'Massive Hope': A Historian's View of Elgar's First Symphony

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It is dangerous to privilege the artist's sensibilities as an idea of social values while ignoring the conditions under which the work of art is produced and consumed.[1]

A hundred years ago the British were mired in a major constitutional controversy about the powers, responsibilities and morality of their legislators. If this today makes MPs' expenses and talk of Parliamentary reform seem a curious example of *déja vu*, the events of 1908 to 1911 are not without relevance to Elgar, and in particular to reception of his First Symphony. This article attempts to demonstrate the correlation.

It is a sad fact that the intrinsic qualities of any creative work, not to mention the artist's own intentions, are largely irrelevant to its reception and the degree of its acceptance. While Hall Caine sold a million copies of virtually every one of his novels, Henry James never sold ten thousand. With Elgar's First Symphony the crucial question is: why was it that, in 1908–9, it achieved such an apparently unique rating in public estimation? First we need to determine precisely to what degree it did indeed buck the norm. It is frequently stated that it received about 100 performances in the twelve months after the premiere. More sober estimates have reduced the figure to 82, including overseas venues.[2] In 1923 the *Musical Times* claimed it was 90. Data were apparently derived from the Novello archives in the 1960s, but their unfortunate dispersal since makes it hard to validate the figures; the stipulated time period also appears to be fairly elastic. A detailed study of surviving programmes (almost the sole reasonably accessible and reliable source) reveals the result set out in the Appendix. The data have been compared with those provided by Henry R. Clayton of Novello in a letter to Elgar on 8 February 1910.[3] The Appendix

1 Janet Wolff and John Seed, *The Culture of Capital: art, power and the nineteenth-century middle class* (Manchester University Press, 1988), 202.

2 Michael Kennedy says that there were 82 performances in 1909 (which excludes the first four). *Portrait of Elgar* (3rd edition, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 227. Cyril Ehrlich also gives 82 as the performance total for the first year, but may be simply quoting Kennedy. *First Philharmonic: A History of the Royal Philharmonic Society* (Oxford University Press, 1995), 184.

3 Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar and His Publishers: Letters of a Creative Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 727–9.

combines these data with my own research, which is confined to United Kingdom performances, and by the nature of things is heavily slanted towards mainstream symphonic concerts; thus it is not claimed as comprehensive. It seems, however, to represent about 66% of the probable UK total. Some overseas performances have also been added from Richard Smith's *Elgar in America*.[4] In addition use has been made of John Gardiner's important Elgar research with its interesting historical reflections on the perceptions behind response to Elgar's music, including the First Symphony.[5] However, the comments made in this article are entirely the author's own.

The Appendix is based on the strict legal interpretation of a year as 'a year and a day'. The first-year total is 53 performances, of which 39 were in the UK and 14 overseas. If this figure can be taken to represent c.66% of all performances, a total of c.58 in the UK and c.21 overseas comes close to 82. The UK figure means that the symphony was played on average about once a week. Some of the data derived from Novello are suspect – in at least one case the date quoted does not correspond with the date shown on the programme. The Appendix includes two performances by the Beecham Orchestra, which we know were truncated and which, interestingly, do not appear in the Novello list.

It is perhaps worth noting that most overseas performances were in the United States – ten out of fourteen, and so nearly 20% of the 53. It would appear that Novello had only limited marketing capability in mainland Europe. It should also be noted that this was the first of Elgar's major works to fall under the terms of his revised contract with Novello. This paid him a higher fee for performances, but there was no up-front payment for the work itself. By now Elgar could afford to take a chance on his reputation as a selling-point and he was probably becoming disenchanted with Novello's commercial approach. Nevertheless there was pressure on both composer and publisher to market the work as vigorously as possible. Overseas performances were valuable for his reputation, but there was a downside: the problem of collecting payment. In his letter of 8 February, Clayton told Elgar that they were still owed for a performance in Rome over a year before. Frankfurt is castigated for refusing to fix a date for a performance although the promoters had had the music for several months. Moreover it is too easy assume that a work scheduled was actually played; this assumption may well inflate the number of alleged performances.

What happened next is surely important, if only because of Clayton's comment in the letter already quoted:

> There are no performances of the Symphony now booked for any place in Great Britain and we have no enquiries about possible performances.

Hazell's Annual relates that the Symphony was frequently played, 'especially during January and February' [1909], implying considerable reduction later.[6] This

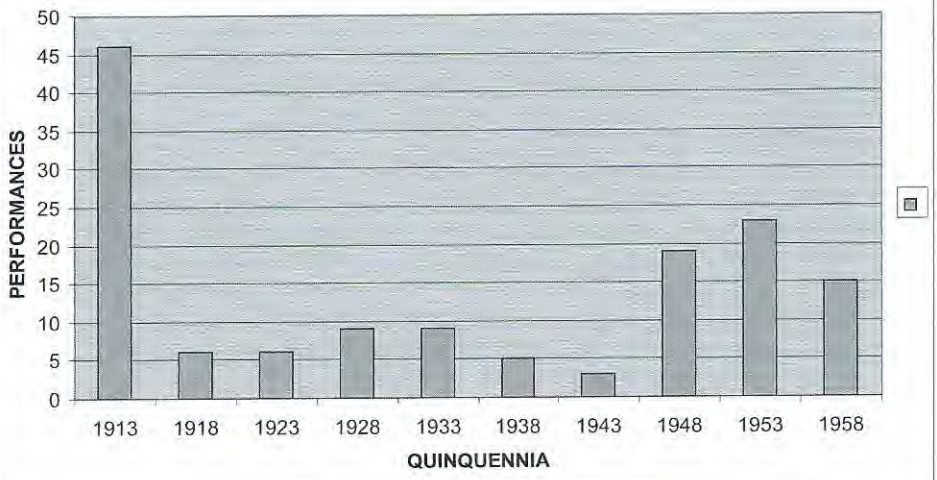
4 Richard Smith, *Elgar in America* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2005), 212.

5 John Gardiner, 'The Reception of Sir Edward Elgar 1918-1934: A Reassessment' in *Twentieth Century British History*, vol. ix no. 3, 370–395.

6 Lewis Foreman (ed.), *Music in England 1885-1920, as recounted in Hazell's Annual* (London: Thames, 1994), 83.

is borne out by the fall in the rate of performance from four per month in January to February to an average of 2.6 for the rest of the year. As regards the overall rate, I have found just five performances in 1910 (United Kingdom only), and only one in 1911. Even accepting that this is only a proportion of the actual total, the difference is striking. The symphony essentially disappeared from the repertoire. This was no doubt partly a reaction to the excess of 1909, the high cost of performance (see below), and Elgar's own actions in producing both a concerto and another symphony within three years. The Second rapidly overtook the First in frequency of performance, and has remained ahead ever since. The histogram demonstrates the pattern of performance of the First over the 50 years from the premiere. It is striking in showing the near disappearance of the work from concert programmes. It is also notable that the first five years represent 30% of all performances and the last 15 years 43%.

TABLE 2 **FIRST SYMPHONY 1908-1958**
UK Performances Only



Much critical opinion at the time and since has felt the First Symphony to be prolix and ponderous. A further element affecting reception may have been that the national mood did not remain attuned to its perceived optimism. It is, however, clear that for a time the Symphony achieved a higher exposure than any previous work of such substance by a British composer. It is therefore an historically valid exercise to attempt an exegesis on the social and political reasons for this phenomenon, and for the sudden collapse. What was it which made the First Symphony so popular in its early days? What was it that appealed to the Edwardian frame of mind and made it peculiarly receptive to the work? Equally, what kind of audience did the work reach and what was its size?

There is a common misperception that the Edwardian period consisted entirely of hot summers, peace, prosperity and social contentment. Neville Cardus, one of the most sedulous promoters of this unrealistic view, claimed that he had been at the First Symphony premiere and had been especially impressed by the motto theme.[7] But as he was only eighteen at the time there must be a suspicion of considerable 'ex post facto' about his remarks.

To put the Symphony in a meaningful context we should look at national and international events contemporaneous with the first twelve months of its existence, and then consider the wider issues surrounding its appearance. December 1908 was a particularly significant month in British history. Five days after the First Symphony premiere, Reginald McKenna, First Lord of the Admiralty, presented to the cabinet his request for six battleships in the next naval estimates instead of the expected four. Within days the Admiralty and a carefully orchestrated campaign in the country demanded eight. No one could have foreseen that this would lead to a controversy that would split the political establishment, cause a constitutional crisis, and sour public life. All this was going on as a background to the early performances of the symphony, and it is hard to believe that its reception was completely unconnected. Many of those who applauded were likely to be natural conservatives and supporters of the 'We Want Eight' campaign. Probably many were within the group particularly targeted by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (David Lloyd George) in his budget, as those who should be funding both the rearmament and the social reforms which the Liberal government was proposing. Indeed, Elgar himself was in this group. One innovation introduced in the 1909 budget was 'Supertax' on annual incomes above £5,000, and increased income tax on all incomes above £3,000. The Supertax threshold was subsequently lowered to £3,000 and we know from Elgar's later anguished response that he came within its scope.[8] The Budget was rejected by the House of Lords, bringing on a constitutional crisis lasting two years.

If this were not enough, there were many other issues likely to have induced a degree of alarm in the movers and shakers of the day. On 16 October 1908 the first aeroplane flight in England took place, and on 9 November the first woman mayor (Elizabeth Garrett Anderson) was elected. On 1 January 1909 state pensions to the elderly became payable for the first time (but Churchill could still describe Britain as 'the best country in the world – for rich men'). There was a major controversy over stage censorship; the National Social Purity Crusade had been launched earlier in 1908. Suffragette violence was on the increase; force feeding was introduced during the year. On 27 January 1909 *An Englishman's Home* opened at Wyndhams Theatre for a five-month run. Its theme was the threat posed to English domesticity by military unpreparedness. The 'Home' depicted was, of course, a middle-class one, inhabited by potential auditors of the First Symphony. Throughout there were rumblings from Ireland and in industrial relations. The position of the middle

7 Christopher Brookes, *His Own Man: The Life of Neville Cardus* (London: Methuen, 1985), 62.

8 Moore, *Elgar and his Publishers*, 833–4.

class as both 'natural' political leaders and arbiters of taste and morals was under attack, not to mention the forebodings in some quarters about potential foreign (i.e. German) invasion, forebodings to which works like *An Englishman's Home* particularly pandered.

It is also worth briefly considering the state of literature and music. A more pessimistic and questioning mood was entering the novel and drama. Shaw had a relatively quiet period, *Misalliance* being his only major product; but its *coup de théâtre* of disruption, even though in this case more sexual than military, seems remarkably prophetic. Among the usual farcical and frothy plots and 24-hour best-sellers, a more serious note was struck by Arnold Bennett, for example, with *The Old Wives Tale*, *Clayhanger*, and *Hilda Lessways*. Other notable works include *What Every Woman Knows* (Barrie), *The Madras House* (Barker), *A Room with a View* and *Howard's End* (Forster), *Strife*, and *Justice* (Galsworthy), *The White Peacock* (Lawrence), *Smith* (Maugham), *Mid-Channel* (Pinero), *Deirdre of the Sorrows* (Synge), *Ann Veronica* and *The History of Mr Polly* (Wells). Most of these deal with disturbing issues of class, gender, and personal morality, even if sometimes the message is over-sugared. There was also an interesting attempt to create a provincial theatre, especially focusing on the works of Stanley Houghton (*Hindle Wakes*), another indication of the increasing permeation of the cultural establishment with lower class experience and values. Inevitably there was also the counter programme of reassurance, imperialism, and romanticism. Works such as the already mentioned *An Englishman's Home* (Du Maurier), *Prester John* (Buchan), *Father Brown* (Chesterton), *Under Western Eyes* (Conrad), *Wind in the Willows* (Grahame), *A Soldier's Honour* (Kimberley), *Kismet* (Knoblock), *Drake* (Parker), and *Where the Rainbow Ends* (Mills) are examples. For the last-named play, incidental music was provided by Roger Quilter. Its theme of chivalry and empire was inevitably an attraction though its number of performance did not compare with *The Arcadians* (Monckton), premiered in 1909 and with 809 performances by the end of 1914, his *Quaker Girl*, premiered 1910 with 536 performances by 1914. *The Arcadians* has been called the greatest operetta of the Edwardian age.[9] Some of the music is oddly Elgarian in its undershot sense of regret; indeed Elgar's First Symphony must have sounded much more encouraging.

These lists do not include foreign imports. *The Merry Widow* (Lehar) had already clocked up 778 performances by the outbreak of war. Most serious music was by non-English composers, including Scottish and Irish. The year 1909 was remarkable for the British premieres of operas: *Louise* (Charpentier), *Tess* (D'Erlanger), *The Wreckers* (Smythe), *Pelléas et Mélisande* (Debussy), *Samson et Dalila* (Saint Saëns); in 1910 there followed *Elektra* (Strauss), and *La Habanera* (Laparra), characterised as 'an exceedingly gruesome story'.[10] Nor, if the title is anything to go by, can Leoni's *Golgotha* the next year have done much for the gaiety of nations. In 1911, the year of Elgar's Second Symphony, came the revised version of Bantock's *Dante and Beatrice* and the premiere of his *Overture to a Greek Tragedy*, and the British premiere of Massenet's *Thais*. Mention may also be made

9 Richard Traubner, *Operetta: a Theatrical History* (London: Gollancz, 1984), 209.

10 Foreman, *Music in England*, 84.

of Delius's *Mass of Life* (1909), and *Village Romeo and Juliet* (1910), Bantock's *Omar Khayyam* (1909), Harty's *With the Wild Geese* (1910), and Vaughan Williams *Sea Symphony* (1910). Even Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet* (1911), though at first sight appealing to the maritime jingoism of the British, are considerably more subdued and elegiac than his earlier *Songs of the Sea*.

Vaughan Williams's work brings us to the intriguing issue of direct symphonic competition with Elgar. In 1908 the most recent British symphony was Stanford's Sixth, premiered in 1906. As it was in a sense a *pièce d'occasion* linked to the death of the artist G.F. Watts, its relevance might have been seen as muted; it appears to have had only two performances at the time. German's 'Norwich' Symphony of 1893 had not achieved much *éclat* and Parry's last had been the Fourth (1889, revised 1904). Re-written and performed in its final version in 1910, this is an impressive work, with an almost Elgarian finale, but its sober confidence and optimism seem somewhat out of place in that year.[11] Cowen's Sixth dates from 1897, Wallace's *Creation Symphony* from 1899. Coleridge-Taylor's student effort received a public performance in 1900 and was then forgotten. Indeed, the last British symphony to have achieved real acclaim had been Cliffe's of 1889, which is hard to understand today but probably not unconnected with the fact that it was the composer's first work: its reception may have been more to do with expectation than delivery. Novello actually published the work in 1904, fifteen years after its first appearance, which must have been in response to its popularity. The truth is that no British symphony was in regular performance by 1908. Not only was Elgar's First a more substantial work than its predecessors, but it was the creation of a well-established, well-known, and publicised figure near the apex of his career. Another eight symphonies in the next few years could confidently be expected.

At the time of its premiere there was a real possibility of European War, the Bosnian crisis having exploded in October 1908. On 31 October the *Daily Telegraph* published an indiscreet interview with the Kaiser, and early in 1909 the Young Turks seized power in Constantinople, Blériot flew the Channel, and the first Model T was produced. The world was becoming increasingly accessible, interdependent and volatile, factors which would inevitably reduce Britain's significance. Yet here, apparently, was nostalgic, well-bred English music, resonant with images of long hot summers by Teme and Tern and enjoyed by equally well-bred people of impeccably English descent, safely conservative in politics and Anglican in religion, and in its finale seeming to re-assert the triumph of England and Englishness. Its reassuring qualities must have appealed immensely, while more disquieting elements could be ignored and, indeed, were probably only noticed by few early listeners. Since completing *The Kingdom* in 1906 Elgar had written little of substance, and the resurgence of England's major composer and his challenge to the long-sustained Germanic dominance of symphonic music were undoubtedly a cause for rejoicing.

But did commercial economics play a part as well? Novello was badly in need of a major commercial success and Elgar, almost out of the blue, provided them with the opportunity. There is some evidence that Elgar's income had been

11 Jeremy Dibble, *C. Hubert Parry: His Life and Music* (Oxford University Press, 1990), 278–80, 436–40.

falling and 1907 was an inflationary year. For him too, there was a need to put a new product on the market. August Jaeger was dying, but he had survived long enough to give his employers what they wanted by steering the composer through his characteristic doubts. The fact that at least twelve performances were given within the first eight weeks in eight different locations raises the suspicion that the orchestras were cognisant of the work before the premiere, presumably as a result of careful proselytising by Novello. Indeed, this may have had some adverse influence on subsequent opinion. Dan Godfrey was to complain about Novello's hard-headed commercialism in charging excessive fees for hiring the parts.[12] Despite his enthusiasm for Elgar's music, he performed the symphony only seven times for precisely this reason (the basic charge was fifteen guineas, about £800 in 2010 terms).

Elgar received £208 in February1910 for outstanding fees in respect of the Symphony from June 1909, although Novello rather sourly pointed out that they had not been paid in respect of all performances.[13] Assuming a pro rata for the first six months of about £150, Elgar's income for the year from the work, quite apart from fees for conducting it, was equivalent to £16,800 in today's money. It must have had a distinctly benign effect on his bank account, if nothing else.

'Associationism'

I am not suggesting that there was a direct and deliberate correlation between Elgar's First Symphony and the public mood, although the composer's own comments might suggest otherwise. Elgar studies are bedevilled by what can only be called 'associationism' – the belief that all his major works can be associated, either with a personal characteristic or the impact on the composer of some external event. Thus we are told that the Cello Concerto is a lament for the dead of the First World War, that the Second Symphony is a lament for the Edwardian age, that the *Nursery Suite* is a lament for Elgar's youth (a lot of lamenting, without much rejoicing). In consequence the image of the composer is of a neurotic, febrile, not to say flebile, personage, soaked in nostalgia, medievalism and Toryism, rather than a hard headed, bottom-line obsessed member of the English middle-class. The First Symphony has predictably been associated with chivalry, nobility, Englishness, and nature; Matthew Riley, for example, considers the Symphony under 'Nobility', 'Nature', and 'Childhood'.[14] But the First Symphony is simply a major piece of music, written in the late-Romantic European style, with some undoubtedly individual, but essentially musical, idiosyncrasies here and there. Critics at the time responded to it in these terms or, more romantically, as a conflict between the ideal and the real. It was left to later commentators and biographers to adopt the 'associationist' line. In Europe it probably sounded conservative, but in Britain it would have seemed to some of its original hearers as radical. The composer felt constrained to provide a good 'sound-

12 Stephen Lloyd, *Sir Dan Godfrey: Champion of British Composers* (London: Thames, 1995), 85.

13 Moore, *Elgar and his Publishers*, 729.

14 Matthew Riley, *Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007).

bite' for the work but, bearing in mind my epigraph, any sensibilities he may or may not have possessed at the time must not be privileged over contemporary realities.

The Symphony resonated well at the popular level because of what was happening both at home and abroad. Any work that could apparently demonstrate Englishness, chivalry, and triumph after travail, was going to be a success. Later, the Violin Concerto was also well received, and in time the Second Symphony was only slightly less popular. Elgar's mistake in linking the latter to the ex-monarch when it was premiered a few days before the Coronation of his successor was probably a factor in an initial lack of enthusiasm. Also by the end of 1911 the constitutional crisis was resolved, British naval supremacy was being restored, suitable reassuring pageantry had marked the Coronation and the Durbar in India, and international relations had temporarily eased. The following year was to be a different matter; increasing tensions, social and political, of the run-up to war effectively side-lined the First and, paradoxically, may have tended to boost the Second at its expense.

The audience

The reception of Elgar's First Symphony at some of the early concerts was ecstatic. But who were the people who stood on their seats and cheered the composer to the echo? Theatrical audiences were class-divided with a good deal of working-class participation in music-hall and popular drama; tiara wearers dominated opera and the more expensive theatre seats. Concert audiences were more homogeneous, heavily made up of the middle, especially upper middle, class. A glance at subscription lists or a study of ticket prices will demonstrate this. Symphonic music in particular was very much a bourgeois taste. It might almost be said that the Symphony provided the middle class with a chance for their very own 'Mafficking'. Reference to that event highlights the degree to which mass hysteria could seize the English middle class in this period. Reactions to the Boer War, to suffragettes, to warship building, to strikers, to foreigners, to modern art, to the Russian Ballet, all indicate an increasing degree of paranoia in the people who believed themselves to be the preordained rulers of the land. As 1909 could be said to be the year in which it all started to go wrong for them, the need for the sort of psychological comfort provided by an outstanding artistic and 'British' achievement is manifest. On the surface this had nothing to do with Elgar or with any purposes or meanings which he may have attached to the work himself. It should, however, be pointed out that he declared that the symphony represented 'a massive hope in the future'. For whom? For what?

Despite the benign financial effect, it can be argued that the rave reception of the symphony had unfortunate consequences for Elgar. Failing to recognise that at least part of the success was due to careful commercial promotion, the encouragement and support of Jaeger, and the contemporary climate of opinion among those who counted, Elgar was always to measure the success of future works by reference to it. He assumed that when the Violin Concerto and even more the Second Symphony and the Cello Concerto failed to produce the same reaction that they were failures, reinforcing his well-known tendency to self-pity. Yet setting aside personal preferences in regard to all three as to their musical qualities, and being sure to compare like

with like, the figures give the lie to Elgar's assumptions.

Undoubtedly the First Symphony was a rave success compared to the Variations or *Introduction and Allegro*. But in the meantime the composer's reputation had grown, as had opportunities for performance. Against the First the Second Symphony achieved a 69% performance rate in the first twelve months and the Violin Concerto 86%. This is more meaningful than total performances and is hardly a record of either failure for either of them, or of excessive success for the First. Moreover the scoring against a time scale of only one year is distorting; what is crucial is whether works 'bedded down' in the repertoire. In the period from 1908 until 1965 the average year scores for the period are 2.4 for the Violin Concerto, 2.6 for the First Symphony and 2.7 for the Second; virtually no difference. In 1917 a poll was taken of audiences at the Royal Albert Hall in which the First came sixth and the Second seventh in the symphony group (the Variations were eighteenth in the orchestral group). When a similar poll was taken in Birmingham in 1946 the Variations came first and the Second Symphony third; the First was nowhere. This only goes to emphasise that though the First did receive very frequent performance for a short period, it did not maintain that level. There must be more than musical reasons for this phenomenon.

We must be careful not to over-estimate the initial impact. If there were 60 UK performances, the maximum number that could have heard it, assuming sell-outs at every concert, is unlikely to have been more than 120,000. This is about 0.2% of the then population. As seventeen performances in London are claimed (an acceptable figure on the basis of the Appendix), at least three in Manchester, and two in Eastbourne, Leeds, Glasgow, and Bournemouth, a good proportion of the audiences are likely to have heard the work more than once, reducing the overall total. Probably 60,000 is a more realistic figure. That 60,000 Britons heard a British symphony in one year is indeed remarkable, but is it right to call this a miraculous success? And how many of these performances would have been satisfactory to modern ears? The mainstream concerts of the Hallé, Liverpool, London Symphony, and Bournemouth orchestras were probably to a reasonable standard, but how good were Beecham's (cut) performances, with a small band, or the many provincial concerts given by amateurs? The Duke of Devonshire invited Richter to Eastbourne to give what seems to have been one of the earliest UK performances (23rd February 1909), but his private orchestra had no more than 50 players on 'good' days (some sources claim even fewer) and had to be strengthened with some 27 hired hands from the LSO. According to local accounts there were six rehearsals, all taken apart from the dress rehearsal by the local conductor, Pierre Tas. The LSO contingent appeared at only the last of these. The music critic of the *Eastbourne Gazette* refers, unsurprisingly, to some infelicities in the performance.[15] It might also be pointed out that this procedure also increased the cost of performance and thus the price of seats.

This leads on to the interesting question of critical acclaim. The same local critic was fairly scathing about the work itself: 'too drawn out', 'scrappy and incoherent', 'a trifle laboured'. Nevertheless he agreed that it was a major achievement and

15 *Eastbourne Gazette*, 27 February 1909.

the Adagio was particularly impressive. The audience, around 2,000 in the Floral Hall, listened 'with almost devout attention' (an interesting comment) and the work received enthusiastic applause. The *Eastbourne Chronicle* (in those halcyon days the town boasted two major local papers) was even more downbeat, taking a very parochial stance in praising the local musicians and largely ignoring the rest. Its critic refers mysteriously to differences of opinion among the best authorities as to the quality of the work – already! Richter is mentioned mainly to recount some of his famous *lapsus linguae*. A second performance was given seven months later. This time only five players were imported from the LSO. Some sources state that Richter conducted again, but the conductor was Tas. Opinion had not changed; among comments on the dignity and emotional power of the work, phrases such as 'vague and meaningless' and 'laboured' are still bandied about.[16] *The Times* critic, Fuller Maitland, did not attend the Manchester premiere and the paper published a coolly favourable review. There is a critical reference to the large number of themes, but the Adagio and orchestration are praised. It is said that the applause after the first movement was purely formal but that after the third the composer was called on to the platform. No reference is made to the work's overall reception.[17] When Fuller Maitland reviewed the London premiere his contribution was 'laced with much venom'.[18]

Although not much can be inferred from these limited examples, it appears that the work was enthusiastically received by audiences but was regarded with some reservations by the critics. Interestingly some of the points in the *Eastbourne Gazette* account were later taken up in more august publications. Beecham famously compared the symphony to St Pancras; and in an odd way this remark was prophetic. Originally St Pancras was seen as a miracle of Victorian engineering, complemented by an architectural masterpiece. By 1908 the engineering seemed commonplace, and the architecture was derided as bad taste. Today St Pancras is again an icon of technical achievement, and its architecture is carefully preserved as 'heritage'. A book could be written on the reception history of many famous British works of art in which Elgar and his music would provide remarkable examples.

Massive hope

An important fact about the Symphony is its remarkable success overseas. This rather flies in the face of received opinions about Elgar's music being essentially English. If the above figures are reasonably accurate, 26% of the first year's performances took place abroad. Audiences in Vienna, St Petersburg, Pittsburgh and Sydney can hardly have been interested in the Malvern Hills or 'sounds you hear down by the river', still less in celebrations of English grandeur. With this work Elgar seemed to have achieved his ambition to be accepted as a mainstream European composer,

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16 *Eastbourne Chronicle*, 8 September 1909.

17 *The Times*, 4 December 1908.

18 Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance and the Press 1850-1914: Watchmen of Music* (Ashgate: Aldershot, 2002), 181. Fuller Maitland was a close associate of Stanford.

free of excessive nationalist overtones, an ambition he had declared as long ago as 1886.[19] It is unfortunate that the sequel was less compelling and perhaps even more unfortunate that much subsequent writing on him has reverted to the mood of 1909: ecstatic celebration of his supposed nostalgic, English, rural inspiration.

For what was the massive hope that Elgar felt justified in claiming as 'content' for his symphony? Was it for himself, his class, the nation, humanity? Whatever it was and whoever were to be the beneficiaries, there is no doubt that the years 1908 to 1913 saw the apex of Elgar's creative achievement. Four of his five major completed symphonic works appeared during those years, plus an innovative choral work. That these were the Elgarian years *par excellence* and also those of deep political and international travail must raise questions about the cultural relationship between them. It might also be useful to reflect on the aftermath. Why did the symphony disappear so comprehensively for so long, and what are possible reasons for its revival after 1945? The first is probably relatively easily answered: the 1920s and 1930s were not attuned to the kind of Edwardian assurance with which the music was associated. For one thing the post-World War British mood was one of withdrawal into an intimate communing with 'heritage' and nature at home, and a promotion of the Empire as a family undertaking in opposition to any continental commitment. In such a climate the First Symphony, declamatory, European, and expansive, hardly resonated with the prevailing mood. Its opulence and requirement for large resources were also out of kilter with the later period of depression and approaching war, characterised on the one hand by retrenchment and on the other by dismay. After 1945 a mood of relief and triumph, short-lived no doubt, was more receptive to the work, and the boost to classical music given by the Second World War was carried forward by the founding of new symphony orchestras and active state involvement in promoting the arts. There was a revival of interest in Elgar and his music which even pre-dated the proposal, made in 1950, for an Elgar Society. The arrival of the long-playing record and the first recordings since the composer's own should also be noted. Historically, however, these are almost all entirely different circumstances from those which applied to the original period of acclamation.

Virginia Woolf declared that 'human nature changed in December 1910'. Behind this ostensibly ridiculous statement (she surely meant 'English' nature) is the fact that this period did see a remarkable artistic turmoil and the first serious dents in the insularity of English creativity. The discovery of the Post-Impressionists, of Dostoevsky and Chekhov and the Diaghilev ballet, must have been disconcerting for traditionalists. Yet Elgar's First Symphony could appeal to both sides of the cultural divide. For traditionalist it represented solid English virtues, 'broad, healthy and out-of-doors'; for the cosmopolitan it was the first major work by an Englishman in the European symphonic mainstream, undershot with Mahlerian angst. His previous musical excursions to Europe had been wrapped in fustian oratorio or festival cantata format. Now he had come into his inheritance. For many English the symphony's 'massive', if ill-defined, hope was a tonic they badly needed and they

19 Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990), 18–20.

responded accordingly. Woolf got her year wrong; it should be December 1908.[20]

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Appendix: Known performances of the First Symphony 1908–9

1908	
December	3 Manchester (Richter)
	7 Liverpool
	12 London (Richter)
	19 London
1909	
January	1 London (Elgar)
	3 New York (USA)
	5 New York (USA)
	8 Milwaukee (USA)
	10 Chicago (USA)
	16 Brighton (Stanford)
	16 London (Elgar)
	18 Toronto (CAN)
	24 New York (USA)
February	16 Birmingham
	20 Eastbourne (Richter)
	23 Worcester
	26 Liverpool (Richter)
	26 Boston (USA)
	27 Boston (USA)
	27 Bournemouth
March	4 Manchester (Richter, by request)
	5 Pittsburgh (USA)
	5 Bradford
	6 Pittsburgh (USA)
April	1 Bournemouth
	4 Louisville (USA)
	7 London (Richter, by request)
	17 Bournemouth
May	13 London (Nikisch)
June	1 Sydney (AUS)
	23 London
September	2 Eastbourne
	9 Hereford (Elgar)
October	5 Birmingham
	14 Malvern
	21 Newcastle
	21 Manchester
	25 Budapest (AUST-HUN)
	26 Hull
	27 Middlesbrough
	28 Doncaster
	28 Hanley (Beecham)
	29 Nottingham
	30 Cambridge (Beecham)
November	2 Leeds
	3 Leeds
	7 London
	11 Exeter
	24 Dundee
	25 Bonn (GER)
	29 Edinburgh
	30 Glasgow
December	4 Glasgow

20 One curious footnote. The Parliament Bill was passed by the House of Lords in 1911 under a threat that the King would create 500 extra peers to swamp the Tory majority. Among those proposed for the honour was Parry; one who was *not* was Elgar. Opposition 'went to the wire' and it was only a revolt by Lord Curzon and 37 of his colleagues that secured the passing of the bill. It is ironic that the collapse of the Lords' resistance saved us from an Elgarian depression of such proportions that we might never have had another note of music. Perhaps we have more to thank Lord Curzon for than we realise.

The Full Orchestral Score of the *Severn Suite*

Robert Kay

The reappearance of the manuscript full score of *The Severn Suite* fills a major gap in Elgar autograph material. Although this score was known to have existed, it has been missing since the 1970s and its survival has long been the subject of speculation. *The Severn Suite* was originally written for brass band, and has become a standard piece of brass band repertoire in the edition by Henry Geehl.[1] The version for full orchestra is less well-known, although it was recorded by Elgar in 1932.[2] The score appeared in the catalogue of his publishers Keith Prowse Ltd., but publication never took place.[3] The musical survival of the orchestral version was, however, assured by the existence of a copyist's 'Dyeline' score, not in Elgar's hand, possibly prepared by the publisher for the 1932 recording session (it is customary at recording sessions for several copies of a score to be required for the conductor, sound engineers etc.).[4] At least two copies of this score have been located, and were used as the basis for the first publication of the full orchestral score by Acuta Music in 1991.[5]

The autograph score seems to have remained on the premises of Keith Prowse until the 1970s, when it was apparently thrown out (!) during an office reorganisation. An alert employee rescued it from a skip and carried it away. The descendants of this employee have kept the score ever since. Ownership of the score is currently under investigation, but it appears (without prejudice to ongoing negotiations) that Keith

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1 Published in 1930 by R. Smith & Co. (London) as their edition No. 2050. This brass-band version is in places slightly simplified, both by comparison with the full-orchestra MS and with Elgar's own original brass-band score: otherwise there are no musical differences between the various versions. See also Philip Maund, 'Elgar's "Brass Band Thing"', this Journal, 10/2 (July 1997), 46–61; 'Elgar's "Brass Band Thing". The Severn Suite – Postscript', this Journal 12/1 (March 2001), 24–9.

2 By the London Symphony Orchestra on 14 April 1932 (first performance of the orchestral version), issued on His Master's Voice 78s DB 1908-10.

3 The *Nursery Suite* full score, published by Keith Prowse in 1931, carries an advertisement for the *Severn Suite* military band arrangement (which did achieve publication) and also for the orchestral version (announced as 'in preparation').

4 On the Dyeline Score see Christopher Kent, *Edward Elgar, a Guide to Research* (New York: Garland, 1993), 346. Some minor errors in the Dyeline Score are audible on the 78s.

5 One in the BBC Music Library and one at the Birthplace. Keith Prowse presumably also had copies in-house.

Prowse never had the ownership title and therefore, under the terms of Carice's will, the MS should become the property of the British Library. Until ownership is resolved, the MS will not be available for detailed study, but examination of a photocopy makes possible the following preliminary observations:

- The MS is dated February 1931. It is somewhat untidy, with numerous corrections and second thoughts (some in red ink). It has the appearance of a 'final draft' rather than a 'fair copy'.

- The above might explain the existence of the Dyeline Score (whose *raison d'être* has always been debatable, given that the autograph MS was known to have existed). Elgar was given only four weeks, between the initial request from His Master's Voice on 17 March and the recording session on 14 April, to make performing material available.[6] In view of the untidy nature of his MS he could have requested that a house copyist prepare fair copy, a purely mechanical task which Elgar may not have relished, especially as he was then engaged in orchestrating Chopin's *Funeral March* for the BBC Symphony Orchestra.[7] This theory would imply that the Dyeline Score be considered as part of the prime source material.

- There are no significant musical differences between the Elgar MS score and the Dyeline Score. The latter contains a number of trivial mistakes which are an inevitable consequence of human error during copying.

- The MS score contains optional parts for harp and organ. Both, however, have been deleted (struck through) in the MS and do not appear in the Dyeline Score.[8]

- Some tempo indications are not in Elgar's handwriting, for example the instruction *Più mosso – scherzando* in the Minuet, which Elgar simply marks as *Animato*.

- Certain works of reference assign descriptive titles to the first four movements (respectively, 'Worcester Castle', 'Tournament', 'The Cathedral', and 'In The Commandery'). These appear on the Elgar MS, but are once again not in his hand. They appear in no other contemporary source material other than the printed score of Geehl's Military Band (Wind Band) arrangement of 1931, and may therefore owe their existence to Geehl rather than to Elgar himself.[9]

The rediscovery of the Elgar orchestral MS means that now, for the first time, all primary source material for *The Severn Suite*, in its various versions, is available for comparison. The Elgar Complete Edition will now be able to include the orchestral

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6 See Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar on Record* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 163–6.

7 This was recorded on 30 May 1932, with Adrian Boult conducting and Elgar in attendance.

8 Interestingly, Moore (*Elgar on Record*, 166) mentions a harp as having been included in the orchestral line-up for the recording session. No harp is audible on the 78s.

9 Elgar's original short score, his own brass band MS, the printed score of the Geehl brass band version, the Dyeline Score (where the third movement only is given a title) and the labels of the 78s. On the MS full score the first movement title is erroneously given as 'Worcester Cathedral'.

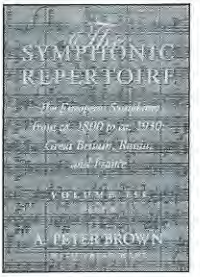
version based on authentic material. Given that *The Severn Suite* is scheduled to appear in E.C.E. Volumes 26 (orchestral version), 35 (piano version of Fugue), 36 (Atkins's arrangement of the Fugue, and of the Suite as Organ Sonata No. 2), 39 (original version of Minuet), and 40 (brass band version), perhaps it is not too late to suggest that this piece, with its complicated history, be allocated a volume of its own where all versions can be presented in one convenient package. One might also suggest that the Geehl brass band version be included. This was prepared with Elgar's cooperation, and was for many years the only version known to music-lovers. There is inconsistency in E.C.E. publishing the Atkins organ arrangements but excluding the Geehl.[10]

Robert Kay is a proprietor of Acuta Music, whose Late Elgar Edition makes available study scores and performing material of previously unpublished music from Elgar's final compositional period. The Severn Suite *was the first Acuta publication, and a new edition based on the rediscovered Elgar MS is currently in preparation. The Chopin* Funeral March *is reviewed below.*

STOP PRESS! On 7 October, the editor had a fortunate and fortuitous encounter with Richard Chesser, head of music at the British Library. He greeted me with 'We've got a new Elgar acquisition, yesterday'. It is, of course, the autograph score of the orchestral version of the Severn Suite. The terms of Carice's will do indeed apply, and Richard permitted me to report this to members.

10 On the other hand, it is easier to compare versions that do not appear in the same volume [ed.].

A. Peter Brown with Brian Hart. *The Symphonic Repertoire: Volume III, Part B: The European Symphony from ca. 1800 to ca. 1930: Great Britain, Russia, and France*



Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 2008

xxxiii + 805 pages

ISBN 978-0-253-34897-5; £66.00

Listening recently to a marvellous 1978 recording of Schumann's First Symphony by the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra, I seemed to hear the music as though for the first time. At the end of the of first movement's Andante Rafael Kubelik shapes the rising arpeggios perfectly. Beginning in the violas and then in the violins, they gradually accelerate, *poco a poco* – just as Schumann indicated – to culminate in an emphatic double forte that quickly gives way to the rollicking allegro. The feeling of emergence and liberation is absolutely exhilarating. Moments like this remind us why the symphony has held an enduring appeal for both musicians and listeners for over two centuries. However, learning how generations of composers have used the symphony is not as easy as one might think. No writer appears to have surveyed its full history since Swiss musicologist Karl Nef published *The History of the Symphony and Suite* (*Geschichte der Sinfonie und Suite*) in 1921.

Scholarly examination of the symphony today usually takes the form of a symposium, with several writers contributing from within their specialized fields under the direction of an editor.[1] Some of these, like Robert Layton's *A Companion to the Symphony* (1993), survey the genre's entire history. Others, like D. Kern Holoman's *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony* (1997), focus on an individual period. During the 1990s, with new critical editions of once-obscure works frequently appearing, A. Peter Brown, a Haydn specialist at the University of Indiana, embarked on an extraordinarily ambitious project: a complete survey of the symphony, starting with its eighteenth-century origins and continuing into the twentieth century. He soon realized that this would have to be a multi-volume effort, and he planned a series of six books. Unfortunately, Brown died in 2003, at which time only three of the books had appeared; but work on the series goes on. Brian Hart, an associate professor at Northern Illinois University who had studied with Brown, completed the present book (the second part of Volume III). Volume I, which will explore the eighteenth-century symphony, is being completed by a team of

1 I understand a *Cambridge Companion to the Symphony* is in progress [ed.].

Brown's colleagues, working from his outline; it will be published in August 2011. Volume V is also in preparation; it will be a symposium on the twentieth-century symphony, as Brown had planned.

The book under review examines 79 symphonies written in Britain, Russia and France from about 1800 to about 1930. (It excludes Berlioz, who is discussed in the section on 'avant-garde symphonists' in Volume III, Part A.) Brown not only analyses each work, he also provides brief biographical sketches, information about the dates of composition and first performance, tables showing the works' structures, excerpts from early reviews, and abundant music examples. These are especially useful in the case of the many works that are largely unknown. In addition, each of the book's three section contains an extensive bibliographic overview.

Brown devotes the first third of the book to 28 British symphonies written between 1819 to 1912: all those by Elgar, Stanford and Parry; nine by Cipriani Potter (1792–1871); and four by William Sterndale Bennett (1816–75). He begins with an overview of musical life in Britain during the first half of the nineteenth century, when the most popular contemporary composers were Beethoven, Spohr and Mendelssohn, whose 'Italian' Symphony had its premiere in London in May 1833. By that year, at least three of Cipriani Potter's had been heard in the capital to considerable acclaim, and Brown clearly believes that Potter does not deserve the obscurity his work suffers today: 'Not a single symphony by Potter reveals anything but a composer completely in control of his materials, one who has the skills and technique to use his ideas to fine effect'. Potter was rumoured to have composed fifteen symphonies; if so, six are now lost. His main influences were recent Viennese composers, and when he visited Austria in his twenties, he met Beethoven, who thought him 'a good fellow...[with] a talent for composition'. The allegro from his Symphony in F ('No. 7'), in particular, is fluent, vigorous and very skilfully scored. A modern audience might find it delightful, but they would never guess who wrote it.[2]

From 1822 to 1859, Potter served as a teacher and then as Principal of the Royal Academy of Music, and one of his students was Bennett, who became Principal in turn (1866–75). A dedicated teacher, Bennett had trouble finding time to compose, but he completed eight symphonies, of which five have come down to us. Bennett's finest work is undoubtedly his Symphony No. 8 in G Minor of 1864, written more than twenty years after his previous symphony, now lost. The Eighth, his only symphony to be published, was performed ten times from 1864 to 1875, not only in London and Manchester, but also in Leipzig and New York.[3] Unlike Potter, Bennett did not sink into obscurity: his overture *The Naiades* shared the bill with Elgar's Violin Concerto at its premiere. Bennett's five piano concertos are all available on CD.

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2 'No. 7' is the fourth to survive. It was recorded by Douglas Bostock and the Czech Philharmonic on Classico (2005). A modern edition of 'No. 10' in G minor, which was once conducted by Wagner, is published as vol. 77 of the series *Musica Britannica* (London, 2001); it and 'No. 8' in E flat were recorded by Hilary Davan Wetton on Unicorn-Kanchana (1989).

3 The work was reprinted in the series *The Symphony 1720–1840*, series E, vol. vii (New York, 1982) [ed.].

Brown encourages us to reconsider Potter and Bennett, but when it comes to Stanford, he is an outright advocate, believing that his 'Irish' Symphony (No. 3) could well regain its former popularity: its last movement 'can hold its own against any finale in other symphonies scored for the normal nineteenth-century orchestra'. He also admires his fifth and sixth symphonies: 'Both are deeply original in conception and execution and end not with a bang, but with celestial music of a striking kind'. Although Parry's 'Jerusalem' is one of the best-known tunes ever written, his five symphonies were long ignored, except for recordings of the First, by William Boughton, and the Fifth, by Adrian Boult. Then, in the early nineties, Matthias Bamert and the London Philharmonic recorded the first complete cycle, and it proved a revelation. Writing in Gramophone in January 1991 about their interpretation of the Fourth, which had not been heard since 1910, Michael Kennedy found the first movement 'full of repressed passion and romance, with a coda of radiant beauty leading into an Adagio of which Elgar would have been proud, as he would of the great tune in the finale (he would have marked it nobilmente!). That such music should have been collecting dust for nearly a century beggars belief'.

Brown emphatically agrees with Kennedy's assessment of Parry's Fourth but considers the coda flawed:

> Three bars from the end ... the orchestra plays six hammer strokes on an E major chord, then is silent for three beats, and the horns play a slowly descending tetrachord that comes to rest on the fifth degree of the final E major triad. The rests combined with the retard deflate the ending. One solution is to move the horn entrance back one bar and ignore the ritardando, thereby allowing the music to maintain its momentum.

Nevertheless, Brown sees the work as Parry's finest achievement: 'In the hands of a conductor as committed to this piece as one might be to those other E minor symphonies by Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák and Sibelius, audiences would discover Parry worthy of their attention'.

Brown provides one of the most comprehensive explorations of the symphonies of Potter, Bennett, Stanford and Parry to date. But Diana McVeagh, Michael Kennedy, Jerrold Northrop Moore, Robert Anderson, James Hepokoski (in Holoman's *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony*) and others have already given us detailed analyses of Elgar's two symphonies. What new insights can Brown offer? He clearly loves the First Symphony (he calls the motto theme 'one of the most memorable themes in all symphonic music'), and he provides a detailed account of the formal and tonal structure of each movement. This is particularly helpful in the case of the first, which initially confused even August Jaeger. He also points out that the use of F sharp minor in the second movement serves as a transition from D minor in the first movement to D major in the third. In fact, Brown observes, 'it might be more correct to view this as a symphony in D that begins and ends in A flat'.[4] Furthermore, Brown's extensive study of earlier Continental composers enables him to see that Elgar's use of a motto to unify his symphony reflects similar strategies in the last three symphonies of Schumann.

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4 This is essentially the conclusion reached by J.P.E. Harper-Scott in *Edward Elgar, Modernist* [ed.].

Brown finds much to admire in the Elgar's Second but believes that, after the second movement ('one of the composer's finest creations'), the quality of the work declines: 'Unlike the First Symphony, where both the movements and the cycle cohere and every gesture seems inevitable, the Second Symphony's scherzo and finale are more like a collage of materials arbitrarily placed into the same environment'. Nonetheless, on the strength of the first two movements, he sees the work as second only to Elgar's First in the history of the English symphony:

> Elgar's two completed symphonies are, outside of England, some of the most ignored great works of the repertoire. Both of them, despite some weakness, are masterworks. Elgar had a sure sense of form, a melodic gift equal to any of his contemporaries, a high level of orchestral control, and an ability to develop, transform, and vary his materials to fine overall effect.

While I have concentrated on the treatment of British symphonists, Brown has similar insights to offer about many French and Russian composers. Here again, familiar figures like Chaikovsky and Saint-Säens stand side-by-side with lesser-known composers such as Kalinnikov (1866-1901), whose First Symphony was heard in Vienna, Berlin, Paris and New York, and Albéric Magnard (1865-1914), whose Fourth Symphony (1914) Brown considers 'one of the most effective and accomplished symphonies of the French school'.

I read this book with a growing appreciation of the scale of Brown's achievement and with a strong sense of gratitude to Brian Hart for seeing the book through to completion. The series as a whole deserves the attention of anyone with a serious interest in music. Like the earlier volumes, this latest book was praised by *Choice*, the American Library Association's magazine for academic libraries. They rated it as 'highly recommended', not only for upper-division undergraduates, faculty and professionals, but also for general readers.

Certainly conductors, writers about music – particularly writers of programme notes – and serious music students of all kinds will find *The Symphonic Repertoire* a treasure-trove of information and analysis. In fact, many would want the book for the bibliographic overviews alone. And where else would they find a five-page discussion of Parry's Second Symphony? In this age of thrift, the series may be a strain on a reader's budget, but, if that's the case, the local library might be persuaded to acquire it. For my part, I'm thankful to Brown and Hart for introducing me to the music of Potter, Bennett and many other neglected composers, and I'm sure I'll be reaching for this book often. In the meantime, I've ordered the companion volume about German and Nordic composers. I'm eager to see what Brown has to say about that Schumann symphony I've been listening to.

Frank Beck

Kevin Allen: *This Charming Island ...*

Alverstoke: Kevin Allen 2010

£6 inc. p&p

ii + 34 pages

ISBN 0-9531227-5-1

This latest in the series of booklets from Kevin Allen tells the story of Edward and Alice Elgar's honeymoon at Shanklin and Ventnor on the Isle of Wight. As usual, Kevin has thoroughly researched his topic, and presents a wealth of fascinating detail within a thoroughly readable little book. It is comprehensively illustrated, and includes facsimiles of diary pages for the relevant period. It is unfortunate that these, along with the majority of the illustrations, are not reproduced with total clarity. My transcript of these pages from his diary may be found on the Elgar Society website for those needing a little help![5]

The book may be obtained from the Birthplace, which incidentally still has copies available of the previous book in the series: The *Portsmouth North End Choral Society, Elgar, and Caractacus* (Kevin Allen 2007).[6]

Martin Bird

5 www.elgar.org/honeymoon.htm.

6 This was not sent to the Journal for review at the time of publication.

REVIEWS OF MUSIC

Elgar: *Andante and Allegro* **for Oboe Quartet**
Ledbury: Acuta Music, 2008

Chopin, orchestrated by Elgar: *Funeral March* **from the B flat minor sonata**
Ledbury: Acuta Music, 2010

The *Andante and Allegro* seems to have been composed when Elgar was about 21, no doubt for domestic use, since his brother was learning the oboe; the words 'Xmas music' appear on the oboe part. The ensemble is that of Mozart's wonderful quartet K. 370: oboe, violin, viola, and cello. The Andante is in G major, an oboe aria over continual violin semiquavers and sustained viola and cello, the former frequently being required to play two-note chords. The movement ends with the violin liberating itself from the middle register to ascend to the heights, *perdendosi*, and diminuendo to *ppp*. Otherwise the music would not be much affected if the string parts were arranged for piano. By contrast, in the G minor Allegro the oboe part is agile and contrasts scherzo-like staccato with *dolce* lyricism, while the strings participate in thematic work, all three contributing characteristic material (including *pizzicato*).

'Characteristic', that is, in that the music acquires vitality from the variety of textures and instrumental deployment. The group that kindly played it over for me considered it pleasant enough, but wondered how I knew it was by Elgar. Indeed, there is little if anything to characterize it as his work, but c.1878 that was to be expected, and it is a useful addition to the modest repertory for this ensemble. The editor has filled out the dynamics and articulation from the scanty markings in the source (which consists of separate parts, not a score); although these markings are not typographically distinguished from the original they are uncontroversial. The Acuta edition is of both score and parts, the latter clearly laid out and easy to use, without page-turns as the music lasts only about six minutes in all.

Robert Kay informs me that 'unless *Beau Brummel* turns up' Elgar's orchestration of Chopin's celebrated Funeral March completes Acuta Music's project of publishing all late Elgar works not previously available. Elgar undertook this for HMV in 1932, transposing it up a whole tone; with the Third Symphony in the

offing he may have been glad to exercise his skills in the key of C minor. There is nothing here corresponding to the gloriously non-Baroque sounds he found for Bach's C minor Fantasia and Fugue (still less the splendid stylistic outrage of Schoenberg's Bach orchestrations). The orchestra is large but not exceptionally so and the percussion is used with restraint in scoring more Elgarian than Chopinesque – not surprisingly, since Chopin was never interested in forging a personal orchestral sound. Elgar's careful articulation is much in evidence in the accompaniment where strings play staccato, woodwind semi-staccato, and a muted horn legato, a method designed, perhaps, as equivalent to light piano pedalling. Interventions from horns and flutes colour the first statement of the melody and such delicate colour-changes are also apparent in the lyrical middle section, where trumpets remind us of the dead march dotted rhythm (bars 47–50). While it is surely more sensitive than the wind-band and brass-band renderings, Elgar's Chopin would not, of course, be playable on the march.

Julian Rushton