests this 'in some ways may be ranked as Elgar's greatest single movement'.<sup>7</sup> Consider its stunning opening (Example 8). For fifteen of its first sixteen bars, each downbeat receives the same sharply etched rhythmic figure. Even the twelfth bar has it, only shifted to beat two. Yet what disquiet Elgar brings to this stability! The piano, in a sustained counter-melody, seems to join and yet separate from the sputtering of the strings. Ensemble dynamics change nearly every bar, and differ in each phrase. Nor is this opening period divided in a customary manner into 'four by four'. Rather it is in units of 4, 4, 3 and 5 bars. Is this music contractile, or propulsive? Bold, or hesitant? It is both; opposites are together. 'An aspect of rhythm, or of form in time', Eli Siegel wrote in *Self and World*, 'is the feeling of speed in slowness, slowness in speed. When music is good, there is a sense of motion and of pause'. We are looking at a compelling instance of that goodness.

Ex. 8 Piano Quintet, opening (strings in octaves)

Moderato 76

The musical score for Example 8, the opening of the Piano Quintet, is presented in two systems. The first system covers measures 1 through 12, and the second system covers measures 13 through 16. The music is in 2/4 time and marked 'Moderato 76'. The string quartet parts are written in octaves. The piano part features a sustained counter-melody. Dynamics include *pp*, *mf*, *p*, and *cresc.*. The score is divided into four phrases of 4, 4, 3, and 5 bars respectively.

Near the beginning of the development section Elgar recasts the opening piano melody, assigning it to the strings. The piano now accompanies with beautiful yet disquieting harmonies (Example 9). Notice the symmetry and asymmetry of the melody here: the 'answering' phrase, while set in a lower octave, is also, as it concludes

– in terms of the pitch classes used – sequentially a step higher (on B, rather than A sharp: Example 9 (b)). Elgar has composed this passage so that it sinks and rises at once, making for an effect of reconciled hope and despair. Truly music that addressed the emotions of the time: for this was written in the weeks directly after the conclusion of World War One.

Ex. 9 (a) Piano Quintet, development (omitting lower strings)

Ex. 9 (b) model

... creates something deeply satisfying in terms of rhythm, the achievement, while technical, is not only that. It goes deeper. It implies a beautiful way of thinking about time itself.

In an Aesthetic Realism class in 1978, Eli Siegel commented that the last point in the liking of the world – and liking the world on an honest basis, he explained, is every person's deepest desire – is the liking of time. This is what people find so very difficult; and it may be that the largest appeal of music is precisely its power, as an art, to present time as having sensible and likable meaning, and to present that meaning with physical immediacy.

We all tend to see time as unfriendly. Either it hangs heavily, or it flits by. Things can seem to drone along drearily forever, or change on us rudely. We are bored; we are frazzled. And then, there is aging and death. The list of complaints against time is substantial.

I hear *The Dream of Gerontius* as a whole, and very much this concluding aria, as an attempt – both musical and theological – to present time as a friend. Gerontius is safe; he is of eternity now. And yet there still awaits the process of Purgatory. The Angel sings:

Be patient on thy bed of sorrow;  
Swiftly shall pass thy night of trial here,  
And I will come and wake thee on the morrow.

Throughout this aria, as Elgar joins activity and quietude in every passage, there is a transcendent feeling of ‘dynamic tranquillity’. We remain in 3/4 time throughout, and the over-all feeling is one of gentle, expansive motion forward; yet there are cross-rhythms everywhere – and irregular cross-rhythms, at that. And like the First Symphony, it begins with a seven-bar orchestral phrase (Example 10).

Ex. 10 The Angel's Farewell, Introduction

**Andante tranquillo**  $\text{♩} = 92$

4 bars: twice 2 + 4 beats

3 bars to voice entry: orchestra, twice 3 + 4 beats

Through this introduction, Elgar is alerting us to the fact that this beatific vision will not be one of false and ego-pampering quietude. There's rhythmic alertness here—as I trust is apparent from the analysis presented by the brackets and bar-counting in Example 10. And as the Angel sings, the phrase structures are hardly ever symmetrical. For example, the aria begins with this quatrain by Newman:

Softly and gently, dearly ransomed soul,  
In my most loving arms I now enfold thee,  
And, o'er the penal waters, as they roll,  
I poise thee, and I lower thee, and hold thee.

The first line is set over four bars; the second, over two; the third over five; the fourth over three (Example 11).

Ex. 11

Angel  
*pp, legatissimo*  
 Soft - ly and gen - tly, dear - ly ran - somed soul, In my most lo - ving arms I now en -  
 fold thee, And, o'er the pe - nal wa - ters, o'er the pe - nal wa - ters, as they  
*rall., dim. pp dolce pp A tempo* [Orchestra and chorus]  
 roll, I puise thee, and I low - er thee, and hold thee.

The procedure for the next quatrain is similar. The Angel's phrases seem somewhat more symmetrical:

And carefully I dip thee in the lake, [2 bars]  
 And thou, without a sob or a resistance, [3 bars]  
 Dost thro' the flood thy rapid passage take, [2 bars]  
 Sinking deep, deeper, into the dim distance. [3 bars]

But they are framed by two-bar phrases of choral sound. Thus, this quatrain, like the preceding one, is fourteen bars long. But how different in internal design: 2+2+3+2+3+2 versus, earlier, 4+2+5+3. And fourteen bars, of course, is exactly twice the length of the orchestra's opening seven-bar phrase. Eternity, the composer seems to imply, is enlivening, as well as consoling; demanding as well as comforting – a thing of symmetry, and surprise.

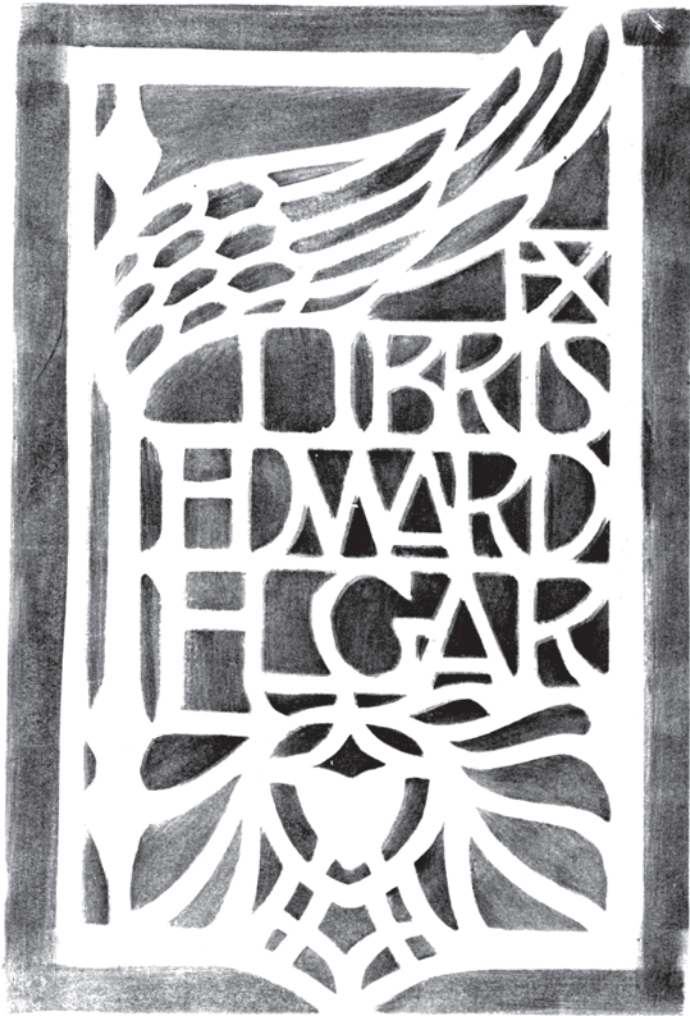
The evidence is plain: Elgar was a 'Master of Rhythm' and, unfortunately, a still largely unacknowledged one. The purpose of this essay is to change that adjective.

*Edward Green is a professor at the Manhattan School of Music, where he has been teaching since 1984. He is an award-winning composer; his Concerto for Alto Saxophone and Strings has just been released on Arizona University Recordings and a Trumpet Concerto will come out on Albany records in 2006. His Music for Shakespeare (an orchestral suite) has been widely performed in the Americas. He is also an active musicologist with writings on (among other subjects) the music of Marcabru, Haydn, Harry Partch and Zhou Long. Among his most recent publications are an article on Donald Francis Tovey and 'The Need for a Philosophic Musicology', which just appeared in The International Review of the Aesthetics and Sociology of Music (December 2005), and 'A Note on Two Conceptions of Aesthetic Realism', in the October 2005 issue of the British Journal of Aesthetics. He is also a leading authority on the music of Duke Ellington, and last summer gave a talk in London at the invitation of the Duke Ellington Society of the United Kingdom.*



- 1 An earlier version of this paper was read by Edward Green at the Elgar Birthplace on 3 July 2005, as part of the Elgar Conference organized by Matthew Riley of Birmingham University to commemorate the centenary of Elgar's appointment as Peyton Professor of Music.
- 2 Charles Francis Abdy Williams, *The Rhythm of Modern Music* (London: Macmillan, 1909).
- 3 Each accented violin note is a 7th above the bass, which is not shown for reasons of space [ed.].
- 4 This rhythmic activity, of course, goes hand in hand with the 'jape' of starting a D major march on E flat, as explained to Dorabella (*Memories of a Variation*: 2nd edition (Oxford, 1947), 35).
- 5 On aesthetic Realism and music, see Eli Siegel, *Self and World: An Explanation of Aesthetic Realism* (New York: Definition Press, 1981); also Edward Green and Arnold Perey: 'Aesthetic Realism: A New Foundation for Interdisciplinary Musicology', at: [http://www.perey-anthropology.net/world\\_music/escom\\_1.htm](http://www.perey-anthropology.net/world_music/escom_1.htm).
- 6 Robin Holloway, 'The early choral works', in Daniel M. Grimley and Julian Rushton, *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar* (Cambridge, 2004), 65; Rushton, *Elgar: 'Enigma' Variations* (Cambridge, 1999), 57.
- 7 Percy M. Young, *Elgar O.M.* (London: Purnell Book Services, 1973), 351.





*A watercolour by Troyte Griffith showing his design for an Elgar bookplate.*

*[Arthur Reynolds collection]*

# The Sounds that Elgar Heard (Part V): Elgar, Troyte Griffith, and the Geology of Malvern

**Catherine Moody**

We have followed Edward Elgar in his Malvern houses and found how his surroundings can be seen as a setting for his progress in his music and his career.<sup>1</sup> His life in Malvern notoriously included the labour of earning a living by music teaching; but it also included the enlivening social life of 'Sherridge', 'Madresfield Court', 'Hasfield', and an increasing number of concert venues. We have seen that at 'Forli' he was neighbour to inventiveness in mechanical engineering. Link Top was agog with the production of bicycles. Also, non-conformist bible study chapels and meeting houses were proliferating, and road testing of experimental motor cars was taking place on private estates to avoid the 4 m.p.h. speed limit. The active intellect had many manifestations at the turn of the century.

There is a leavening permeating most of Elgar's letters. As one reads on, one is rewarded, from time to time, by gathering allusions that enrich the thread of his message, the message that caused the letter to be written. There is, perhaps, lateral thinking going on depending upon the breadth of the recipient's ability to follow the branch lines. With some correspondents, the allusiveness becomes fun. With Arthur Troyte Griffith the jokiness ripples through letters, familiar themes cropping up and being returned to, even after long intervals. Jones, the mason who worked with this architect friend of Elgar, referred repeatedly in conversation to Troyte's 'very quick mind'. Elgar could be jokey, knowing his friend would not miss the point.

Elgar's reading in Welsh borderland history in 1906 is the spark that set off the following diversion. Elgar wrote to Troyte on 17 March 1906: 'I have twice again lately read of the awful doings of Grwuffydd & Aelgar in Hereford in Concert; do you remember what we did together in AD 850?'<sup>2</sup> This could well be the continuation of a previous conversation. The theme goes on in letters of 1909 and 1910. In 1910 Troyte has probably pointed out where his name ('Troyte') actually came from. On 13 August 1910 Elgar wrote, 'I thought your godfathers and godms in Baptism tacked Troyte on to you not I'. Rennie Bere, nephew to Troyte, has sent me a detailed explanation, which I quote:

ATG's maternal grandfather was Arthur Acland, second son of Sir Thomas Acland (tenth baronet, 1787–1871). In 1848 Arthur Acland inherited the estate of Huntsham (near Tiverton in north Devon) from the Rev. Dr C. B. Troyte who was both rector and squire. One of the conditions of the inheritance was that Arthur should change his name to Troyte and he did this with little enthusiasm. His children loyally followed suit. Arthur's second daughter Harriet thus became Harriet Troyte. She met her future husband, George Griffith, in Oxford where he was assistant to Professor Sir Henry Acland (FRS, Regius Professor of Medicine).

The letter which contained Elgar's own conjectural origin of 'Troyte' is one which has intrigued me. On 24 March 1909 he wrote:

I have an idea that Troyte after all is derived from detritus & not truite—altho' the reason you liked Schubert's Forelle may be that you are derived from the same root or rather Quelle I suppose.



The Severn at Pixham Ferry (pastel painting by the author). Elgar, whose early life was spent all around the River Severn at Worcester, crossing it to school at Cathedral Ferry, would have seen the river as it is here in its high water. The sedimentary plain of the Severn Vale Elgar would have known and seen its contrast to the Malvern Hills. Living from 1885 to 1889 at 4 Field Terrace, Bath Road, Worcester, the distant view would have been followed when he moved to the close-up from 'Saetermo' by the Boys' College, Malvern.

So Elgar's conclusion was that Troyte was derived from detritus. Why did he pick on the word 'detritus'? What significance had detritus? What potential did it provide? Is the geological connotation appropriate?

Perhaps *The Record of the Rocks* by William Symonds may have been a background to Elgar's mental excursion. On the wall of the schoolroom of Thorn Bank, Malvern Wells, where I was a pupil, hung an ancient diagram of the geology of the Malvern Hills. At this school, close under the shadow of the hills, where in winter the sun dipped out of sight at two in the afternoon, the formation of the hills intrigued me. The diagram showed the section of the hills across the Great Fault line. It showed where the stratified layers had been fractured by a great convulsion. Many millions of years ago, a great crack was made, running due north and south, and the whole of the west side was thrust upward, revealing layers of stratified rock. This fascinated me. I looked long at this old engraved figure, trying to imagine the dizzy heights the hills must have originally reached before the fall of rubble and debris came down and the wearing away of softer rock left only the hardest Precambrian remains we see now. This diagram, I remember, was quite old and seemed to have been made available by the Malvern Naturalists' Field Club.

Living in the Cotswolds before I came to Malvern, I saw the distant view of the Malverns which always seemed phenomenal in their steepness. Coming here in the 1930s (when A. Troyte Griffith was still alive and secretary and treasurer to Elgar's Concert Club) I was able to savour the quality of Malvern life. It was in a state of social preservation; Edwardian life was conserved in a wonderful way. The *Malvern Gazette* used to print

reports of the activities of the Field Club. These, although not sensational, formed a topic of interest to readers.

The fact that North Malvern, Great Malvern, Malvern Wells and Little Malvern are all strung along the fault line where the east side of the fracture stayed put, whilst the west side was thrust upward, must have been a topic amongst the inhabitants from time to time. Detritus, the material eroded from the elevated rock, must be falling down to the foot of the upwardly raised mass, and in fact it is on these lower slopes that the string of habitation has been built. Elgar, coming from the banks of the Severn, knew how the winter floods of the Severn Vale deposit a layer of silt on the fields. Coming to live in Malvern, firstly at 'Saetermo' in The Lees, he must have been conscious of the change in terrain. Furthermore, when the Elgars came to live at 'Craeg Lea' they were right over the entrance of the railway tunnel bored by Stephen Ballard three decades earlier to take the line through to Hereford.

Readers may feel that Elgar would not go into all this when his mind was full of music. However, geology may well have been a topic brought to his attention by Alice, for it had been an enthusiasm of her early years. Alice Roberts, before becoming Mrs Elgar, lived with her family to the south of the Malverns. This region was a place where manor houses and rectories, villages and remote and ancient churches stood. It had a quality which, even now, casts a spell of enchanting rusticity. Unlike the Lakeland of the Romantic poets, this region, on the borders of Herefordshire, Gloucestershire and Worcestershire, remains somewhat unidentified. Lying between the legend-endowed Ragged Stone and the Forest of Dean (itself a place of somewhat elusive qualities) lay a region where large houses were built or added to. In the early 1800s 'Hasfield', designed by Smirke, the architect of Eastnor Castle, was built. Not far away, 'Hazeldine' in Redmarley d'Abitot was purchased by Colonel Roberts. It was an old house, much extended.

It is easy to think of the area in terms of class distinction, of the wealthy served by impoverished underlings, but this is simplistic. The houses, surrounded by agricultural acres, were centres where the whole organic equilibrium had to be maintained. Drought, frost or rain were balanced by the skills of husbandry. The incursions of parasites as they ranged in scale from the virus affecting vegetation to the failings of humankind were countered by skill and craftsmanship in agricultural practice, by the application of discipline, generosity and



*'Saetermo' in The Lees, now Malvern College No. 7 (Photograph by Reginald Farrar).*





*View Across the Golf Course (oil painting by the author). Looking across the Malverns to the Cotswolds, that part of the golf course is in view which Elgar reached from the garden of 'Saetermo'. It is in the middle distance. Behind the line of trees (centre) stands No. 7, the house rented by Alice Elgar. This study was painted from the Wells Road, outside 'Fair View', the home of A. Troyte Griffith. The bride path, Rotten Row, where Elgar often walked, is in the foreground. 'Craeg Lea' is a few furlongs further south from Troyte's house.*

hospitality in the human sphere. From this living foundation, green intellectual buds and branches could grow, not only from books in libraries but by observation of the equilibrium of nature.

The knowledge of geology was advancing. William S. Symonds, lord of the manor and rector of Pendock, had come to his parish not long before the Roberts family arrived at 'Hazeldine'. He had a strong sense of public duty and wide learning as well. He wrote on geology. His *Record of the Rocks* was his masterpiece. For young naturalists, *Old Stones* explained the rocks near Malvern, and *Old Bones* was a study of fossils. There was much of mutual interest for Alice and the Symonds family. Hyacinth, William Symonds's daughter, was Alice's contemporary and her piano duet partner. Geology was the topic linking Alice with the father.

Malvern Naturalists' Field Club, which is still operating, was founded by William Symonds. Expeditions and excitement of discussion with such dynamic teachers as Hugh Strickland, reader in geology at Oxford, meant this was no dry-as-dust subject. Furthermore, Hyacinth became associated by marriage with the family of Charles Darwin, and there the vitality of research is well known.

Alice Roberts' correspondence with Symonds shows that her involvement was deep, and her resulting paper, 'Worlds from my Window, a Geological Essay', shows an individual advance in outlook. Her grasp of the part played by geology in history and sociology is expressed in a way that had to wait until the mid-twentieth

century before W. G. Hoskins, Hatton Professor of English History, developed this kind of approach in his study *Fieldwork in Local History*, and John Gloag also in the history of the design of artefacts. Alice's description of her view of the Malverns from the south is imaginative and dramatic. She also brings in the feelings of the locals, 'the lingering tradition amongst the peasants causing them to dread the shadow [from the steep side of the hills] falling on them or their dwellings'.

The breadth of this intellectual life can be realised in the fact that Symonds, rector of Pendock, concurred with and was an example for Sir Charles Lyell who urged that clergy would benefit from acquiring scientific knowledge, 'there being a dangerous want of sympathy between the better informed working classes ... and the clergy', an opinion which still has a new and disturbingly innovative flavour.

The 'new men' of the time, Stephenson, Newcomen, Isambard Kingdom Brunel, and Maudslay, with their new discoveries and observations were uncovering a whole new chapter in the understanding of the created world and of natural forces. William Symonds, writing *On the Geology of the Railway from Worcester to Hereford* in 1861–2, must have studied closely the work of Stephen Ballard who surveyed, designed and built this part of the railway, and who was the first to tunnel through the Malvern Hills, taking the railway line through to Hereford. Reminders of these earlier researches must have come when the Elgars went to live at 'Forli' in Alexandra Road, just under the steepest slopes of the North Hill. Here the sounds of the big quarry must have been audible while the 'Enigma' Variations was being composed. Then they moved in 1899 to 'Craig Lea' on the Wells Road. It is just beyond the Wells Common and quite close to 'Fair View', the old Malvern stone house on the Old Wyche Road where Arthur Troyte Griffith, the seventh 'variation', lived. 'Craig Lea' is situated just over the point where the railway tunnel penetrates the hill, and where Stephen Ballard's excavation revealed so much about the geology



'Craig Lea', exterior. After moving to 'Forli', close under the granite heights of the North Hill, his next home was 'Craig Lea'. 'Forli' was quite attractive outside, but inside the rooms were small—even 'pokey', according to Elgar enthusiast Kevin Allen, who lived there for a time.



*Above left: Although I took this photograph in 1980, when my mother and I visited on an 'open day', it still gives an idea of the gracious space of the interior of 'Craeg Lea'.*

*Above right: Olive Gosden was here too. Olive had been a music teacher and performer much encouraged by Elgar. Here she is outside the entrance to 'Craeg Lea'.*

of the Precambrian granite of the hills.

Elgar wrote of 'detritus' being the derivation for 'Troyte' on 24 March 1909. This is long after the era of Alice's writing on geology in the 1870s, but it has been a perennial subject in this region. In 1900 the Malvern Field Club published *A History of the Geological Structure of Malvern* by Mr Wickham, whose object was to summarise the various theories of the formation of the Malvern Hills. As most of the inhabitants were living on the zone of this deposit of 'detritus', and as each inhabitant would be able to elaborate on the theories from personal observation, Elgar must have savoured this aspect of Malvern life, and the word 'detritus' must have been put to full use. This excursion will, I hope, add a few lines to a sketch of the life that contributed to the quality of the word 'detritus'. It then had even more nuances of meaning than were given in *Chambers Dictionary* of 1860: 'detritus—a mass of substance worn or rubbed off solid bodies small then debris. See DETRIMENT.' The present-day connotation of 'detritus' meaning 'rubbish' may have already begun to creep in.

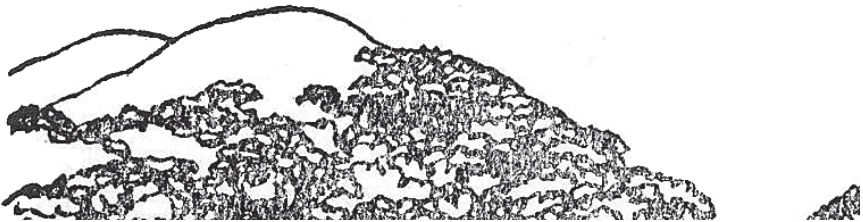
Troyte's father George Griffith was a naturalist. When Faraday was advocating the teaching of science in schools and the word 'scientist' was taking over from the term 'natural philosopher', George Griffith had become the first teacher of science at Harrow School and was to propagate this teaching in schools nationally. For very many years he was secretary of the British Association. Not only was scientific nomenclature familiar to Troyte, but he was also at home with the world of the leading minds who were exploring the natural world. The eager observers of Redmarley d'Abitot who had inspired Alice were also members of learned societies, reading

papers to the British Association and exchanging new ideas as they were evolved.

Consequently, when Elgar used the word 'detritus', many bells of association were ringing in both their minds. In a light-hearted phrase or two in a letter, fellow feeling can be found. Music and geology could touch. The poem by H. A. Acworth, the text for Elgar's *Caractacus*, describes one of the peaks of the range of the Malvern Hills—the British Camp hill, the camp of the heroic Caractacus, the last defender of the land against the incursion of the Roman army. The chorus sings of the Severn Vale, then 'Behind the dark Silurian hills', which gives the formation of the British Camp. The Silurian stratum backs the summit of Precambrian Malvern granite which it abuts and overlays on the western slopes. Acworth, who lived near to Elgar in Malvern, wrote in close partnership with the composer.

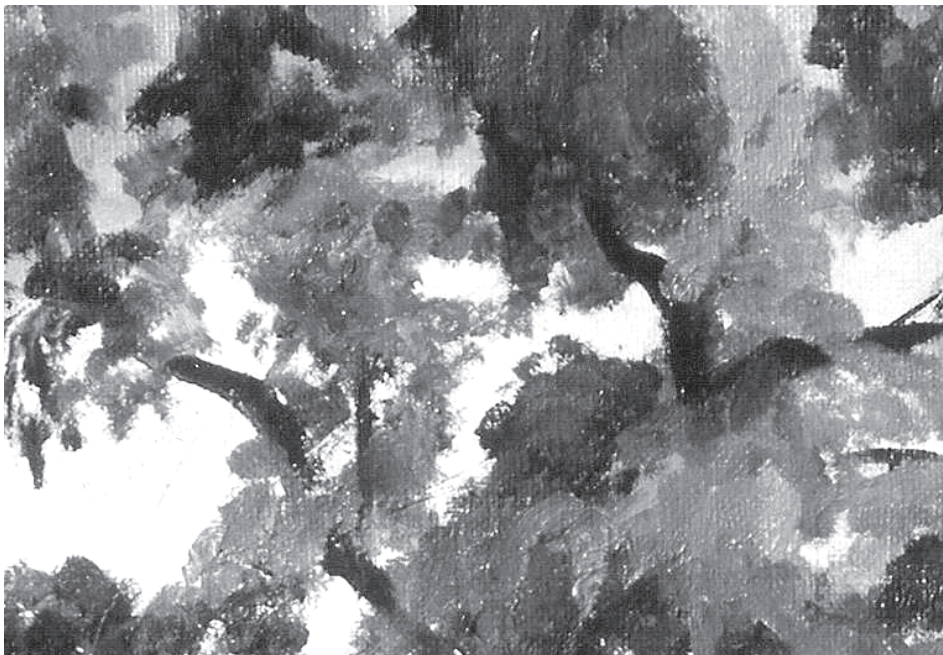
Acworth's poetry is perhaps not so highly esteemed as the music of *Caractacus*. Not so finely balanced in his judgement as Elgar, one can imagine the former member of the Indian civil service unconsciously raising a smile on the part of the composer. James Nott in his old age described H. A. Acworth to me. Mr Nott was grandson of James Nott the elder, historian of Great Malvern Priory and author of *Some of the antiquities of 'Moche Malverne'* (1885). He lived all his life in Malvern and spent his childhood years watching people from his father's grocery shop in Church Street opposite the priory. He recalled seeing Acworth in Church Street one hot summer day coming up from the Gentlemen's Club to Belle Vue. Because of the hot weather he had resumed Indian summer garb. He was wearing a solar topee—the pith helmet of the colonial empire—and the puggaree floating behind. Furthermore, he was holding a handful of cotton wool to his nose to keep off the fumes of the motor cars—very few in those days.

Whatever the quality of Acworth's poetry, underlying consciousness of the geology of the Silurian strata is there. Such colourful individuals were an interesting element in the town in James Nott's youth. Another character he recalled was William Porter. He was a builder. He had come with Stephen Ballard, constructing the railway line from Worcester. He was a tall, strong



Drawing of Rock Formation (by the author). Geologists find much diversity in this region. The Gullet Quarry and ridges leading up to the western slopes.





*British Camp from Croft Farnyard (oil painting by the author). The underlying geology known from the features of the landscape was linked to ancient history, the subject for Elgar's and Acworth's Caractacus.*

man and was famous for being able to upend the great baulks of Burmah teak that formed the shafts for the railway signals into the holes single-handedly. The shafts needed unusual strength and height to get them to balance upright from the horizontal.

Finding that Malvern, then connected with the rest of the country, was likely to grow, Porter set up as a builder. James Nott's father, Arthur, was apprenticed to be an architectural draughtsman, and his first job was to draw the plans for 'Craeg Lea', Elgar's house from 1899 to 1904. It was built by William Porter. We have already noted Elgar's letter (to Troyte, 1 May 1914) at the time of his death: 'I am sorry about old Porter, he was a good sort'. Letters to me in 1976 from Mrs Hughes, née Porter, granddaughter of William Porter, told me how the Porter family, living close by in Eaton Road and then in Old Wyche Road, often met Elgar on his visits to Troyte Griffith.

The excavation of the railway must have been familiar to both the Elgars and Troyte. The use of Malvern stone for the construction of All Saints' Church, Lower Wyche, and Troyte's careful selection of the pink granite from the quarry just behind the school above the church would have occupied their attention over some months during the construction.

The interior of 'Craeg Lea' shows the music room to have been of sufficient size for music and conversation to develop on the more ample scale that Alice Roberts—now Lady Elgar—was familiar with in her earlier life in Redmarley d'Abitot. Since moving from the noise of the North Hill quarry and the cramped rooms of 'Forli', where the Elgars lived from 1891 to 1899, Elgar had already composed the 'Enigma' Variations. While they still lived at

'Craig Lea' their significance was recognised. Mr Grundy, the proprietor of the Wyche store and post office wrote to tell me that he delivered telegrams of congratulations to Elgar, just downhill from his post office to 'Craig Lea'.

A visit to Italy with Alice, his daughter Carice and a friend took them to Bordighera and from there to Alassio on the coast of the Gulf of Genoa in January 1904. Here a magnificent composition was evolved, the concert overture *In the South (Alassio)*. This powerful and rich piece of music brought Elgar's creative genius to new heights. The Alps are near the sea at this point on the Gulf of Genoa and, conscious of the heights of more than 3,000 feet down to the sea, Elgar could have recognised a grander enhancement of the form of the Malvern Hills and the Severn Plain, and profited thereby. He was to move away to live in Hereford later that same year, where he would have found a more placid foundation. Had he found in the Precambrian rock and the Great Fault the stimulus to get things going, but had he also found that the 'benighted paradise', as he was tempted to dub Malvern, had fulfilled its task?

Troyte and the 'detritus' root for his name was part of a conversational 'give and take', trains rumbling through the Ballard tunnel below, neighbours' amateur theories of geology that would have cropped up as they cultivated their gardens, were all a sort of continuo. The labour of teaching music and petty snobbery were perhaps a cause of discontent. Words should not be used to describe creativity. For generations to come Elgar's music itself will speak to us. Metaphysical or extra-sensory perception may be irrelevant. These flights of fancy can but hint at the richness Elgar drew upon. They do, at least, run Troyte and 'detritus' to earth.



The Eastnor Monument to the Somers Family (oil painting by the author). The Silurian heights perhaps inspired the subject of Caractacus. The granite of the British Camp is a deeper, older stone and the Silurian formation is still to be found over the west side of the deeper, older formation.



*Possible drawing of Arthur Troyte Griffith by Victor Hume Moody.*

- 1 See this JOURNAL, 13, 5 (July 2004), 26-35; 13, 6 (November 2004), 23-30; 14, 1 (March 2005), 2-12.
- 2 This is the postscript to the letter of 17

March 1906, one that is published in Jerrold Northrop Moore (ed.), *Edward Elgar. Letters of a Lifetime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 172-3.

#### *Acknowledgements*

Many thanks are due to my friends for their recollections of Elgar's days. I should also like to record my appreciation of the late Percy M. Young's biography of Alice Elgar, and to the BBC for their broadcast of the concert overture *In the South (Alassio)* with the Hallé Orchestra last September (2005), with the analysis of Elgar's music by Mark Elder. With all of us together, it has been a happy pilgrimage, following this master of music.

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

## Elgar in Smyrna, 1905 – an Addendum

### Andrew Neill

It would have been wise to have visited Istanbul before writing about Elgar's visit there in 1905, but, at last, I found myself in the great city just as the November 2005 Edition of the JOURNAL was with the printers.<sup>1</sup> Also, through staff illness at the Victoria and Albert Museum, I was unable to obtain permission to reproduce the wonderful photograph of Lady Maud Warrender which is attached to this addendum. This permission has now been granted. The photograph, taken at the Lafayette Studios in Bond Street on 14 February 1900, shows Lady Warrender as 'Pity' in *The Masque of War and Peace* written by Louis N. Parker with music by Hamish MacCunn. The Masque, in aid of a Boer War charity, was performed at Her Majesty's Theatre on 13 and 14 February 1900. Percy Anderson, who was to befriend the Elgars and paint portraits of both Edward and Carice, designed the costumes and production.

Although Istanbul is now a city of between 15 and 18 million inhabitants, the area around the Golden Horn, Blue Mosque and Topkapi Palace would still be recognizable to a visitor of a century ago, as would the journey up the Bosphorus to Teraphia where Elgar stayed in the summer home of the British Ambassador. It was there that he caught sight of the Black Sea, the waters of the Bosphorus leading there in a straight line. Alas, the residence was burnt down a number of years ago and no British Government since has been prepared to spend the necessary funds on restoration. For readers who would like an idea of what Constantinople (and much of Turkey) looked like in 1905, the photographs taken by the intrepid Gertrude Bell in May that year can be seen on the world-wide web.<sup>2</sup>

It is strange how even the smallest works of art can sometimes dominate the mind in a way that is out of proportion to their size. Doesn't 'natural' contradict 'strange'? Perhaps 'In Elgar's case, this is the more surprising for he impresses ....' This can be natural or surprising, which is the case with Elgar; for he impresses most often with his orchestration and choral writing, usually employed in support of a large canvas. However, it was the piano piece *In Smyrna* which seemed to dominate the months immediately up to and sometime after last year's AGM. Indeed one of the highlights of the year was the visit, to the Birthplace, of the Turkish Ambassador to Britain, Mr Akin Alptuna, and his wife Mrs Esin Alptuna.

On that occasion, after I had given a short introduction to the piece, which covered the essentials of Elgar's visit to Turkey in September 1905, Paul Rooke repeated his elegant playing of *In Smyrna*. In his words of thanks the Ambassador said how much the piece meant to him and how well Elgar conveyed the feeling of Ismir (modern day Smyrna), the town in which he was raised in the 1950s. Elgar, he said, portrayed the quiet atmosphere of 'Smyrna', the lapping waves of the sea, the heat and smells of a Mediterranean town not yet dominated by traffic, and the noise of late twentieth-century life. At last, for me, the subtlety of Elgar's writing fell into place. I no longer have to work out why I can barely detect the sound of the East in the music: the Sufi dancers, the call to prayer and the hub-hub of the bazaar. Quite simply, they are not there. What we have is a portrait, in sound, of a place lodged in the composer's memory.



1 See 'Elgar in Smyrna,

## In Memoriam: The Record Guide (1951–56)

### Michael Plant

The final part of *The Record Guide*, by Edward Sackville-West and Desmond Shawe-Taylor with Andrew Porter and William Mann, was published fifty years ago. This series, comprising two comprehensive volumes and three supplements, came out between 1951 and 1956. It thus straddled the transition from 78s to (mono) LPs, not to mention adventures with classical music on reel-to-reel tape. Of course, cassettes still lay in the future, as did stereo. At the outset, the authors found it easy to review what remained of the classical catalogue in the days of post-war austerity but, by the end, they were overwhelmed by the flood of new releases as the nation embraced a renewal of prosperity. Their house style was discursive and personal and could not readily be abridged – for example, they devote two complete pages to a detailed exposition of Alban Berg's Violin Concerto – and on publication of the 1956 supplement to the 1955 edition they called it a day.

The record reviews at first glance seem long out of date, but even today they usefully draw attention to many performances and artists rightly considered historic. The authors' inimitable frankness, clarity and candour are a pleasure to read; they are not afraid to call a spade a spade and always have something interesting to say, even when they are plainly wrong; they also offer very readable introductions to each composer and his music. Without patronising their readers, they assume them to be intelligent and enthusiastic, but not necessarily well informed; they therefore stepped in where angels would fear to tread and their judgements remain as stimulating today as when they were written. The period flavour only increases their fascination and, in the case of Edward Elgar, their views provide a useful summary of the dilemma in which the sympathetic critic found himself when looking back at the composer's life and career from the far side of the Second World War and the atomic bomb. See what you think!

It is not easy to assess the value of Elgar's music today. The period of English history in which he came to maturity – the period known as Edwardian – is at once too recent and too completely superseded to be viewed without prejudice. Boastful self-confidence, emotional vulgarity, material extravagance, a ruthless philistinism expressed in tasteless architecture and every kind of expensive yet hideous accessory: such features of a late phase of Imperial England are faithfully reflected in Elgar's larger works and are apt to prove indigestible in 1950. But if it is difficult to overlook the bombastic, the sentimental and the trivial elements in his music, the effort to do so should nevertheless be made for the sake of the many inspired pages, the power and eloquence and lofty pathos of Elgar's best work. A late starter (his first composition of any importance, the *Froissart* Overture, was written when he was 33), Elgar was at all times capable of turning out music that is merely tawdry; but it is as futile to judge him by, say, the *Sea Pictures* and *The Music Makers* as it would be to approach Sibelius through the piano pieces and *Finlandia*. Elgar's music is never exquisite and seldom remarkable for a fine taste; it is strongly emotional, vigorous, sometimes forbidding and shot with gleams of melancholy: in fact, the powerful expression of an obdurate, exclusive but thoroughly musical mind.

And here is part of their discussion (1955) of Op.85, written long before it became a world-wide best-seller:

To those who love Elgar's music the 'Cello Concerto remains the final expression of his most intimate thoughts and

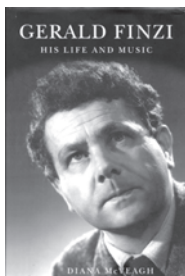


feelings. Even musicians who dislike the externals of his style – the brassy glare that often rises from his orchestra and the self-conscious nobility that sometimes does duty for the genuine article – even those to whom such failings are repellent fall victims to the irresistible appeal of the 'Cello Concerto. The task of interpreting the solo is extremely difficult – especially for the 'cellist who is not an Englishman – for the emotional content of the music (save for the Amfortas-like outburst in the middle of the finale) is veiled by a reserved dignity that is peculiarly English. Foreign 'cellists ... tend to over-express the gently flowing, pastoral melody of the opening movement, whereas this should sound like a traveller who is walking easily forward into an unfamiliar landscape. The listener ought never to be quite sure which note is coming next: an effect obtainable only by giving more than a fraction more than its true value to each quaver in the bar. ... Paul Tortelier gives a beautifully studied performance of the whole work. The superb, swarthy tone of his 'cello is as well suited to the quick sections as to the deeply felt Adagio, which is delivered with brooding melancholy and unusual variety of colour. ... This is not a virtuoso piece, but such passage-work as it contains is perfectly controlled in the HMV disc and the harmonics are (as so seldom) absolutely in tune. [This recording has been reissued by Testament on CD.]

Food for thought, even in 2006. I have kept the volumes of *The Record Guide* at my side for nearly 40 years and recommend them to all. They are not uncommon and can often be found in second-hand bookshops for little more than they cost when new.



## BOOK REVIEW



The Boydell Press,  
2005  
352 pp., hardback  
ISBN 1843831708  
£25.00

### Gerald Finzi. *His Life and Music*

by Diana McVeagh

Diana McVeagh reminds me of a contemporary version of the composer Paul Dukas, releasing well-considered and beautifully constructed gems at all-too infrequent intervals. Most recently I have read her piece on *The Dream of Gerontius* which was published recently in a tribute to Andrew Porter. Full of insight, it is a lesson to us all in concision.

To say that this biography of Finzi has been long anticipated would be to understate the case; and devotees of Finzi's music will not be disappointed. Nor will readers who have a wider interest in the music of Britain during Finzi's short life (1901-1956). Indeed it is, in my view, the book for which we have long been waiting, even if we did not realise it! It complements Stephen Banfield's biography (Faber & Faber, 2000), which I found elusive in terms of characterisation.

Like many others I heard Finzi's music for the first time through the recording of *Dies Natalis* made in 1946 and 1947 by Boyd Neel, with Joan Cross. From McVeagh we learn that Finzi conducted one of the sessions (probably January 1947), although he was not happy with the result, partly through some of the prejudices which he harboured throughout his life: 'Joan Cross was too connected with opera and with Britten; and Boyd Neel too much the slick professional and the Handelian'. Indeed for most listeners recordings have been indispensable in enabling us to understand Finzi's music. Those old Lyrita LPs which contain (still) definitive performances under Boult and Handley await long-needed conversion to CD.

Of the three dominant British composers of the 20th century, Finzi never met Elgar, befriended Vaughan Williams, and 'did not admire' Britten's music. He was not uncritical of VW but their friendship was deep. McVeagh paints a number of happy vignettes such as this:

...at 1.15 they left London and drove through the night to Ashmansworth. On arrival Vaughan Williams ate two large bowls of cornflakes and honey, then sat at a window with his hearing aid tuned to listen to the birds and watch the dawning sky.

In examining Finzi's music we have to consider his importance as a composer, his influence on his contemporaries, and the perspective we have now that he has been dead for fifty years. Like Elgar he was, essentially, a 'one-off', but his legacy is smaller, more provincial – more intimate. McVeagh, it seems to me, gets all this into perspective while pointing up the importance of his relationship to his family and friends like Howard Ferguson and Edmund Blunden. Finzi's contribution to the editing of Ivor Gurney's poetry and his championship of 'forgotten' English composers such as John Garth, Richard Mudge, John Stanley, William Boyce, and Charles Wesley is made vividly clear.

But it is McVeagh's writing about Finzi's music which is the heart of the book. This

is McVeagh on the Clarinet Concerto:

... the initial three-note figure, which builds passionately and painfully to the "Angel of the Agony" discord at cue 5. Still more pervasive than *Gerontius* is the influence of Elgar's Violin Concerto: both Elgar and Finzi knew how to make their soloist's decorations thematically expressive; and the *lusingando* passage in the first movement after cue 2 is pure Elgar. This particular mood, of influence and gravity, however, is Finzi's own.

McVeagh is particularly good when she considers Finzi the song composer:

In spite of his sympathy for the poet, his Hardy songs are less spontaneous than some of his others. It is as if he felt himself a trustee of Hardy's words, with a highly developed awareness of his responsibility. His very scrupulousness tends to enforce uniformly moderate speeds. Of course he could write a broad-swinging tune, a 'Rollicum-rorum', and a perfect single-span lyric such as 'Since we loved'. But he would not, could not, have composed a vocal quicksilver scherzo like Britten's 'Queen and huntress' (*Serenade*) in which voice and horn vie instrumentally with each other.

So where does Finzi's music stand today? McVeagh's biography will provide readers with the material to make up their own minds. For me he wrote half-a-dozen works which I love; and his songs must form part of the foundation of any review of 20th-century English song. But it is for other reasons that his music is unlikely to travel widely abroad (like their composer). There is, I suppose, a sameness to much of his music, and at times one is left with the feeling of 'is that all?' Despite the bigger works such as the concertos, *Intimations of Immortality* and *In Terra Pax*, there is an essential smallness of scale to Finzi's work that encourages prejudice. Listeners must look beneath the surface to find their reward.

McVeagh provides a rounded, sympathetic and at times critical perspective on Finzi and his music which, through a few works, holds its own in the repertory. She shows us why:

His music is shot through with visionary gleams: in *Dies Natalis*, the sultry gold of 'the corn was orient and immortal wheat' or the bated breath of 'everything was at rest, free and immortal'; in *Intimations* 'another race hath been'. His songs can take in the sly, casual humour of 'The market-girl' or measure man's achievement against the universe with thrilling tension in 'At a lunar eclipse'. Not loud or commanding, Finzi's voice is lyrical, candid, and fastidious. No one else has quite his shades or shy rapture or melancholy, his characteristic radiance.

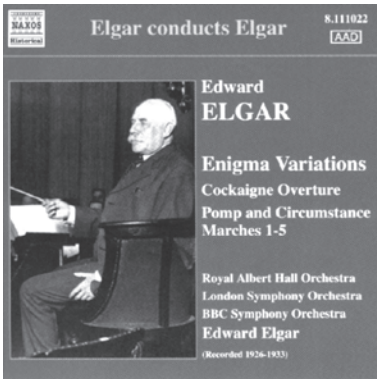
Andrew Neill

## CD REVIEWS

### 'Accidental stereo': Reissues of Elgar conducting Elgar

- Cockaigne Overture, Op. 40  
BBC Symphony Orchestra (rec. 11.04.1933)
- Variations on an Original Theme ('Enigma'), Op. 36  
Royal Albert Hall Orchestra (rec. 28.04.1926 & 30.08.1926)
- Pomp & Circumstance Marches, Op. 39  
Royal Albert Hall Orchestra & London Symphony Orchestra  
(rec. 27.04.1926, 15.07.1927, 18.09.1930)
- Side 3 of Cockaigne ('accidental stereo')  
BBC Symphony Orchestra (rec. 11.04.1933)

conducted by Sir Edward Elgar



are all available in EMI's Elgar Edition, which many readers will have had for nearly 15 years. There are, therefore, two questions to ask of this Naxos version: Are the transfers superior to those produced by 'accidental stereo' work?

Robert-Thorn's transfers are exemplary but, as his sources for the recordings were similar to those used by EMI, I can detect no marked differences. Although he has used American pressings for most of the other recordings, I detect any major differences to the EMI compact discs either. Those not in possession of the EMI boxes this disc can be bought with confidence. I will miss out on Jerrold Northrop Moore's invaluable notes, though! The Naxos sleeve note, concerning the technical aspect of 'accidental

From early on in the electrical recording era, it was not unusual to have two turntables running at the cutting of wax recording master discs. One might be kept as a safety for backup purposes; it could be recorded at a lower volume level in case the other matrix exhibited overload problems during playback. Sometimes both the original take and the backup were released, either to replace a worn-out master or for foreign issue. In almost all known examples, both turntables were fed from the same single microphone, recording monaurally from one position. In a handful of instances, however, two microphones appear to have been used, one to feed each turntable.

Therefore by synchronising the two recordings it should be possible to obtain a stereo effect, and indeed this is clearly in evidence from the sample recording we are given here: the final side of *Cockaigne*. The effect is interesting, for there is little expansion of the sound stage, only a *clear* differentiation between left and right with the violins and woodwind strongly on the left and the cellos and basses to the right.

I first heard an attempt to demonstrate this effect twenty years or so ago (with *The*

*Kingdom* prelude), but was not impressed. Clearly Mr Obert-Thorn has now achieved a technical advance with this effect and it would now be interesting to hear the whole *Cockaigne* Overture as well as the other recordings 'accidentally' recorded in stereo. For not much more than £5 it is well worth exploring this recording. I would be interested in hearing the reaction of other listeners to this experiment.

Andrew Neill

So please write in with your views [ed.]!

### **Elgar: A Self-Portrait**

Overture: *Froissart*, Op. 19; *Dream Children*, Op. 43; *The Music Makers*, Op. 69;  
J. S. Bach, *Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 537*, orch. Elgar, Op. 86

Jane Irwin (mezzo-soprano)

Hallé Choir and Orchestra conducted by Mark Elder

On their own Hallé Concerts Society label, Mark Elder and the Hallé Orchestra continue their Elgar Edition series with this very welcome and attractively mixed selection of music, covering a wide span of the composer's creative years from 1890, when he was beginning to make a mark, to the period which produced some of his final works in the early 1920s. It is entitled *Elgar: A Self Portrait*, and aptly so; because if ever a man had a public face so diametrically distant from his private one, this was he. Prone to emotional ups and downs, while at the same time in seemingly perpetual poor health, Elgar's complex personality is always at the heart of any discussion about or analysis of his music.

It all starts off positively enough, with *Froissart* given an invigorating opening Richard Straussian flourish, yet as the music becomes more reflective Elder turns his attention to detailed matters of phrasing and style; the Hallé in full cry is an exciting experience indeed, but they are also capable of tender warmth. Similarly the beautifully played miniatures *Dream Children* (two instrumental sketches for a proposed Children's Suite) are treated with tender loving care, in particular the dilemma of their tonality; are they in the minor or the major key, and, therefore, is the mood of the music radiant or shadowy? Whatever the answer, the inclusion of these two charming pieces provides a tranquil calm before the storm.

The central work of the CD is *The Music Makers* (1912), a work often in the programmes of choral societies throughout the land, yet one which is far from straightforward to bring off, not least because of its musical reminiscences. It starts with a strongly played prelude with melodies that unify the whole setting. Hidden among the anguish and melancholy, or 'stately sorrow', is the Original Theme which lies at the heart of *Enigma Variations*, a theme which 'expressed when written (in 1898) my sense of the loneliness of the artist as described in the first six lines of [Arthur O'Shaughnessy's] ode, and to me it still embodies that sense'. Further quotations come from *Enigma*, *Dream of Gerontius*, *Sea Pictures*, the Violin Concerto and the First Symphony, while beyond his own compositions there are snatches of *Die Meistersinger*, *Rule Britannia* and the *Marseillaise* to be heard.

In a finely paced account, Elder has quite rightly thrown caution to the winds and

HALLÉ  
ELGAR: A SELF-PORTRAIT  
THE MUSIC MAKERS  
DREAM CHILDREN  
FROISSART  
FANTASIA AND FUGUE  
MARK ELDER  
JANE IRWIN

Hallé  
CD HLL 7509  
68' 24"

encouraged his strings to play with even more *portamento* than hitherto on other discs. The fresh sounding voices of the Hallé Choir, if perhaps a little too distantly balanced in Manchester's Bridgewater Hall, tell of a chorus in good shape in the hands of James Burton. The finely sensitive and accomplished soloist is Jane Irwin, described as a mezzo-soprano when the contralto sound (in particular that of Muriel Foster) is what Elgar would have had in mind when he wrote *The Music Makers*. It is of course true that today the word 'contralto' is unfashionable; perhaps operatic parts for such a voice are considered unattractive and thought of as character parts (who wants to be the witch, granny or soothsayer; who wants to be the one who gets neither her man nor an aria?). Puccini may have done much to damage the contralto's reputation by rarely casting one (Tigrana in *Edgar* is the best such role), yet Erda, Delilah, Carmen, Rosina, numerous Handel roles and those of earlier periods, let alone Verdi parts such as Azucena, Amneris, Maddalena, Ulrica, and Mistress Quickly, surely have their attractions. However, look in any agent's list and you will be hard put to find the word 'contralto'. Barbirolli may have dismissed the (Clara Butt) sound as 'bovine', but Kathleen Ferrier did more than enough, even in his eyes and ears, to rescue the reputation of the contralto voice.

Finally there is Elgar's orchestral transcription of Bach's giant C minor Fantasia and Fugue for organ. 'I can't be original and so I depend on people like John Sebastian for a source of inspiration', he told the young conductor Eugene Goossens in 1921. For all that this was a downright lie regarding his own observation of his originality, one nevertheless cannot but admire this labour of love. Strauss turned down the chance to contribute the Fantasia after Elgar had already completed the fugue 'to show how gorgeous and great and brilliant he would have made himself sound if he had our means'. There are some glorious moments and providing one does not approach the result with a purist's ear, a good time will be had by listeners one and all. The idiomatic performance of the end is a glorious Stokowskian display of the Hallé's virtuosity, in particular the two 'lady harpists' having a field day. 'And when I say gentleman I include the lady harpist', Vaughan Williams said, when thanking the LPO and Boult after their recording of his Sixth Symphony. Methinks Elgar would have had some kind words of thanks for Mark Elder and the Hallé orchestra, judging by the result here.

Christopher Fifield

### **Adelaide Symphony Orchestra**

Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85, *Sea Pictures*, Op. 37, *The Kingdom*, Op. 51 (Prelude)

Li-Wei (cello)

Elizabeth Campbell (mezzo-soprano)

Adelaide Symphony Orchestra conducted by Nicholas Braithwaite

The orchestras of the separate Australian states remain one of the country's glories. Originally run by the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, these orchestras play an enormously important role in Australian cultural life; and the Adelaide orchestra has recently won acclaim for its involvement in two productions of Wagner's *Ring* cycle.

This means that the orchestra is more than merely well equipped to perform

Elgar's music, and this is immediately apparent in the prelude to *The Kingdom*. The players are sensitive to the changing tempi over the first seven bars (for example) which Braithwaite negotiates with ease from the outset. These performances benefit from a recording with a ripe, clear sound made in the Adelaide Town Hall over a series of sessions in November 2002.

If I have a reservation it lies in the performance of *Sea Pictures*. Elizabeth Campbell follows in a fine line of Australian performers of Elgar, including Yvonne Minton and Lauris Elms, both of whom have recorded *Sea Pictures*. But her tone seems, at times, to vary from line to line in the five songs. This means that it is not a relaxing listen. Nevertheless, her diction is good and she copes well with the stress and strain of *The Swimmer*. I look forward to the day when the Elgar Society Edition produces the definitive version of the score. Somehow, Adam Lindsay Gordon's poem has sustained an error from the beginning. In the last verse the final two lines are:

*To gulfs foreshadow'd through straits [not strifes] forbidden,  
Where no light wearies and no love wanes.*

This is hardly great poetry but it is, perhaps, more comprehensible than the words we have always accepted!

Li-Wei is a sensitive cellist with a wonderful technique. Having just listened to Jacqueline Du Pré in the 1963 performance from Prague, I am forced to recognise that there are many different ways to approach a great work such as this. Li's coolness hides his passion and you only have to listen to the *più tranquillo* passage at cue 71 to see how his control manages the stillness and introverted passion to perfection. In the second movement Li's technique allows the music to fizz along naturally and humorously, drawing you in advance into the hushed world of Elgar's last great *adagio*.

Do buy this recording. I found it very rewarding.

Andrew Neill

### **Pablo Casals**

Elgar: Cello Concerto in E minor, BBCSO, Sir Adrian Boult  
Dvořák: Cello Concerto in B minor, Czech PO, George Szell  
Bruch: Kol Nidrei, LSO, Sir Landon Ronald

This recording has an intrinsic fascination in that Casals (born in 1876), undoubtedly one of the great soloists and chamber musicians of the twentieth century, was a younger contemporary of the composers and so from the same performing tradition; thus we might expect performances of the kind that the composers had in mind. Then, in the case of the Dvořák and Bruch recordings, the head of classical recording at HMV at that time was Fred Gaisberg, a man, as Elgarians know, used to drawing fine performances from artists and composers.

Nevertheless (and paradoxically), I must confess I approached this CD with trepidation, given that these are mono HMV recordings from 1936-1945, by a cellist whose previous records I had heard were made late in his life (he died in 1973), and came complete with rheumy groans and other off-putting tics.



ABC Classics 476  
7966

The Dvořák did nothing to dispel my fears. This 1937 recording is, according to the sleeve notes, 'legendary'; but if ever a masterpiece could sound pedestrian, this performance managed it. One can leave aside the technical slips that, though thankfully few given the conditions under which the wax recordings of this long and difficult work were made, still begin to grate after a few hearings; but not the wilful cutting off of phrase ends by both soloist and orchestra, nor the indifferent playing of some of the solo orchestral players. Listen to the horn, for example, in the first movement's second subject and compare it with the meltingly lovely playing in the Rostropovich/Karajan/Berlin PO version. Obviously there are also many fine moments, as one would expect from this combination, but many other recordings lay greater claims upon our ears and wallets.

The Bruch was recorded in 1936 and fares much better, with a wide and expressive range of solo cello timbre and sympathetic accompaniment by Landon Ronald and the LSO. This time, the technical slips, surprisingly frequent given the calibre of the artist and the shortness of the work, do not detract unduly from the emotional sweep of the piece; and this is as satisfying a reading as any more modern recordings.

However, the best recording was definitely left to the end of the disc, and is also the most recent, having been made in 1945 when Casals was about 67. I am sure I am not alone in regarding the chamber qualities of the Elgar concerto as an extension of the late flowering of his 'Brinkwells' chamber music, not only chronologically, but emotionally. Yet many recordings seem to emphasise the larger-scale, declamatory aspects of the work. Casals and Boult choose to mine a different seam and create an astonishingly intimate interpretation that repays many hearings.

From the first chords, Casals's plangent tone seems to this listener ideal for the piece, and there is no undue emphasis on the soloist: he is part and parcel of the orchestral sound, which makes the exquisitely understated woodwind interjections all the more satisfying. The second movement is taken more slowly than some of the showier, more recent recordings, so instead of bullying the listener with sheer speed, Casals and Boult give the music room to breathe, and the occasional impassioned rhetoric emerges organically from the rest, as it should.

With such sensitivity on display, it is a shame that the editor did not leave a couple more seconds between the end of this movement and the start of the third, which seems to intrude upon the silence too quickly. However, this is again beautifully played, with the customary fine interplay between soloist and orchestra and an impression of wistfulness rather than searing passion. The fourth movement maintains the same level of inspiration. If anything, the *rallentandi* and *ritenuti* are even more expressive than in earlier movements and the playing convinces us of a view of the musical details shared by soloist, conductor and ensemble. For me, it was a pity when the performance ended, but then it gave the excuse for further hearings.

Given the riches that are contained in each of the four movements, it seems perverse that Sanctuary chose to present this concerto as one track, making navigation difficult. Nevertheless, this is an interpretation well worth adding to any Elgarian's collection although, if it's the Dvořák you want, stick to Rostropovich!

Steven Halls



Sanctuary  
Records  
AJC 8557 (Mono)

## The Playful Pachyderm

Classic miniatures for bassoon and orchestra  
including Elgar, *Romance*, op. 62

Laurence Perkins (bassoon)

New London Orchestra conducted by Ronald Corp

The bassoon has its own history, which includes a number of 18<sup>th</sup>-century concertos, but its main use at that time was as the useful bass to the baroque and classical orchestra, with its music often not even written down (it doubles the cellos as best it can). It suffered a little in the romantic orchestra from the general increase in loudness, for it is not capable of great power, not to mention the rivalry, in its own register, of an interloper, the bass clarinet. Elgar was fully aware of the value of the latter: just listen to the sinister opening of the finale to his first symphony.

But Elgar is a rare, if not unique, example of a composer who actually played the bassoon, and by a curious quirk his first completed work for solo instrument and orchestra is this gently melancholy *Romance*, Op. 62, first performed after Op. 61, the Violin Concerto, but finished first. Later he was to honour his instrument with one of its finest orchestral cameos, in *Falstaff*.

The 'Playful Pachyderm' is hardly a title suited to the dignity of the instrument, despite its reputation as a joker (thanks partly to Joseph Haydn). This is, however, the title given by another bassoon-playing composer, Gilbert Vinter, to the longest piece in this anthology (at 6' 33" a good minute longer than the Elgar). The singing qualities of the instrument, recognized by Mozart and Haydn who often double the violin melody an octave lower on bassoon, are much in evidence in this recording, and are particularly attractive in some folksong arrangements, especially those by Vaughan Williams and the Scottish melody arranged by Perkins himself (he is indeed credited with adapting eleven of the eighteen items on the disc). Otherwise I most enjoyed Gounod's *Funeral March of a Marionette*, and was pleased to re-encounter a favourite of my youth, the *Allegro spiritoso* of Jean-Baptiste Senaillé, a violin piece adapted for the bassoon with the assistance of a famous Elgarian, Sir Hamilton Harty, and recorded to fill up a side on a 78 recording left blank by the brevity of Mozart's bassoon concerto, performed by the doyen of English bassoonists, the late Archie Camden.

Perkins's performances, nicely accompanied by the New London Orchestra under Ronald Corp, are clean and accurate, and occasionally touch eloquence. If I have reservations about the Elgar, they are minor: it is pleasing, and observant of nuance, but one can imagine it coming over with more passion. The orchestral bass is sometimes a little weak, but the balance of solo and orchestra is good, in that one can hear other elements as Elgarian counterpoint to the solo, and no background mush. The performance is not intended as 'historically informed'; Perkins's instrument is a modern one, its tenor tone a little dry and suitably reedy, but not, in that respect, in the same class as the bassoons Elgar knew and which one can still hear on his recordings of the 1920s. The instrument cannot, of course, emulate the Elgarian portamento available to a violin, and maybe for that reason the orchestra steers clear of such things. Unless I am much mistaken, the ad lib trombones are not included, although Elgar offered them considerably more notes than he had in the recently completed



orchestral songs Op. 59.

There are not too many recordings of Op. 62, and yet it is a piece of mature Elgar, sensitive as ever in its instrumental detail, subtle in harmony – and crystal clear in form, perhaps paying homage to the piano concerto Romanza of Mozart. No good Elgar collection should be without it. Most of the other pieces recorded here are arrangements, but good ones, and include music by Fauré and Ravel as well as lesser-known composers like Vinter, Fred Godfrey, and the obscure J. Quenton Ashlyn. Perkins is an assiduous researcher and supplies excellent notes, but even he is unable to offer much on the latter and his 'The Bassoon – humorous song' than 'fl. 1900'. Perhaps one of our readers knows more?

Julian Rushton



Hyperion  
CDA67453



# LETTERS

*From: Ronald Taylor*

*Andrew Neill's very interesting account of In Smyrna (JOURNAL, November 2005) brought to mind an impromptu performance I was responsible for some years ago.*

*I was privileged to attend a series of classes given by the late Dr Geoffrey Bush (1920–98) in his capacity as senior lecturer in the extra-mural music department of the University of London. Having a copy of The Queen's Christmas Carol (1905) in which In Smyrna first appeared, I took it along to one of the classes and showed it to Dr Bush before the meeting. I explained that I was then unaware of a public performance, and he said, 'Let's give one then!' Placing the book on the music stand he launched into a performance—he was a highly skilled pianist. After a few bars he stopped and said, 'God, this is more difficult than it looks!' He started again, this time playing it through successfully. He then decided to play it through again. By this time other members of the class had gathered round, asking 'What is it?' and I was able to explain. I'm still not sure if this constitutes a first performance, but there can't have been many. The book itself is now very scarce.*

Note: Geoffrey Bush, besides being a distinguished composer, was the editor of several volumes of *Musica Britannica*, including the songs of Parry and Stanford. He was at work on two volumes of Elgar's songs for the Elgar Complete Edition at the time of his death. [Ed.]

*From: Christine Coles (Ludlow, Shropshire)*

*With reference to the most interesting article about William Lygon by Ernest Blamires (Society JOURNAL, November 2005), I should like to make an observation about a detail on Page 28.*

*William wrote that he left for Middleton to consult Lord and Lady Jersey. Mr Blamires has put 'just west of Worcester' in brackets. Does Mr Blamires have evidence that the Middleton concerned really is west of Worcester and that Lord and Lady Jersey lived there? Is it not more likely that this would have been Middleton Stoney in Oxfordshire, which was the home of the Jerseys – the Jersey Estate? It would have been very convenient for William Lygon to have travelled by train to London the next day. (Lord Jersey was very interested in the promotion of the railway!)*

*It was the 7th Earl of Jersey who had been Governor of New South Wales. He died in 1915 and was buried with a simple ceremony at All Saints Church, Middleton Stoney in a coffin made from an oak tree cut in Middleton Park. (There was a big memorial service held at St George's Church, Hanover Square). The inscription on the grave reads:*

VICTOR ALBERT GEORGE CHILD VILLIERS

EARL OF JERSEY

P.C. G.C.B. G.C.M.G.

Born March 20th 1845

Died May 31st 1915

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*From: Ernest Blamires*

*In my article 'Loveliest, Brightest, Best' (this JOURNAL, November, 2005, specifically p.28) I located the home of Lord Jersey (1845-1915) in 'Middleton, (just west of Worcester), my only plea being that I was unaware that there are nineteen Middletons and another twelve (with extensions, such as ...One Row, ...on the Hill, ... the enchanting, ...Quearnhow, ... and Stoney!) in Britain. My AA Atlas tells me that similar names are Broughton, Capel, Chapel, Clifton, not to mention 'Little', and many others!*

*I had read up on Lord Jersey, but simply assumed (always a dangerous procedure) that Middleton, just a pleasant ride from Madresfield Court, was the location since Lord Beauchamp used this single word location in his diary. However, there is no doubt that Christine Coles is correct in nominating Middleton Stoney as the location, and the internet shows me lovely images of both the All Saints' church where the 7th Earl is buried and Middleton Park. Indeed, the finest hotel there is the 'Jersey Arms'. A biography of Lord Jersey and his highly intelligent wife, Lady Margaret, and their time in Sydney, would make another fascinating study – but that's for others to explore*

*I extend my warmest thanks to Ms Coles for her comment and for the detail provided.*

*From: Catherine Moody*

*Like the growing tips of a budding tree, the subject of the sights and sounds that Elgar saw and heard, and that I too have encountered, persists in growing.*

*My article ['Elgar at the Wheel', this JOURNAL, July 2005], which arose from Philip Maund's request that I try to identify the vehicle in which Elgar and A. E. Rodewald were photographed, has aroused interest in Liverpool, where Peter Elson has been inspired to seek out the house of Rodewald that was visited by Elgar. Mr Elson is hoping to get a plaque put on the house, and plans are afoot to have the building listed.*

*Another aspect of Elgar's life in Malvern that could be gone into further is his friendship with Arthur Troyte Griffith. In the archive of the Royal College of Music is a letter written by Troyte's sister and executrix to Carice Elgar-Blake. It describes the opening of the exhibition of Troyte's paintings, which was mounted by my father Victor Hume Moody. That was the chief reason for the letter, but it also has links with Basil Nevinson, the cellist and 'variation', and others in the Nevinson family.*

*The signatory of this letter is hoping to gather the five articles published in the Elgar Society JOURNAL and by adding other material, form a small book. This is something that it is desirable to do soon, as it would be material never before published, derived from the personal recollections of people whose families have worked on our houses for generations – stonewallers and masons, teachers, lay preachers, as well as fellow*

musicians such as the Gosden sisters – all showing how Elgar's genius lights up so many lives.

From: Sylvia Bennett

**An Enigma of a Variation:** Tracking down the 'Dorabella Bequest'

Mrs Richard Powell (Dorabella, Variation X) was Vice-President of the Sheffield and District Elgar Society from 1950 until her death. She gave generously of her time and talents during these years and, before her death in 1962, left for the use of Society members a collection of Elgariana - scores, manuscripts, pictures, letters and documents - which became known as the 'Dorabella Bequest' (DB).

After surviving being plundered and nearly sold off by the Treasurer, languishing in an attic for over 20 years, evading 'rescue' by such persons as Dr Percy Young, Wulstan Atkins and Alan Webb, and being taken by force from the Chairman's widow when the Society folded, what remained of the DB was finally placed in the Parry Library at the Royal College of Music, London, by Claud Powell (Dorabella's elder son) in 1986.

Following Claud Powell's death last year, additions have been made to the DB, including Dorabella's diaries from 1894 to 1914, though the new material has yet to be catalogued and some has been sent for restoration.

The DB can be viewed by Elgarians, students and researchers during term time at the RCM between 10am and 5pm Monday to Friday, and is well worth a visit.

I hope to be able to tell the full story of the 'quest for the Bequest' in a future issue of the JOURNAL/NEWS. Meanwhile, thanks to Wendy Hillary for setting me on the trail.

## 100 YEARS AGO...

The final Birmingham lectures of 1905 were on 'English Executants' (29 November), 'Critics' (6 December), and 'A Retrospect' (13 December). They were last-minute affairs: the word 'frantically' accompanies Alice's description of their composition. Elgar's uncompromising remarks were seized upon by many critics, who overlooked the telling points he made: as Alice wrote to Jaeger on 14 December: 'The reports give *no idea* of what his Lectures are'. He received a 'nice telegram' from Joseph Bennett of *The Daily Telegraph* commiserating that the lectures were being 'wrongly or misleadingly reported'.

On 18 December Edward was 'going on with his work' on *The Kingdom*, but it was hard going, and he had headaches. Percy Hull came to tea on Christmas Day and he was played 'the end of 1<sup>st</sup> part of 2<sup>nd</sup> part' – the settings of the Eucharist and the Lord's Prayer. Composition alternated with Elgar's new hobby of chemistry about this time, the latter being much more agreeable, as he told Walford Davies on New Year's Eve: 'I am the same depressed (musically) being & the same very much alive (chemically & every other 'ally) mortal; keen for everything except my avocation...I am working away & some of the themes are not bad'.

On 4 January he sent off to Novello the Prelude, followed by sections of Scene I ('In the Upper Room') on 12 and 16 January; and on the 18th, the Lord's Prayer, which was to come at the end of the first part, and which had been written over two years before during the composition of *The Apostles*. On the 17th Alice wrote: 'E. not well & depressed. Turning against his work. A. very sad'. Maybe Elgar's disillusion with organised Christianity suggested a choral ending to the choosing of Matthias, the new apostle to replace Judas: on 18 January Alice wrote of 'a beautiful tune... warning to priests &c'. His depression was certainly exacerbated if not caused by the enormity of the task, with so little written, and a second trip to America to be made in the spring. On 1 February Alice went to see Alfred Littleton, suggesting that, as with *The Apostles*, the new work should be only the first half of the projected scheme. By the second week in February: 'E. saying he must give up his work'. On 13 February, Alice went to Birmingham to see G.H. Johnstone, who was '...very nice about it all & ready to accept a morning's part instead of a whole day'. The relief was palpable and some of Elgar's depression lifted: 'E. better & busy' (17 February). Work continued on Scene 2 (a short duet for the two female soloists) and the big Pentecost scene: the 'new music' was played on 7 March to Ivor Atkins and Frank Schuster, who were 'much thrilled'. Henry Embleton came on the 12th, and 'thought the new music the most beautiful he ever heard'. Later that day the bass soloist William Higley came to run through the new music for Peter. The great Pentecost Scene was sent to Novello on 27 March, and the Elgars began to prepare to leave for America. Elgar took advantage of the fine spring days to do some cycling.

He and Alice left Liverpool on the S.S. *Celtic* on 6 April. Professor Sanford met them in New York, and they took the overnight train for Cincinnati the following day (16 April). Alice was not impressed, writing of 'most uninteresting country... hideous towns'. The *Cincinnati Post* remarked on the Elgars' reluctance to be photographed on their arrival: 'The visitors accepted the situation with rather ill grace'. Elgar conducted a rehearsal with the choir on the 18th, and the next day he began to orchestrate the completed sections of *The Kingdom*, writing on the title page a quotation from the Canadian poet Bliss Carman: 'I would write "a Music that seems never to have known dismay, nor haste, nor wrong"'.

Geoffrey Hodgkins

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