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# The Elgar Society Journal

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*The Editor does not necessarily agree with the views expressed by contributors,  
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*Front Cover: Gustav Mahler and Edward Elgar at the age of 23 (Wolfgang Schreiber, Gustav Mahler, Reinbek 1971, p. 34; Arthur Reynolds' collection)*

**Notes for Contributors.** Please adhere to these as far as possible if you deliver writing (as is much preferred) in Microsoft Word (doc or docx files). A longer version is available in case you are prepared to do the formatting, but for the present the editor is content to do this.

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### ***Presentation of written text:***

**Subheadings:** longer articles benefit from judicious use of these.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Editorial

Dear fellow members of the Elgar Society,

Usually it hardly springs a surprise when the editorship of a musical journal changes. However, when about 18 months ago the Executive Committee of the Elgar Society approached me, a German, to become the editor of a magazine published by a society that could hardly be more English, it was I who was rather surprised. After long and careful deliberation I accepted the invitation to contribute to the Elgar research. I would like to thank my predecessors, notably Julian Rushton and Martin Bird, for sharing their knowledge and for the inestimably valuable job they have done. They have left quite big footsteps and it is worthwhile to follow them whilst not excluding to create own ways. Let me tell you briefly what brought me to Elgar and what a non-English editor can achieve.

I currently live in the South-West of Germany as a professional writer, broadcaster, translator and music manager. I have been a member of the Elgar Society for about twenty years but became interested in British music about forty years ago. Born near Paderborn – where in the mid-1970s one of my favourite authors, Ian Mc Ewan, visited his father who was based there as an army officer (which I did not know at the time, of course) – I grew up as one of two sons of expellees: my mother came from Silesia, my father from East Prussia, which explains the surname. I became acquainted with Sir Edward's music in the early 1980s when one evening I was watching a TV report about Jacqueline du Pré, followed by the complete cello concerto by Elgar with one of its greatest interpreters. I was so stunned and overwhelmed by this touching music and Jacqueline du Pré's powerful performance that, the very next day, I went to a record shop and bought the du Pré/Barbirolli LP (one of the most expensive LPs I have ever purchased, but it was worth it).

My interest in Elgar grew over the years and, when I wrote my book about 19<sup>th</sup> and 20<sup>th</sup> century British composers, he was certainly one of the most important among them. Over the years I have written several books – biographies of Sullivan, Janáček and Verdi, a book on opera etc. – and I edited others, among them *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert & Sullivan*, the by now three volumes of the international book series *SullivanPerspektiven* as well as 16 editions of the *Sullivan-Journal*, the magazine of the German Sullivan Society. Whenever I could I presented Elgar in German radio broadcasts, pre-concert talks, essays, lectures and concerts. As a counsellor for the prestigious musicological German book series 'Musik-Konzepte' I took up the cudgels for Elgar and he became part of the systematically edited 'English branch' in the series (with Sullivan in 2011, Elgar in 2013, Britten in 2015, Vaughan Williams in 2018, and some more in the pipeline; for the Elgar volume I recommended and translated essays by Julian Rushton, Benedict Taylor and J. P. E. Harper-Scott).

In 2009 I founded the Deutsche Sullivan-Gesellschaft e.V. (the German Sullivan Society) which is committed to promoting classical British music in Germany – unlike Elgar Sullivan covered all musical genres. In 2015 I became the founder-director of 'Britannia in Bamberg – Tage der britischen Musik', the only festival in central Europe that promotes classical music by composers born in Britain from the middle ages up to the present time. In April 2015 we presented an Elgar weekend (with films, readings from the letters and diaries, and concerts with the complete

music for strings and the major chamber music works) with support from the Elgar Society and family: no less a person than Hilary Elgar wrote some introductory words for the programme book. In April 2017 another cooperation with the internationally acclaimed Bamberg Symphony Orchestra adds live-performances of *The Dream of Gerontius* to the third festival. The support of the Elgar Society was a major contribution to helping start the Bamberg Festival, and awarding me the Certificate of Merit presented to me by Paul Grafton during one of the concerts was a very great honour.

I would like to thank Paul Grafton for his encouragement and his interest in the German-British Elgar connection, Geoffrey Scargill for his untiring efforts to promote Elgar outside Britain, Steven Halls for his trust and support as well as Martin Bird for sharing his expertise and experience with me. With this background you can be sure that you will still read essays by the well-known and established authors such as Kevin Allen with the first part of his study on Dora Penny. However, I would also like to encourage young researchers and non-British scholars to delve into Elgar's time and his achievements and share inspiring discoveries about one of the greatest 20<sup>th</sup> century composers. This is what Elgar is to me – to be honest, I am not really interested in 'Englishness in music' or 'solution no. 9,748' of the Enigma: I prefer finding paths towards some hitherto unknown regions of research. One of these yet not reconnoitred areas is the contemporaneity of Edward Elgar and Gustav Mahler which is explored by Alexander Odefey in the present and the forthcoming issue.

I look forward to a fruitful cooperation during my editorship and hope that we will enjoy the journey of discovery together!

Meinhard Saremba

# Edward Elgar and Gustav Mahler: The possibility of an encounter (part one)

**Alexander Odefey**

## *Introduction*

Elgar's fame as the leading composer of his country and as an important figure in European music evolved in the first decade of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It was at the same time that Mahler was no longer seen only as a highly respected conductor and director of opera houses, but was also becoming more and more accepted as a composer.

Mahler and Elgar were indeed close contemporaries: Gustav Mahler was born on 7 July 1860 and died at the age of fifty on 18 May 1911. Edward Elgar, born 2 June 1857, was three years older than Mahler, but had survived him by more than two decades when he died on 23 February 1934, aged seventy-six. Both of them met several fellow composers, and Antonín Dvořák, Gabriel Fauré, Frederick Delius, Richard Strauss, Jean Sibelius were among those who met with Elgar and with Mahler. Strauss, it seems, was the only one to have had a closer, almost cordial relationship with both men. Of course, there were also various conductors, instrumentalists and singers who personally knew both Elgar and Mahler.

From this, the question arises whether there might possibly have been an encounter between Elgar and Mahler, too. Trying to find an answer, it seems reasonable to begin with a look at the places where they lived and worked.

Mahler spent his life at different places in the Austro-Hungarian Empire and the German Empire. Born in Kalischt (Kaliště) in Bohemia, a village near the Bohemian-Moravian border, he spent his childhood in the Moravian town of Iglau (Jihlava), 35 km to the south-east, where the family had moved a few months after his birth. From 1875 to 1878 Mahler attended the Conservatory in Vienna, and in the years that followed he frequently returned to the Austrian capital, just as he, of course, visited his parents' home in Iglau. His professional career as a conductor started with brief appointments at theatres in Bad Hall (June to August 1880), Laibach (September 1881 to April 1882) and Olmütz (January to March 1883). Following this he held positions at the opera houses in Kassel (October 1883 to July 1885), Prague (July 1885 to July 1886) and Leipzig (July 1886 to May 1888) before he went to Budapest to take up in October 1888 the post of the director of the Royal Hungarian Opera. Subsequently Mahler accepted an appointment as chief conductor (*Erster Kapellmeister*) at the *Stadt-Theater* in Hamburg, where he remained from March 1891 to April 1897. While this was his longest engagement so far – and a highly successful one, too – the crowning achievement of his career surely was his time at the Hofoper in Vienna from May 1897 to December 1907 (he was its director from October 1897). Finally he spent the seasons 1907/08 to 1910/11 in New York, the first two as conductor at the Metropolitan Opera, the other two as artistic director and conductor of the New York Philharmonic. Four times he crossed the Atlantic Ocean in

autumn, returning to Europe the following April.

In contrast, Elgar lived in England his entire life: most of the time in or not very far from Worcester, some years also in London.

Of course, the reasons for these differences between the two composers are to be found in their contrasting careers. Mahler started, not yet twenty years old, an occupation as an opera conductor that took him to several cities. On the other hand Elgar had chosen, more or less voluntarily, a life as a freelance musician and composer. He carried out his several musical activities in the vicinity of his native Worcester. When in later years he was invited to conduct his compositions at the most important English music festivals or in London, he was easily able to do this from Malvern and Hereford. And, needless to say, the same is true for his lectures at Birmingham University, when he was holding the Peyton Professorship between 1905 and 1908.

Of great importance for the question if Mahler and Elgar have ever met is, however, the fact that Elgar regularly made journeys abroad, both to go on holiday and to conduct his compositions. Moreover, Mahler was only once in his life in the United Kingdom. Therefore a meeting between the two composers can only have happened in the course of that stay or during one of Elgar's journeys abroad. Let us look closely at these cases now in chronological order. Within my considerations I will also touch on other aspects of their lives, similarities as well as differences.

### *The 1880s: Elgar's first journeys abroad*

#### **1880:**

His first journey abroad took 23-year-old Elgar in August 1880 for a week to Paris. He travelled together with Charles Pipe, a young merchant and friend who was engaged to Edward's sister Lucy. They arrived in the French capital on 18 August and visited numerous places of interest in the next days, including Versailles. Elgar, too, took the opportunity to hear Camille Saint-Saëns playing at the organ of the Église de la Madeleine. On 23 or 24 August the friends went back to Worcester.<sup>1</sup>

Mahler at that time was in Upper Austria where he had his first appointment as conductor at the theatre of Bad Hall from early June to the end of August.<sup>2</sup>

#### **1883:**

In January 1883 Elgar spent two weeks in Leipzig to see his friend Helen Weaver who was studying at the famous conservatoire of the town. He arrived on New Year's Day and experienced a rich musical programme with Helen and another young woman who was a fellow student and friend of hers. They heard concerts and opera performances with the Gewandhaus Orchestra, including works by Schumann and Brahms, but also Wagner's *Tannhäuser* und *Lohengrin*. In mid-January

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1 See Edward Elgar, *Provincial Musician. Diaries 1857–1896*, edited by Martin Bird (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2013), 4–8; Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 88f.

2 See Katharina Ulbrich, Mathilde Kubizek, Erich Wolfgang Partsch, 'Mahler in Bad Hall. Eine Dokumentation', *Nachrichten zur Mahler-Forschung* Nr. 50 (2004), 42–60; Gustav Mahler, „Verehrter Herr College!“ *Briefe an Komponisten, Dirigenten, Intendanten*, hrsg. und kommentiert von Franz Willnauer (Wien: Zsolnay, 2010), 23–26; Helmut Brenner, Reinhold Kubik, *Mahlers Welt. Die Orte seines Lebens* (St. Pölten/Salzburg: Residenz, 2011), 51f.



Elgar returned to England because he had to play the violin in William C. Stockley's Orchestra in Birmingham.<sup>3</sup>

Had his visit taken place three and a half years later, then he might have witnessed Mahler conducting the two operas in Leipzig. But at the beginning of 1883 Mahler was in Vienna and on the way to Ölmütz in Moravia, respectively, where he worked until mid-March at the *Stadttheater* as replacement for a recently dismissed conductor.<sup>4</sup>

### *The 1890s: Mahler in London / Elgar's journeys to Bavaria*

#### **1892:**

After his stay in Leipzig, nine and a half years passed until Elgar travelled abroad again. Meanwhile his life had changed considerably: He had got married to Caroline Alice Roberts on 8 May 1889, and in that year they had settled in London, where their daughter Carice had been born on 14 August 1890. But as Elgar's hopes to become established in the musical world of the capital had been dashed, he had returned with his family to Worcestershire in 1891.

Alice who was almost nine years his senior, was an affectionate and caring wife. Being a cultured and intellectual woman she helped and encouraged her husband in many ways. Her diaries reveal touchingly her concern when he was ill and her genuine gratitude when he had returned safely from a journey. Many years later she wrote down a statement, apparently characteristic for her: 'The care of a genius is enough of a life work for any woman.'<sup>5</sup> Mahler's wife Alma Schindler with her unquestionably egocentric attitude was surely a far cry from this. Anyway the marriages of the two composers could hardly have been more contrasting: Mahler was, when he met Alma for the first time in November 1901, at the height of his career as a conductor, and a veritable celebrity in Vienna. He also wasn't younger than his bride but nineteen years her senior.

Edward und Alice Elgar spent their honeymoon on the Isle of Wight. Their first journey abroad took place in the summer of 1892. This was also the year of Mahler's only stay in the United Kingdom mentioned above and, interestingly, both events coincided:

Mahler, who had been *Erster Kapellmeister* at the *Stadt-Theater* in Hamburg for a year, was offered in March to conduct a series of guest performances in London during June and July. To his sister Justine he wrote about it at the end of March:

I am just about to conclude my contract which obliges me to conduct the German season (Nibelungen, Tristan, Fidelio) at the Royal Opera in London in June and half of July. – This is one of the most outstanding positions for a conductor, and can possibly bring with it the most pleasant consequences for the future.<sup>6</sup>

The negotiations had been conducted by Bernhard Pollini, the impresario of the *Stadt-Theater* in Hamburg, and Sir Augustus Harris, the distinguished impresario and manager of the Royal Opera Covent Garden and the Drury Lane Theatre. In addition to Mahler, several singers from Hamburg,

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3 See Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 96–98; Elgar, *Provincial Musician*, 9.

4 See Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 29, 56; Kurt Blaukopf, *Mahler. Sein Leben, sein Werk und seine Welt in zeitgenössischen Bildern und Texten* (Wien: Universal, 1976), 164–166.

5 See Elgar, *Provincial Musician*, 14–16, quot. 16; Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 115–132.

6 Stephen McClatchie (Ed.), *The Mahler Family Letters* (Oxford: OUP 2006), 161.

among them Heldentenor Max Alvary and soprano Katharina Klafsky, and from Berlin had been engaged, complemented by a number of choral singers and orchestral players, mainly from England, but supported by guests from Germany. Once Mahler had signed the contract he began to take lessons in English in April and May with his friend, the physicist Arnold Berliner. Mahler started from Hamburg on the evening of 26 May and reached London after a 24-hour journey via Cuxhaven and Southampton. He stayed in London until 23 July.<sup>7</sup> In letters to Justine he described his impressions of the city:

London is indescribably imposing. – Here one gets a glimpse of what ‘humanity’ has become. (31 May)

The city is stunningly magnificent – its first impression on me was a bit like when I saw the sea for the first time. (first week June)<sup>8</sup>

With a population of 4.2 million (Greater London: 5.6 million), London at that time was the world’s largest city followed by New York (2.5 million) and Paris (2.4 million).

A production of Wagner’s *Siegfried* on 8 June at Covent Garden was the first in series of altogether eighteen performances conducted by Mahler that also comprised the three other parts of the *Ring*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Tannhäuser* and Beethoven’s *Fidelio*. Because of the project’s great success additional performances were given at the Drury Lane Theatre. Here is a chronological list:

8 June	Siegfried	Covent Garden
13 June	Siegfried	Drury Lane Theatre
15 June	Tristan und Isolde	Covent Garden
18 June	Tristan und Isolde	Drury Lane Theatre
22 June	Das Rheingold	Covent Garden
25 June	Tristan und Isolde	Drury Lane Theatre
27 June	Das Rheingold	Drury Lane Theatre
29 June	Die Walküre	Covent Garden
2 July	Fidelio	Drury Lane Theatre
4 July	Die Walküre	Drury Lane Theatre
6 July	Siegfried	Covent Garden
9 July	Tristan und Isolde	Drury Lane Theatre
11 July	Siegfried	Drury Lane Theatre
13 July	Götterdämmerung	Covent Garden
16 July	Tannhäuser	Covent Garden
18 July	Götterdämmerung	Drury Lane Theatre
20 July	Fidelio	Covent Garden
22 July	Tannhäuser	Covent Garden

Mahler left to his assistant conductor Leo Feld two further performances on 8 and 14 July at Drury Lane of the opera *Der Trompeter von Säckingen* by the Alsatian composer Victor Nessler, which was very popular in those days.<sup>9</sup>

7 These dates follow from Mahler’s letters to his sister Justine of 26 May, 28 May and of third week July; McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 174f., 181f. That he was to leave on 23 July he also told in his letter to Arnold Berliner of 14 July; Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, hrsg. von Herta Blaukopf (Wien: Zsolnay, 1996), 123.

8 McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 176.

9 See Andrew Nicholson, ‘Mahler in London in 1892’ in Donald Mitchell, Andrew Nicholson (Ed.), *The Mahler Companion* (Oxford: OUP, 2002), 539–546.

The whole project proved to be a huge success, indeed, both financially and with the audience and critics. Among the listeners of Mahler's conducting at Covent Garden was nineteen-year-old Ralph Vaughan Williams on whom *Tristan und Isolde* on 15 June made an equally overwhelming impression as *Götterdämmerung* did on 13 July on Gustav Holst who then was two years younger.<sup>10</sup> For the two English students of music, who were to meet in person and to start a lifelong friendship not until 1895, it was the first time they heard these works by Wagner. This surely was crucial to evoke the impression of an extraordinary event. Nevertheless Mahler's ingenious conducting might have made a major contribution to it, too. Paul Dukas, who had come to London as critic for the *Revue Hebdomadaire*, also praised Mahler's interpretation of the *Ring des Nibelungen* ('M. Mahler, un chef d'orchestre de la grande lignée', 'M. Mahler peut être comparé aux meilleurs de ses émules', 'M. Mahler a droit à la plus grande part des éloges') and many years later referred to Mahler's interpretation of *Fidelio* as one of the greatest musical memories of his life.<sup>11</sup> Elgar hadn't been in London since a short stay with Alice from 5 to 8 March. In the next months he had been working in Malvern on the *Serenade for Strings* op 20 and on his cantata *The Black Knight* op 25.<sup>12</sup> He might, however, very well have read reviews of Mahler's performances in London in various newspapers. Not least that applies to the weekly reviews by George Bernard Shaw who worked from 1890 to 1894 for *The World*. On Mahler's first appearance at Covent Garden, for example, he wrote:

Finally, I have to chronicle several curtain-calls for the energetic conductor, Herr Mahler. He knows the score thoroughly, and sets the tempi with excellent judgment. That being so, I hope he will yet succeed in getting a finer quality of execution from his band.<sup>13</sup>

Elgar and Shaw got to know each other only in March 1919, but Elgar then admitted that he had enjoyed Shaw's former reviews (which were written largely from 1885 to 1894).<sup>14</sup> Indeed, there is a possibility that Elgar and Mahler could have met right at the end of Mahler's stay in London: Elgar and his wife started for a journey to Germany on 22 July. They left their home *Forli* in Malvern in the morning and travelled by train to London. Elgar's diary entry for the day reads:

Left Forli by 8.30 train for Paddington. To Cleveland Sqr.

E called Novellos

Saw Chanot

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10 See Ursula Vaughan Williams, *R.V.W. A Biography of Ralph Vaughan Williams* (London: OUP, 1964), 34; Michael Short, *Gustav Holst. The Man and his Music* (Oxford: OUP, 1990), 17.

11 See Georges Favre, 'Les débuts de Paul Dukas dans la critique musicale', *Revue de Musicologie* 56 (1970), 54–85, quot. 57, 64, 84; Paul Stefan (Hrsg.), *Gustav Mahler: Ein Bild seiner Persönlichkeit in Widmungen* (München: Piper, 1910), 81.

12 See Elgar, *Provincial Musician*, 177–194; Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 159–164.

13 Bernard Shaw, *Music in London 1890–94. Vol. II* (London: Constable, reprint 1949), 111–116 (15 June, on *Siegfried*), 123–127 (29 June, on *Das Rheingold*), 133 (6 July, on *Die Walküre*), 141–145 (27 July, on the *Ring*), quot. 115.

14 See Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 738.

And for the 23 July it is:

E called Novellos' saw Mr Fry left 'Black Knight'

A & E to Margate. Arrived at M. 5.10 – at 8, Athelstan Rd. (Miss Baker's)<sup>15</sup>

Thus Elgar got the opportunity to be present at the last performance conducted by Mahler at Covent Garden – *Tannhäuser* – on the evening of the 22nd. In this case, however, he would have to have refrained from making an entry in his diary or to have forgotten to do so. After staying for the night and visiting his publisher Novello the next morning, where he left the manuscript of the first three scenes of *The Black Knight*, Edward and Alice took the train to Margate. Here they met with their friend Mary Frances ('Minnie') Baker, who had invited them to accompany her to Bayreuth for the Wagner Festival.<sup>16</sup>

Mahler also had left London on 23 July, early in the morning. He reached Cologne in the evening, spent the night there and started the next day for Munich, where his train arrived in the morning of 25 July. Around midday he was in Salzburg.<sup>17</sup>

Elgar, his wife and Minnie Baker started from Margate on 25 July and travelled via Dover and Ostend to Cologne, where they – just as Mahler did two days earlier – stayed for the night. They then went on to Bonn, visited the Beethoven House and continued their journey by ship up the Rhine to Mainz. Again by train they arrived in Bayreuth on 27 July.

Both Elgar and Mahler admired Wagner's music which has left its mark on their respective oeuvres.<sup>18</sup> And both of them visited the Bayreuth Festival, though not in the same year: Elgar in 1892 and in 1902; Mahler in 1883, 1889, 1891, 1894 and in 1896.

During their visit in 1892 the Elgars and Minnie Baker saw performances of *Parsifal* (28 July), *Tristan und Isolde* (29 July), *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (31 July) and a second time *Parsifal* (1 August). The next day they left Bayreuth and continued their journey: at first in Nuremberg (2 to 4 August), following the traces of Albrecht Dürer and, fittingly, Hans Sachs, then in Munich (4 to 6 August), where they visited the Alte Pinakothek – and Edward in the evening alone went to see Mascagni's *Cavalleria Rusticana* – and then in Oberstdorf (6 to 10 August). Having spent some days in the Alps they travelled back via Lindau and Constance to Heidelberg (11 to 13 August), and then via Cologne and Brussels to England. On 15 August Edward and Alice parted from Minnie Baker in Dover and went to London, where Elgar met his publishers Novello and Breitkopf & Härtel. Two days later he and Alice returned to Malvern.<sup>19</sup>

It has already been mentioned that Mahler reached Salzburg on 25 July. In the next weeks he spent his summer holiday in nearby Berchtesgaden, together with Justine, their common friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner and various other friends who came for a short visit. When his holiday

15 Elgar, *Provincial Musician*, 195.

16 See Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 159; for Minnie Baker see also Mrs Richard Powell, *Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), 3f.

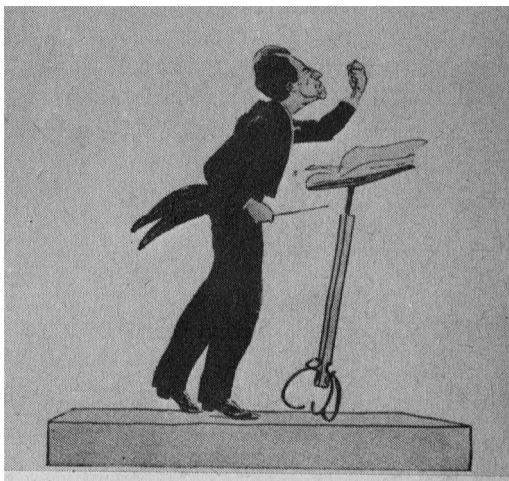
17 See Mahler's letter to Justine of third week July; McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 181f.

18 See Peter Dennison, 'Elgar and Wagner', *Music & Letters* 66 (1985), 93–109; Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler: Visionär und Despot. Porträt einer Persönlichkeit* (Zürich/Hamburg: Arche, 1998), 57–65, 154–167, 208f., 249–260; Constantin Floros, 'Studien zur Parsifal-Rezeption', *Musik-Konzepte*, Heft 25 (Richard Wagner: Parsifal) Mai 1982, 14–57; Alexander Odefey, *Gustav Mahlers „Kindertotenlieder“: Eine semantische Analyse* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1999), 242–251, 257f., 266–268, 290–294, 329f.

19 See Elgar, *Provincial Musician*, 195–200; Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 164f.

drew to a close he travelled back on 24 August via Munich and Berlin. But when he heard of a cholera outbreak in Hamburg he returned to Berchtesgaden, where he stayed for two more weeks from 30 August to mid-September. Again via Munich and Berlin he finally arrived in Hamburg on 22 September.<sup>20</sup>

Hence from 27 July to 11 August in this summer both Elgar and Mahler stayed in Bavaria (or, more precisely, in the Kingdom of Bavaria as state of the German Empire). They were, however, quite far apart from each other, as Berchtesgaden is located about 120 km south-east of Munich and at the eastern edge of the Bavarian Alps, while Oberstdorf is located in their western part (about 200 km west of Berchtesgaden).



**Mahler and Elgar  
as conductors**

In the 1890s Edward und Alice Elgar made four more summer trips to Munich and the Alps.

### **1893:**

The very next year they started from Malvern on 2 August and travelled once more via Dover and Ostend to Cologne. From there they went by ship up the Rhine, this time only as far as Bingen, and then by train via Mainz and Munich to Garmisch, where they stayed from 5 to 17 August at a guest house run by Henry Slingsby Bethell and his wife Sarah. The second half of their holiday the Elgars spent in Munich from 17 August to 3 September. At the Hofoper they saw no fewer than eight Wagner performances, conducted by Hermann Levi, Felix Mottl and Franz Fischer (there was no Bayreuth Festival in 1893): *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (17 August), *Das Rheingold* (20 August), *Die Walküre* (21 August), *Siegfried* (23 August), *Götterdämmerung* (25 August), *Die Feen*

20 See McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 181–185; Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, 124–127; Herbert Killian (Hrsg.), *Gustav Mahler in den Erinnerungen von Natalie Bauer-Lechner* (Hamburg: Wagner, 1984), 23f.; Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 152f.

(27 August), *Tristan und Isolde* (29 August) and *Tannhäuser* (1 September).<sup>21</sup> On 3 September they travelled back via Cologne, Ostend and London. Two days later they reached Malvern.<sup>22</sup>

Gustav Mahler this year spent his summer holiday in Steinbach am Attersee. His siblings Justine, Emma and Otto were there, too, and Natalie Bauer-Lechner; likewise several friends came again for a visit. He arrived on 20 June and in the next weeks composed the Andante moderato and the Scherzo of his Second Symphony, and additionally the *Wunderhorn*-Lieder *Urlicht*, *Des Antonius von Padua Fischpredigt*, *Rheinlegendchen* and possibly *Das irdische Leben*. In a letter written to his brother Alois on 23 August in Steinbach Mahler mentions his imminent departure for Hamburg. From three postcards to Justine follows that he was in Munich on the morning of 25 August, in Berlin in the evening and in Hamburg the next day.<sup>23</sup>

Mahler must have started from Steinbach on 24 August and stayed overnight in Munich. Both he and Elgar thus were in Munich on 24 August and on the morning of 25 August. Alice Elgar's diary entries for these days read:

24 August:

To National Museum with Miss Burley & Miss D. Lunched at Café de l'Opéra then to Hofbräuerei [sic!], & then ices –

E. & Miss B. & Miss D. to Tannhäuser Parody, in the evening.

25 August:

E. & A. to Nymphenburg lunch (horrid) at Volksgarten. back at 4, Miss Edwards to Coffee –  
Götterdämmerung at 6.<sup>24</sup>

Rosa Burley, the headmistress of the girls' school *The Mount* in Malvern, where Elgar had been teaching violin since 1891, and her pupil Alice Davey had come to Munich, too. Together with the Elgars they saw at the Hofoper all the Wagner performances Edward had chosen. In her memoir Rosa Burley recalled that Elgar, her pupil and she had gone 'one night by way of relaxation' to the mentioned parody of *Tannhäuser* at another theatre in the city:

The humour – provided in the main by a Venus more huge even than a Wagner soprano – was not very subtle and perhaps our imperfect knowledge of German saved us a certain amount of embarrassment, but we laughed so immoderately that to Alice Davey [...] the evening is still one of the outstanding memories of the holiday.<sup>25</sup>

Is it possible that Mahler attended it, too? No information seems to have survived on how he spent the evening of 24 August.

21 Levi conducted the complete *Ring*, Mottl *Meistersinger* and *Tristan*, Fischer *Die Feen* and *Tannhäuser*. See the announcement in *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 60 (1893), 334.

22 See Elgar, *Provincial Musician*, 252–258; Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 172–177.

23 See McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 236–238; Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, 132f.; Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 154; Killian, *Gustav Mahler in den Erinnerungen von Natalie Bauer-Lechner*, 25–34.

24 Elgar, *Provincial Musician*, 256f.

25 Rosa Burley, Frank C. Carruthers, *Edward Elgar: the record of a friendship* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1972), 70.



## 1894:

This summer Edward und Alice Elgar left Malvern on 31 July and travelled via London, Harwich, Hoek van Holland and Cologne to Munich, where they arrived on the evening of 2 August. The next morning they continued their journey, as in the previous year, to Garmisch. They stayed for six weeks there, again with the Bethells, and went on walking tours and even on a six-day excursion to Innsbruck via Mittenwald. A week later, on 25 August, they took the train to Oberammergau to be present at the inaugural recital on a new Steinmeyer organ at the Parish Church St. Peter und Paul. In the afternoon Edward introduced himself to the organist and afterwards played the new instrument himself. On their way back to England the Elgars stopped off at Munich from 13 to 18 September. Again they visited two Wagner performances: *Götterdämmerung* (13 September) and *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* (16 September). Then they went home by train via Frankfurt (where they saw the Goethe House), Cologne, Bruges, Ostend and London. They reached Malvern on 21 September.<sup>26</sup>

Mahler, too, in 1894 spent his summer holiday in a way similar to the previous year: he arrived on 6 or 7 June in Steinbach am Attersee and first stayed there until 26 July. During this time he composed the final movement of his Second Symphony, the inspiration for which had come to him on 29 March in Hamburg, when he attended the memorial service for Hans von Bülow. Additionally he made a trip to Ischl to meet Johannes Brahms. On 26 July Mahler left Steinbach and took the train to Munich, where he stayed for two nights. On 28 July he was in Bayreuth. There he repeatedly met with Cosima Wagner and heard *Parsifal* under Hermann Levi (29 July), *Tannhäuser* under Richard Strauss (30 July) and *Lohengrin* under Felix Mottl (3 August). From 31 July to 1 August he made a slight detour to Marienbad before on 5 August he travelled back from Bayreuth via Munich to Steinbach. (Elgar's short stay in Munich on 2 and 3 August thus happened just between Mahler's two stays there.) Having spent two more weeks on the Attersee, Mahler on 21 August set off for Hamburg, where he arrived after short visits in Vienna and Berlin on 27 August.<sup>27</sup>

## 1895:

For the fourth consecutive year – and even on the same day as in the previous year, 31 July – Edward and Alice Elgar started at Malvern on a journey to the Continent. Via London, Dover and Ostend they reached Bruges shortly after midnight. They met an old friend there, visited the town, and Elgar played golf on two occasions. On 4 August they travelled by train via Cologne, Würzburg and Regensburg (with the *Walhalla*) to Passau, and from there on 8 August by ship down the Danube to Linz. The next day they went from Linz to Salzburg (further details on this route shortly). After a walk through the city on 10 August, including a visit to Mozart's birthplace, and a trip to the Wolfgangsee on the following day, the Elgars stayed in Berchtesgaden from 12 to 15 August and then for a week in Kitzbühel. From there they went to Innsbruck on 24 August and finally reached Garmisch on 27 August, where they once again stayed with the Bethells though, because of the longer journey out, only for two weeks and not for six as in the previous year. For the first time during a journey abroad Elgar worked on a composition: In Berchtesgaden he learned that Edward Capel-Cure had finished a first version of the libretto for *Lux Christi* and asked for it to

26 See Elgar, *Provincial Musician*, 299–307; Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 180.

27 See Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, 135–139; McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 281–284; Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 155, 158f., 165–169.

be sent to Kitzbühel. There and/or in Garmisch Elgar made first sketches. To his biographer Robert Buckley he later told that the beginning of No. 3 (Recit. and Chorus 'As Jesus passed by') had been written 6,000 feet above sea-level, and thus had 'at least that claim to be called high art'.<sup>28</sup> On 11 September the Elgars took the train to Munich, where in the evening they saw a performance of Wagner's *Der Fliegende Holländer*. Two days later they boarded the Orient Express and after short stopovers in Strasbourg and Paris reached Malvern via Dieppe and London on 19 September.<sup>29</sup>

As in the two previous years, Mahler spent his summer holiday in Steinbach am Attersee, and again his sisters Justine and Emma, and Natalie Bauer-Lechner joined him there. This time Mahler's stay lasted from the beginning of June to 18 August, broken only by an excursion to Ischl in the first half of July. There he met once more with Brahms: 'Brahms is immensely kind', he wrote on a postcard to Justine from 3 July.<sup>30</sup> In this summer Mahler composed in his *Komponierhäuschen* (little composing hut), situated directly at the shore of the Attersee, the movements 2–6 of his Third Symphony. Travelling back via Berlin, he returned to Hamburg at the end of August.<sup>31</sup>

Considering Elgar's and Mahler's weeks of holiday in the years 1892 to 1894, there are to be found in each of these years a number of dates at which both composers simultaneously stayed in the Alps. The distances, however, between Oberstdorf and Berchtesgaden (in 1892) and between Garmisch and Steinbach (in 1893 and 1894) were quite substantial. In August 1895 the situation was clearly different as Elgar visited Salzburg and Berchtesgaden, let alone the Wolfgangsee located only 20 km from Steinbach. In fact, there are extant documents showing that he then came even closer to his Austrian fellow composer. This happened on 9 August on the way from Linz to Salzburg. On a postcard from Linz to his mother Ann, Elgar wrote the evening before:

Linz Thursday night

Arrived all safely at 7: can hear the Danube rushing under our window: rather cold weather we could do with a little sun: tomorrow Salzburg via two lovely lakes &c &c much love E.E.<sup>32</sup>

Further details on those 'lovely lakes' can be found both in Alice's diary and in a notebook Elgar kept on this holiday. It is important here to remember that the Attersee then (and sometimes today as well) was known as 'Kammersee', too, named after the water castle and little village at the north shore of the lake. Alice's diary entry for 9 August reads:

Left Linz about 9 a.m. at S. Laurenz & then to Kammer – Down the lake to [gap] walked to Unterach – lunched there & then down the Mondsee to [gap] & so by train to Salzburg about 9. Hotel Am Stein.<sup>33</sup>

28 Robert J. Buckley, *Sir Edward Elgar* (London/New York: Lane, 1905), 34.

29 See Elgar, *Provincial Musician*, 352–361; Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 196.

30 McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 287.

31 See Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, 148–151; McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 287f.; Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, *Briefwechsel 1888–1911*, hrsg. und mit einem musikhistorischen Essay versehen von Herta Blaukopf (München: Piper, 1980), 47f.; Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 159–161; Killian, *Gustav Mahler in den Erinnerungen von Natalie Bauer-Lechner*, 35–37.

32 Elgar Birthplace Museum letter 4679.

33 Elgar, *Provincial Musician*, 354.



And Edward recorded in his notebook:

Friday Aug 9.

Linz to Salzburg

Nice Austrian in the train. Glad to leave Linz, not interesting. Got out at Vöcklabruck then down the Alter to Kammer See to Unterach nice Austrian, sent our bags by Omnibus & walked, pretty walk to See, down the Mondsee by steamer to [blank] then by train to Salzburg, arriving about 6.30. Nice old Austrian musician in train.

Salzburg Hotel am Stein very very nice.<sup>34</sup>

The Elgars thus travelled by train (*Alte Westbahn*) from Linz via Wels to Vöcklabruck, where they changed to the small 'Kammerer Bahn' that took them along the river Ager (Elgar inadvertently wrote 'Alter') to the final stop *Kammer am Attersee*. There they boarded a steamer and went down the 20 km long lake. On the boat, Alice wrote a postcard to Ann Elgar:

Kammer See

Going down this lovely blue lake en route to Salzburg where D.V. we arrive to-night. Lovely day but so cool great mountains in view & all [one word illegible]. Bought this flying from train to steamer. E. well & so angry with Austrian money.

Love E. & A.<sup>35</sup>

At which landing stage the Elgars left the boat is uncertain. In Alice's diary there is a gap. Surely she made the entry some time later and couldn't remember the name of the place, which in any case could not have been very far from Unterach at the south-west shore of the Attersee.

All this implies that Edward and Alice Elgar must have passed Mahler's composing hut at a short distance, especially as the hut is located at the point of the lake's smallest width. And it is undoubtedly possible that Mahler at this very moment was working there on his Third Symphony.

For the sake of completeness let us have a look on the Elgars' remaining travel route that day. Following their lunch in Unterach they had their luggage transported by omnibus, while they walked to the nearby Mondsee. During a rest Alice wrote a second postcard to Ann Elgar:

Unterach ~~Thursday~~ Friday. 2 P.M. We are walking from one lake (Kammer) to the other, Mondsee, & are resting in a lovely wood full of ferns I wish I cd. send you, & a blue lake at our feet & lovely mountains. We go over another lake by steamer & then by train to Salzburg. E. is very happy & the grasshoppers singing their loudest. It is a glorious day & quite hot now – There is a mill & stream rushing just below us. Not an English human being to be seen anywhere but people so friendly

Our love yrs C.A.E.<sup>36</sup>

Hence, after a steamer trip across the Mondsee they took the only recently completed (and in 1957 discontinued) *Salzkammergut-Localbahn* to Salzburg.

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34 Ibid., 463.

35 Elgar Birthplace Museum letter 4689.

36 Elgar Birthplace Museum letter 4687. I am very grateful to Martin Bird for letting me know the text of the three postcards here mentioned.

## 1897:

In 1896 Elgar was occupied with completing, preparing the printing, rehearsing and giving the first performance of two large works: the oratorio *The Light of Life (Lux Christi)* op. 29 and the cantata *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* op. 30, which were very successfully premiered under his baton on 8 September at the Worcester Festival and on 30 October at the North Staffordshire Music Festival, respectively. Because of that the Elgars did not travel abroad this year.

In August 1897 they continued their little tradition of visiting Bavaria in the summer, and, as in 1893 and 1894, Munich and Garmisch were their destinations. Without long preparations they started from Malvern on 10 August and reached Munich via London and Cologne two days later. That evening they saw a performance of *Tristan und Isolde*, conducted by Richard Strauss. The next morning Edward and Alice Elgar left for Garmisch. They stayed there for three weeks, met old friends, went on walking tours and excursions and even once attended a fancy-dress ball, with Elgar dressed up as a Japanese Magnate (referring to Gilbert & Sullivan's *The Mikado*). On their way back they stayed again in Munich from 1 to 4 September. On all three evenings they heard music: Mozart's *Don Giovanni* in the epoch-making production of Strauss and director Ernst von Possart,<sup>37</sup> *Der Fliegende Holländer* under Hugo Röhr<sup>38</sup> and a concert of the Kaim Orchestra. On 4 September they returned via Cologne to London, where Elgar had to conduct orchestral rehearsals for the upcoming Hereford Festival.<sup>39</sup>

After having resigned his post at the *Stadt-Theater*, Gustav Mahler left Hamburg in April 1897. On 11 May he gave his debut at the Vienna Hofoper with *Lohengrin*. From 13 June to 29 July he spent his summer holiday in Kitzbühel and Innsbruck (where Elgar had been for some days two and three years ago), and also in further places of the Tyrol and South Tyrol.<sup>40</sup>

There was no overlapping with Elgar's summer holiday this year, as Mahler had to return to his duties in Vienna at the end of July and Elgar left Malvern only on 10 August.

## *The years 1901 and 1902: Further journeys to Germany*

### *December 1901 and January 1902:*

More than four years passed until Elgar travelled abroad again. In this period his reputation as a composer grew steadily. So the first performance of his cantata *Caractacus* op. 35 on 5 October 1898 at the Leeds Festival was a considerable success, and no less than Queen Victoria had accepted its dedication. In the next year the famous premieres of the *Enigma Variations* op. 36 under Hans Richter on 19 June at St. James's Hall and of the orchestral song cycle *Sea Pictures* op. 37 on 5 October at the Norwich Festival under Elgar himself with Clara Butt as the soloist brought him to national prominence. The story of the first performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* op. 38 on 3 October 1900 at the Birmingham Triennial Festival is well known: the eagerly awaited

37 See Raymond Holden, *The Virtuoso Conductors. The Central European Tradition from Wagner to Karajan* (New Haven/London: Yale UP, 2005), 130, 306.

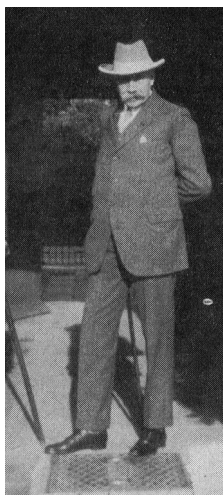
38 See *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 64 (1897), 579.

39 See Edward Elgar, *Road to Recognition. Diaries 1897–1901*, edited by Martin Bird (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2015), 45–48; Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 226.

40 See Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, 247–253; McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 318–320; Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 214–218; Killian, *Gustav Mahler in den Erinnerungen von Natalie Bauer-Lechner*, 93–95.

premiere, the significantly less than perfect execution and the composer's bitter disappointment. Nevertheless Elgar had received much acclaim by the audience, and the critics realised the work's quality. Deeply impressed by the composition was the German conductor Julius Buths, musical director in Düsseldorf since 1890, who had come to Birmingham.

Buths then conducted in Düsseldorf the first performances in Germany of the *Enigma Variations* on 7 February 1901 and of *The Dream of Gerontius* on 19 December 1901. His invitation to attend the latter Elgar accepted with pleasure. With Alice he started from Malvern on 16 December. August Jaeger joined them in London, and together they arrived in Düsseldorf the next morning. During their stay all three were guests at Ehrenstraße 17, where Buths lived with his wife and their two daughters. After various rehearsals the performance took place at the Tonhalle. It was a triumphant success: Elgar was called to the platform after each part and given an ovation.



**Mahler and Elgar throw themselves into a pose**

The Elgars spent Christmas with the Buths family, and travelled to Mainz on 26 December, where they met with Henry Ettling and Fritz Volbach. On 31 December they returned to England, stayed New Year's Day in London and were in Malvern the next day.<sup>41</sup>

Mahler's life took an important turn when he made the nearer acquaintance of Alma Schindler at a dinner party in Vienna on 7 November 1901. In respect of music this month was equally eventful for him, as he conducted the first performance of his Fourth Symphony in Munich on 25 November, albeit with a negative reception by the audience and the critics. From 9 to 21 December Mahler travelled to Berlin and Dresden. First he conducted, after several days of rehearsal, his new symphony on 16 December at Richard Strauss's Berlin series of *Novitätenkonzerten*. To his disappointment it evoked even more hostile reactions than three weeks earlier in Munich. After this he went to Dresden to attend a performance of his Second Symphony under Ernst von Schuch on 20 December, that at least by the audience was warmly received. The next day he was back in Vienna, where he stayed until the end of January 1902, conducting at the Hofoper and presenting

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41 See Elgar, *Road to Recognition*, 389–395; Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 362.

his new work here, too. Furthermore he became engaged to Alma on 23 December.<sup>42</sup>

### *May and June 1902:*

After the very successful performance in December Julius Buths had decided to give another performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* at the Lower Rhenish Musical Festival, which took place at Whitsuntide 1902 at the Tonhalle. Edward and Alice left Malvern on 16 May and, after a short stopover in London, reached Düsseldorf the next day. This time they lived with the family von Weise whom they had got to know in December. On 18 May the Festival opened with a performance of Bach's Mass in B minor BWV 232 that Alice, according to her diary, found 'most splendid'.<sup>43</sup> The programme of the second concert next day (Whitmonday) comprised *The Dream of Gerontius* under Buths as a first part, followed by Liszt's 'Faust' Symphony, conducted by Richard Strauss. Elgar received an overwhelming triumph and August Jaeger wrote in a review for *The Musical Times*:

The work was immediately recognised by the many musicians present from far and near as one of remarkable originality, surpassing beauty, and genuine worth. Professor Buths conducted with a wholehearted enthusiasm and a conspicuous appreciation of its beauties. The fortunate composer was called to the platform again and again after both parts and cheered to the echo. No greater success, I was told, has been achieved by a new choral work of similar dimensions at these Festivals within living memory, and a great triumph for English music can thus be chronicled.<sup>44</sup>

The last concert on 20 May (with compositions by Beethoven, Mozart, Brahms, Strauss and Bach) was followed by a dinner in the course of which Strauss unexpectedly made his famous speech, praising *The Dream of Gerontius* and its composer: 'I raise my glass to the welfare and success of the first English Progressivist, Meister Edward Elgar, and of the young progressive School of English composers.'<sup>45</sup>

Moved by these events, the Elgars stayed for another day in Düsseldorf, before they left on 22 May for Kassel. Two days later they travelled to Eisenach, then further on Bach's tracks to Leipzig and finally to Dresden, where from 25 to 31 May they saw the sights, attended performances at the Semperoper and made an excursion to the Elbe Sandstone Mountains. On their way back they again stopped off at Eisenach. In the afternoon of 2 June (Elgar's 45th birthday) they visited the Wartburg. Late in the evening they took the train to Düsseldorf, where they arrived the next morning. There they once more met the families von Weise and Buths. In the late afternoon they continued their journey and reached London in the morning of 4 June. That evening Edward and Alice at the Queen's Hall heard Strauss conducting his orchestral works *Don Juan* op. 20, *Tod und Verklärung* op. 24 and *Till Eulenspiegels lustige Streiche* op. 28. They lunched with him afterwards and met him also during

42 See Gustav Mahler, *Ein Glück ohne Ruh'.* *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma. Erste Gesamtausgabe*, hrsg. und erläutert von Henry-Louis de La Grange und Günther Weiß, Redaktion: Knud Martner (Berlin: Siedler, 1995), 76–126; Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 2. Vienna: The Years of Challenge (1897–1904)* (Oxford: OUP, 1995), 392–403, 409–416 u. 439–455; Killian, *Gustav Mahler in den Erinnerungen von Natalie Bauer-Lechner*, 201–204.

43 Edward Elgar, *The Path to Knighthood. Diaries 1902–1904*, edited by Martin Bird (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2016), 44.

44 August Jaeger, 'Lower Rhenish Musical Festival', *The Musical Times* 43 (1902), 402–403.

45 So Jaeger (*ibid.*, 402).

the next two days. On the evening of 6 June they were back home in Malvern.<sup>46</sup> Elgar summarized his impressions of the last three weeks in a letter to Nicholas Kilburn, written the next day:

We only reached home last night after our long German rambles [...]. We had a glorious time at Düsseldorf [...]. Strauss is absolutely great – wonderful and terrifying but somewhat cynical – his music I mean. He is a real clever good man.<sup>47</sup>

Strauss in those days also was in close contact with Gustav Mahler, who had come from Vienna to the Rhineland at the end of May to prepare the first performance of his Third Symphony. This took place on 9 June in Krefeld during the annual Tonkünstlerfest of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein, whose president Strauss had been since the previous year. Mahler conducted the first rehearsals on 3 and 4 June in Cologne, then, with Alma (they had been married on 9 March), he went to Krefeld for further rehearsals with the Cologne Gürzenich Orchestra and the Städtische Kapelle Krefeld. On the evening of the premiere the hall was filled to capacity. In the audience were fellow composers such as Engelbert Humperdinck, Eugen d'Albert, Max von Schillings and, of course, Strauss, who had arrived in time from London, and the conductors Julius Buths and Willem Mengelberg. Had the first performance of the Fourth Symphony half a year ago been a failure, now Mahler witnessed a stunning success. Alma reports in her memoirs that there was tremendous acclaim at the end of the first movement and that Strauss advanced to the platform and applauded pointedly. Then she continues: 'The enthusiasm rose higher with each movement and at the end the whole audience got up from their seats in a frenzy and surged to the front in a body.'<sup>48</sup> The reviews in the press were hugely positive, too, and Mahler noticed with satisfaction the recognition he had now got not only as a conductor but as a composer. Even many years later he spoke happily of this stay in Krefeld.<sup>49</sup>

The premiere of Mahler's Third Symphony took place to a day three weeks after the Düsseldorf performance of Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*. Thus an Austrian composer living in Vienna and an English composer from Worcester almost simultaneously achieved great and important successes in the Rhineland, in two cities separated from each other by only 20 km. Incidentally, there exists a letter from Buths to Elgar of 19 July,<sup>50</sup> from which it is apparent that Buths had advised him to come to the Tonkünstlerfest at Krefeld. Yet Elgar didn't adopt the proposal as he intended to begin as soon as possible with the preparations for the performance of his *Coronation Ode* op. 44, that was to take place on 30 June at Covent Garden as part of the coronation festivities for King Edward VII. (Since the King then became ill with appendicitis, the coronation had to be postponed and Elgar's *Ode* received its premiere at the Sheffield Festival in October.) Had Elgar followed Buths' advice, the latter surely would have introduced Mahler to him in Krefeld. But as it was, the nearest they approached each other was on 3 June, when Elgar was in Düsseldorf and Mahler in Cologne.

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46 See Elgar, *The Path to Knighthood*, 42–54; Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 368f.

47 Elgar, *The Path to Knighthood*, 54f.

48 Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler: Memories and Letters* (New York: The Viking Press, 1946), 38.

49 See McClatchie, *The Mahler Family Letters*, 372f.; Gustav Mahler, Richard Strauss, *Briefwechsel*, 83–85; Gustav Mahler, „In Eile – wie immer!“ *Neue unbekannte Briefe*, hrsg. und kommentiert von Franz Willnauer (Wien: Zsolnay, 2016), 413–417; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 2*, 516–521, 527–532; Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 134f.; Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 268–270.

50 Elgar Birthplace Museum letter 7606.

## July 1902:

In mid-July the Elgars had spent some days in London. On 21 July Alice returned alone to Malvern. Edward had left for Bayreuth the evening before in the company of the musical entrepreneur Archibald Ramsden. At the Wagner Festival they saw *Der fliegende Holländer* under Felix Mottl (22 July), *Parsifal* under Karl Muck (23 July) and *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried* under Hans Richter (25–27 July). When Elgar received news that his mother was ill, he abstained from remaining for the final part of the tetralogy. He left Bayreuth early in the morning on 28 July and reached Malvern the next day. Ann Elgar passed away peacefully on 1 September at the age of eighty.<sup>51</sup>

Mahler spent his summer holiday from 21 June to 27 August in Maiernigg am Wörthersee, broken by a short excursion to the South Tyrol at the end of July. During these weeks he was intensely working on his Fifth Symphony, much to Alma's chagrin, who probably felt neglected in their first summer together. Perhaps as a consolation Mahler composed for her the song *Liebst du um Schönheit* on a poem by Friedrich Rückert.<sup>52</sup>

## The years 1903 and 1904: Elgar in Italy, shorter journeys to Germany etc.

### November 1903 to February 1904:

Besides a number of duties as conductor, Elgar in the second half of 1902 and in larger parts of 1903 was primarily occupied with his Oratorio *The Apostles* op. 49. On 17 August 1903 he finished the full score, on 14 October the first performance took place under his baton at the Birmingham Festival. In contrast to the premiere of *The Dream of Gerontius* three years earlier, Elgar's new work won a splendid victory: both the audience and the critics were enthusiastic. Hans Richter, who had celebrated his sixtieth birthday in April and who had opened the festival the day before with Mendelssohn's *Elijah* op. 70, even declared *The Apostles* to be 'the greatest work since Beethoven's Mass in D' and added, when he was asked if he excepted Wagner: 'I except no man.'<sup>53</sup>

Following this great success, the Elgars decided to spend the winter in Italy, where Edward also wanted to realise his long-existing plans to compose a symphony. On 25 November they travelled from London via Dover and Calais to Paris, and then on via Marseille to Bordighera at the Italian Riviera. Here they stayed from 28 November to 10 December, until they moved 60 km further east to Alassio, where they rented a villa that was to become their home until the end of January. Carice followed them on 21 December, accompanied by Rosa Burley. At the beginning of the new year, Elgar started working on an orchestral work, not a symphony, but the concert overture *In the South (Alassio)* op. 50. Rosa Burley had to leave in the middle of the month, the Elgar family went back on 30 January. Again via Marseille and Paris they reached London two days later.<sup>54</sup>

Mahler at that time was in the middle of his season at the Vienna Hofoper but he also made some journeys to present his Third Symphony. Already in October 1903 he had conducted this

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51 See Elgar, *The Path to Knighthood*, 68–75; Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 372f.

52 See Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 135–137; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 2*, 533–539; Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 233–239, 242.

53 See Christopher Fifield, *True artist and true friend. A biography of Hans Richter* (Oxford: OUP, 1993), 366f.

54 See Elgar, *The Path to Knighthood*, 235–251; Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 424–431.



work, and also the First Symphony, in Amsterdam, and during the period of Elgar's stay at the Italian Riviera Mahler travelled to Frankfurt am Main (29 November to 3 December) and to Heidelberg and Mannheim (27 January to 4 February).<sup>55</sup>

### **May 1904:**

In mid-March at Covent Garden was celebrated a three-day festival that was dedicated exclusively to Elgar's oeuvre. The King and his family were present, a number of renowned personalities, ambassadors etc. The press reported in great detail on the event, the *Sunday Times* for example called it 'the first tribute of the kind that has ever been paid to an English composer during his lifetime'. And *The Referee* wrote:

It is not too much to say that the Elgar Festival scheme is unique in the history of British music. A living composer honoured in his own country by three days performances of his works at Covent Garden Theatre is positively startling.<sup>56</sup>

The Hallé Orchestra and Chorus were conducted by their director Hans Richter. On the first evening they performed *The Dream of Gerontius*, on the second *The Apostles*. The final concert comprised in its first half the overtures *Froissart* op. 19 and *Cockaigne (In London Town)* op. 40, the *Enigma Variations*, the *Sea Pictures* (with Clara Butt) and parts of *Caractacus*. After the interval Elgar himself conducted the first two *Pomp and Circumstance* Marches op. 39 and the premiere of his new overture *In the South*.

Two months after this memorable festival the Elgars made a little journey to the Lower Rhenish Musical Festival, which in this year took place in Cologne. On 22 May Fritz Steinbach was to give the first performance in Germany of *The Apostles* at the Gürzenich. Edward had already gone to London on 10 May, Alice followed six days later. Together they started on 19 May and arrived in Cologne in the evening. The performance of the oratorio on Whitsunday was a great success: Elgar spoke of a 'splendid performance' and added: 'We have had a glorious time [...]'. On 28 May he and Alice travelled back via Düsseldorf and reached London the following day.<sup>57</sup>

Mahler was in Vienna throughout May. At the Hofoper he presented on 3 May a new production of Verdi's *Falstaff* conceived by him and Alfred Roller, and he also conducted the subsequent performances.<sup>58</sup>

### **August 1904:**

On 5 July Elgar was honoured with a knighthood by Edward VII at Buckingham Palace. When he was again in London at the end of August to call on his publisher Novello and to begin with the orchestral rehearsals for the Three Choirs Festival in September in Gloucester, he took the

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55 See Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 166–186; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 2*, 638–649, 660–666.

56 Both quotations from Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 434f.

57 See Elgar, *The Path to Knighthood*, 290–296; Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 438f.; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 13/5 (2004), 53, both quot. *ibid*.

58 See Gustav Mahler, „*Mein lieber Trotzkopf, meine süße Mohnblume*“. *Briefe an Anna von Mildenburg*, hrsg. und kommentiert von Franz Willnauer (Wien: Zsolnay, 2006), 485–491. See also de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 2*, 678–680.

opportunity to go on a three-day excursion to Dover, his father's home town. From there he made a trip to Calais on 29 August. Alice, who had stayed at their new home in Hereford, wrote into her diary: 'E. at Dover, Went over to Calais, lovely day'.<sup>59</sup>

Mahler had been spending his holiday in Maiernigg am Wörthersee since 21 June. In this summer he completed the song cycle *Kindertotenlieder* and the Sixth Symphony and began working on his Seventh Symphony. At the end of August he returned with Alma and the two daughters to Vienna. On 6 September he conducted the first performance of the new season at the Hofoper: Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde*.<sup>60</sup>

### ***November and December 1904:***

Accompanied by Frank Schuster, on 28 November Elgar crossed the Channel to attend performances of *The Apostles* under Fritz Volbach in Mainz (30 November) and under Anton Verheij in Rotterdam (2 December), and then of *In the South* under Fritz Steinbach in Cologne (6 December). During the journey they also visited The Hague, Düsseldorf and Brussels. On 9 December they were back in London, where Alice awaited them.<sup>61</sup>

Mahler travelled from Vienna to Leipzig on 25 November to conduct there three days later his Third Symphony. On 30 November he was back in the Austrian capital, where he alongside his duties at the opera house rehearsed the symphony with his Hofoper orchestra. The work's first performance in Vienna took place on 14 December at the great hall of the Musikverein. It achieved an outstanding success, with the result that a further performance was scheduled for 22 December.<sup>62</sup>

### ***The years 1905 to 1908: Elgar in America, on a Mediterranean cruise and in Italy***

#### ***June and July 1905:***

At the end of October 1904 August Jaeger had advised Elgar to write a short piece for the recently founded London Symphony Orchestra. The latter's reaction at first was reserved, but in January and February 1905 he composed *Introduction and Allegro* for Strings op. 47. The new work and the third *Pomp and Circumstance* March had their first performances on 8 March at the Queen's Hall with Elgar conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. In February he also received an invitation from Samuel Sanford, who was Professor of Applied Music at Yale University, to come to America in June and to accept a honorary doctorate. Elgar had already met Sanford in England in the years before, and the cultured and generous American later became the dedicatee of the *Introduction and Allegro*.

Edward and Alice boarded the *Deutschland* on 9 June in Dover and arrived six days later in New York. Sanford welcomed them at the pier and then was their host in his grand house in

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59 See Elgar, *The Path to Knighthood*, 321f.

60 From Vienna Bruno Walter wrote to Hans Pfitzner in a letter of 26 August (a Friday), that Mahler was to arrive only in the following week; Bruno Walter, *Briefe 1894–1962*, hrsg. von Lotte Walter Lindt (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1969), 74. See also Gustav Mahler, *Briefe an Anna von Mildenburg*, 487; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 2*, 713f.

61 See Elgar, *The Path to Knighthood*, 357–361; Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 448f.

62 See Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 232–235; Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 3. Vienna: Triumph and Disillusion (1904–1907)* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 60–76.



New Haven. Beside the celebration at Yale on 28 June, Sanford arranged several excursions in Connecticut and to Boston for his guests. Elgar, however, suffered most of the time from high humidity and didn't feel well. Nevertheless he accepted an offer to conduct in May 1906 at the Cincinnati Festival, not least because of the remarkable size of the fee. On 11 July the Elgars embarked for England. They arrived in Liverpool on 17 July and were later that day in Hereford.<sup>63</sup>

This was the first of altogether four journeys Elgar made to the United States. Quite a number of other composers of his time visited North America, too, including:

Peter Tchaikovsky:	April/May 1891
Ferruccio Busoni:	August 1891 to April 1894, January to March 1904, January to April 1910, December 1910 to April 1911, January to August 1915
Antonín Dvořák:	September 1892 to May 1894, October 1894 to April 1895
Richard Strauss:	February to April 1904, October 1921 to January 1922
Engelbert Humperdinck:	November 1905, December 1910
Camille Saint-Saëns:	October to December 1906, May to July 1915
Giacomo Puccini:	January/February 1907, November/December 1910
Sergej Rachmaninow:	November 1909 to January 1910, then from November 1918
Jean Sibelius:	May/June 1914

Of course, the same applies to Mahler, who just as Elgar travelled four times to the United States. Here is a comparison of the dates of their journeys:

#### Elgar:

9 June	to	17 July 1905	(arrival/departure New York: 15 June / 11 July)
6 April	to	27 May 1906	(arrival/departure New York: 15 April / 18 May)
2 March	to	27 April 1907	(arrival/departure New York: 11 March / 20 April)
25 March	to	9 May 1911	(arrival/departure New York: 31 March / 3 May)

#### Mahler:

12 December 1907	to	2 May 1908	(arrival/departure New York: 21 December / 23 April)
12 November 1908	to	19 April 1909	(arrival/departure New York: 21 November / 10 April)
12 October 1909	to	11 April 1910	(arrival/departure New York: 19 October / 5 April)
18 October 1910	to	16 April 1911	(arrival/departure New York: 25 October / 8 April)

An overlapping of the periods in which both composers stayed in America is to be found only in the time from 31 March to 8 April 1911. I will go into that in more detail later.

For the sake of completeness it should be mentioned that during the weeks of Elgar's first journey to the United States, Mahler on 15 June went on his summer holiday in Maiernigg. He stayed there until 21 August and finished the work on his Seventh Symphony. Before that he had been in Graz from 31 May to 2 June to attend the Tonkünstlerfest of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein, and subsequently had organized three gala performances for the participants at the Vienna Hofoper from 5 to 7 June.<sup>64</sup>

63 See Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 461–463; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 14/2 (2005), 69.

64 See Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 242f., 252–255; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 3*, 211–225, 234–240.

## September and October 1905:

This year's Worcester Festival opened with Elgar's appointment as Freeman of the City. He received this high honour on 12 September. That same day the festival's first musical event was a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius*, conducted by Ivor Atkins, the organist of Worcester Cathedral and dedicatee of the third *Pomp and Circumstance* March. Elgar himself conducted *Introduction and Allegro* and *The Apostles* on the following days. On 15 September he spontaneously accepted an invitation to go on a Mediterranean cruise with Frank Schuster as guests of the Royal Navy. They travelled from London to Calais, and then by train through France and Italy to Brindisi. There they boarded for Corfu and Patras, and finally, again by train, reached Athens on the evening of 19 September, where they went aboard the HMS *Surprise* with a group of other guests. The next two days they visited the sights of the Greek capital, then the fleet sailed for Lemnos and the Dardanelles. As the British fleet because of political tensions couldn't go near Constantinople, a group of ten persons, including Edward and Frank, took an Austrian steamer from Chanak. They stayed in Constantinople from 25 to 28 September, then another steamer took them overnight to Smyrna (now: Izmir), where they met with the fleet again. The next days in that city (29 September to 3 October) made a lasting impression on Elgar. In the diary he kept during the journey he recorded:

This was my first touch with Asia, & I was quite overcome. The endless camels made the scene more real than in Stamboul, the extraordinary colour & movement, light & shade were intoxicating. (30 September)

Small mosque. Received in great style. Music by five or six people very strange & some of it quite beautiful – incessant drums & cymbals (small) thro the quick movements. (1 October)

A short piece for piano he probably composed in November has the title *In Smyrna*. In bad weather and a rough sea the *Surprise* reached Patras on 4 October, where the civilian passengers disembarked. An acceptable way to continue their journey for Elgar and Schuster arose only three days later. Via Corfu they arrived by ship in Brindisi on 9 October and in the evening took the train to Bologna, where they parted since Frank Schuster wanted to go to Venice. Elgar travelled by train via Basel, Calais and Dover to London. Having arrived there on 12 October, he had to go to Norwich for a rehearsal. The entry about this in his diary reads: 'Friday, October 13: midday to Norwich. [...] rehearsal of *Apostles* – and the last music I had heard was the Dervishes in Smyrna!' The next day he was back in Hereford.<sup>65</sup>

Mahler in September and October was occupied at the Hofoper, particularly with rehearsals and the first performance in Vienna of Ermanno Wolf-Ferrari's opera *Die neugierigen Frauen* on 4 October. In mid-September he spent a couple of days with Alma and the daughters in Göding in Southern Moravia, about 100 km north-east of Vienna, where they visited friends.<sup>66</sup>

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65 See Andrew Neill, 'Elgar in Smyrna, 1905', *The Elgar Society Journal* 14/3 (2005), 3–24, quot. 16f., 20; Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 466–468; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 14/3 (2005), 69.

66 See Gustav Mahler, *Briefe an Anna von Mildenburg*, 490; Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 262–265; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 3*, 240–250.

### *April and May 1906:*

Not long after his return from the Mediterranean cruise, Elgar began to work on a new oratorio that was to be performed in autumn next year at the Birmingham Festival. Initially he made only slow progress, but at the end of March 1906 three of the work's five sections had been completed in short score. During the journey to the Cincinnati Festival he had undertaken the previous year he was able to accomplish essential parts of the orchestration, and back in England he composed the last two sections. The oratorio was finally named *The Kingdom* (op. 51), and the full score was completed at the end of August.

Edward and Alice Elgar started their journey to Cincinnati in Hereford on 6 April, boarded the *Celtic* in Liverpool and arrived on 15 April in New York, where Sanford and other friends welcomed them. The next day they travelled by train overnight to Cincinnati. Elgar immediately began the rehearsals and at the beginning of May conducted *The Apostles*, *In the South*, *Introduction and Allegro* and *The Dream of Gerontius* in the course of four concerts. The day before his first appearance he received a telegram from his brother Frank with the news that their father had died peacefully. (William Henry Elgar had passed away on 29 April at the age of eighty-four.) On 7 May the Elgars left Cincinnati and visited the Niagara Falls on their way back. They stayed in New York for a week, boarded again the *Celtic* on 18 May and reached Hereford nine days later.<sup>67</sup>

For Mahler the months April and May were eventful, too. At the Hofoper he conducted performances of Beethoven's *Fidelio* (23 April) and Wagner's *Tristan und Isolde* (8 May), but most notably – 150 years after Mozart's birth – of *Die Entführung aus dem Serail* (1 and 21 April, 5 May), *Le nozze di Figaro* (2, 5, 16, 19 and 25 April, 4 and 17 May), *Così fan tutte* (27 April) and *Don Giovanni* (29 April), and also a new production of *Die Zauberflöte* on 1 June. In addition he made a short trip to Graz with Alma to witness Strauss conducting the first performance in Austria of *Salome* on 16 May. Among others Arnold Schönberg, Alexander von Zemlinsky and Alban Berg also attended this event. And finally on 27 May, the day of the Elgars' return to Hereford, Mahler conducted the premiere of his Sixth Symphony at the Tonkünstlerfest of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein in Essen. He had arrived there already on the evening of 20 May to begin the rehearsals, and Alma had followed five days later. The symphony received applause, but a lack of understanding was evident from parts of the audience (and most of the critics) for this in several aspects demanding work.<sup>68</sup>

### *December 1906 to February 1907:*

Following the successful first performance of *The Kingdom* at the Birmingham Festival on 3 October 1906 and two lectures at the University of Birmingham, Elgar in November booked a passage. He and Alice had decided to spend the winter in Italy again. They boarded the *Orontes* on 28 December and reached Naples via Gibraltar and Marseille on 6 January. They were particularly impressed by Pompeii and after a week moved to Capri, where they stayed until 12 February and had a pleasant time. The last part of their journey from 12 to 23 February the Elgars spent in Rome.

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67 See Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 495–499; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 14/4 (2006), 45; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 14/5 (2006), 57.

68 See Gustav Mahler, *Briefe an Anna von Mildenburg*, 485–491; Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 276–280; Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 303f.; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 3*, 395–419.

There they attended concerts and met with Giovanni Sgambati and Lorenzo Perosi. Edward was overwhelmed by the city and determined to come back for a longer stay next winter. They travelled back by train via Genoa and Paris and were in Hereford on 26 February.<sup>69</sup>

Mahler in these weeks was in the middle of the season at the Vienna Hofoper, where he presented new productions of Rossini's *Der Barbier von Sevilla* on 25 December and of Wagner's *Die Walküre* on 4 February. Moreover, in January he conducted several of his symphonies: the Sixth in Vienna, the Third in Berlin, the Fourth in Frankfurt am Main and the First in Linz. On 14 February he was once more in Berlin for a song recital with the Dutch baritone Johannes Messchaert. With Mahler himself playing the piano, they performed eighteen of his lieder, including the cycles *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and *Kindertotenlieder*.<sup>70</sup>

### **March and April 1907:**

Only four days after his return from Italy, Elgar started, this time without Alice, for a further journey to America. On 2 March he boarded the *Carmania* in Liverpool and arrived nine days later in New York. There he conducted *The Apostles* and the first performance in the United States of *The Kingdom* to great success at the Carnegie Hall. In April he gave concerts in Chicago and Pittsburgh with the *Enigma Variations*, *In the South* and the first *Pomp and Circumstance* March. On 20 April he left New York on board the *Campania* and reached Hereford one week later.<sup>71</sup>

Mahler conducted various performances at the Hofoper in March and April, but he made a journey, too. On 20 March, less than four weeks after Edward and Alice Elgar had left Rome, he arrived there with Alma. He gave two concerts in the Italian capital on 25 March and 1 April, conducting works by Beethoven, Wagner, Weber and Tchaikovsky, and the Adagietto from his own Fifth Symphony. During their twelve-day stay, the Mahlers also thoroughly visited the numerous sights of the city. On their way back to Vienna Mahler conducted in Trieste on 4 April a programme of Wagner's *Meistersinger*-Prelude, Beethoven's Fifth and his own First Symphony.<sup>72</sup>

### **November 1907 to May 1908:**

A few weeks after his return from New York, on 2 June 1907, Elgar celebrated his fiftieth birthday. When Alice had gone to church on the evening of that Sunday, he composed for her a part-song entitled *Love* (later No. 2 in op. 18) – 'wh. made A. feel very unworthy & deeply deeply touched', she confessed in her diary. Five days later he completed another work: the fourth *Pomp and Circumstance* March, which Henry Wood presented to the public at the Promenade Concerts in London on 24 August. Wood, too, conducted on 14 December the first performance of *The Wand of Youth* Suite No. 1 (op. 1a), in which Elgar had provided his charming earliest musical inspirations with a masterful orchestration.

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69 See Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 509f.; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 14/6 (2006), 69; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 15/1 (2007), 75.

70 See Gustav Mahler, *Briefe an Anna von Mildenburg*, 486, 491; Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 301–316; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 3*, 496f., 533–605.

71 See Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 510–512; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 15/1 (2007), 75.

72 See Gustav Mahler, *Briefe an Anna von Mildenburg*, 485–487, 490f.; Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 317f.; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 3*, 627–643.

At that time Edward and Alice, however, had already implemented their plan to spend the winter 1907/08 again in Italy and especially in Rome. With the seventeen-year-old Carice and her cousin May Grafton (the eldest daughter of Elgar's sister Pollie), who was ten years her senior and had been living with them and working as Edward's secretary since summer 1904, they had started from London on 5 November and had via Calais, Paris and Genoa by train arrived in Rome two days later. There Elgar had rented a furnished flat in the Via Gregoriana for six months. Apart from seeing the sights, Edward and Carice took lessons in French and Italian at the Berlitz School. During these months the Elgars had several encounters, accepted invitations by Roman society figures and visited the opera house, where they saw Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca* and *Madama Butterfly*. They also met again with Giovanni Sgambati. May Grafton left for England in January, as her father had fallen seriously ill. Will Grafton, who was not only Edward's brother-in-law but an old friend, too, died shortly afterwards at the age of fifty-eight. With regard to creativity, the time in Italy was only partly successful. While Elgar composed in December some choral works, he made little progress with the symphony for which he had written down some sketches in the previous summer. On 27 March the Elgars had gone for one week to Florence, and on 5 May their long stay in Rome ended. They travelled to Naples and three days later from there by ship to England. On 16 May they arrived in London.<sup>73</sup>

Mahler conducted his last performance, Beethoven's *Fidelio*, at the Hofoper on 15 October 1907. Four days later he started for a concert tour to St. Petersburg and Helsinki, during which he met Jean Sibelius. After having returned to Vienna on 12 November, he bade farewell to the city on 24 November with a performance of his Second Symphony at the great hall of the Musikverein. On 9 December Gustav and Alma Mahler at the Vienna Westbahnhof got on the Orient Express, which took them to Paris. Three days later they boarded the *Kaiserin Auguste Victoria* in Cherbourg and arrived in New York on 21 December. At the end of his first season at the Metropolitan Opera Mahler left the city with his wife on 23 April 1908 and travelled with the same ship to Europe. They disembarked in Cuxhaven on 2 May and went at first to Hamburg. Three days later Mahler took the train to Wiesbaden to prepare a concert at which he was to conduct on 8 May Mendelssohn's Overture *Die Hebriden (Fingal's Cave)*, Beethoven's *Leonore* Overture No. 3 and his own First Symphony. Alma had arrived from Hamburg in time for the concert, and both of them started for Vienna the next day.<sup>74</sup>

### ***The years 1908 to 1911: Further journeys to Italy and America, shorter concert tours to Belgium and Germany***

#### ***August 1908:***

Back from Italy, Elgar addressed himself to his symphony and worked tirelessly on it from June to the beginning of August. He then was able to hand its first two movements over to his publisher Novello on 10 August in London, when he was on a short trip to Belgium. In the evening he and Alice were in Ostend, where he had been invited to give a concert of his own works. Vincent d'Indy

73 See Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 512–528, quot. 513; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 15/3 (2007), 93; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 15/4 (2008), 69.

74 See Gustav Mahler, *Briefe an Anna von Mildenburg*, 490; Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 335–357; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 3*, 739–797; Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 4. A New Life Cut Short (1907–1911)* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 161–167.

and other French and Belgian musicians gave a warm welcome to them. After several rehearsals, Elgar conducted on 14 August a programme that began with *In the South*, the first three songs of the *Sea Pictures* and the first *Wand of Youth Suite*, and continued after the interval with the *Enigma Variations*, the rest of the *Sea Pictures* and finally the Triumphal March from *Caractacus*. Soloist was the Dutch contralto Tilly Koenen (who also performed orchestral songs under Mahler in 1906, 1907 and 1910 in Munich, St. Petersburg and New York). The concert in the Kursaal was a tremendous success and led to ovations. Then the orchestra spontaneously played *God save the King*, and the more than 7,000 listeners rose. '[...] most stirring & affecting, proud to be English', Alice wrote into her diary. Thereafter Elgar was called to the platform again and again. The next day they returned to London; on 17 August they were in Hereford.<sup>75</sup>

Mahler spent with Alma and their daughter Anna from 11 June to 4 September his first summer in Altschluderbach near Toblach in South Tyrol, where he composed *Das Lied von der Erde*. To Bruno Walter he wrote about it at the beginning of September:

I am working very hard [...]. I don't yet know what the whole could be called. I have been granted a wonderful time and I think that it is the most personal work I have ever written. More about it when I see you.<sup>76</sup>

### *April to June 1909:*

On 25 September 1908 Elgar finished the full score of his First Symphony (A flat, op. 55). The first performance took place on 3 December in Manchester with the Hallé Orchestra conducted by Hans Richter. Elgar celebrated an overwhelming triumph. Alice noted down in her diary:

After 3rd movement E. had to go up on platform & whole Orch. & nos. of audience stood up – wonderful scene. Also at end.

Without exception, the critics, too, were deeply impressed. The *Daily Mail*, under the heading 'The Musical Event of the Year', declared:

It is quite plain that here we have perhaps the finest masterpiece of its type that ever came from the pen of an English composer.<sup>77</sup>

Hans Richter went one step further in his assessment of the work on 6 December, when he opened the rehearsal with the London Symphony Orchestra for the symphony's premiere at the Queen's Hall the next day. William Henry Reed, then playing in the first violins, remembered Richter's words:

'Gentlemen,' he said, 'let us now rehearse the greatest symphony of modern times, written by the greatest modern composer,' and he added, '*and not only in this country.*'<sup>78</sup>

75 See Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 528–540; N. N. ('Our special correspondent'), 'An Elgar Concert at Ostend', *The Musical Times* 49 (1908), 581–583; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 15/5 (2008), 57, quot. *ibid*.

76 Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, 371. See also de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 4*, 203–221 (quoted English translation of part of letter, 219); Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 354.

77 Both quotations from Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 545.

78 William Henry Reed, *Elgar* (London: Dent 1946), 97.

The concert in London, only four days after the first performance, was completely sold out. August Jaeger gave a description of the evening in a letter to Dora Penny:

How I wish you had been there. I never in all my experience saw the like. The Hall was packed [...]. After the first movement E.E. was called out; again, several times, after the third, and then came the great moment. After that superb Coda (Finale) the audience seemed to rise at E. when he appeared. I never heard such frantic applause after any novelty nor such shouting. Five times he had to appear before they were pacified. People stood up and even on their seats to get a view.<sup>79</sup>

Following the overwhelming success, a further performance under Richter was scheduled for the 19 December, and Elgar himself, too, conducted the symphony in London on 1, 7 and 16 January 1909. At the same time it received its American premiere under Walter Damrosch in New York. Mahler, who was occupied with his second season at the Metropolitan Opera, had given in November and December three concerts at the Carnegie Hall as a guest conductor of Damrosch's New York Symphony Orchestra, including the first performance in America of his Second Symphony on 8 December. At the bottom of the programme of his last concert on 13 December (with works by Wagner, Weber and Beethoven) is to be found the announcement: 'January 3rd and 5th First production in America of Edward Elgar's new Symphony, the first symphonic work from his pen.'<sup>80</sup> In 1909 there were a lot of further performances in Europe and the US of Elgar's symphony, which he had dedicated to Richter with the words: 'To Hans Richter, Mus. Doc. / True artist & true friend.'

The Elgars had originally planned to travel again to Italy in the winter of 1908/09 but for professional obligations and then health reasons they had to postpone the journey. Finally they received in March an invitation from their friend Julia 'Pippa' Worthington to spend with her some weeks near Florence in April and May. On 9 April Edward went from London to Paris, Alice and Carice followed eight days later. Having been together in the French capital for two days, the Elgar family and Pippa Worthington started on 20 April. They crossed France and Northern Italy by train and reached Florence the next morning. The villa *Silli*, that Pippa had rented, was located in Careggi, a northern suburb of the city. All of them felt very comfortable here, and Elgar soon was composing the choral pieces *The Angelus* op. 56 and *Go, Song of Mine* op. 57. Furthermore he sketched ideas for other projects, among them a violin concerto. Friends like Frank Schuster and Rosa Burley came for a visit, but in Careggi Elgar also learnt the sad news that August Jaeger had passed away. Their stay drew to a close on 28 May. Edward and Alice made a little detour to Pisa and Bologna and on 30 May met again with Pippa and Carice in Venice, where all of them remained for a week. On 7 June the Elgar family said goodbye to Pippa Worthington and travelled home. They stayed overnight in Verona and then went by train to Innsbruck on 8 June. Two days later they were in Garmisch, where they called on Richard Strauss on 11 June. During three more days in the Alps the Elgars revived memories of their journeys in the 1890s, then from Innsbruck they returned to England via Basel and Paris. On 16 June Edward, Alice and Carice arrived in London.<sup>81</sup>

Having finished his second season in America, Mahler went aboard the *Kronprinzessin Cecilie* in New York on 10 April 1909. This time, in addition to Alma, he was accompanied by his daughter

79 Mrs Richard Powell, *Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation*, 99.

80 See Knud Martner, *Mahler's Concerts* (New York: Kaplan, 2010), 232–235, reproduction of the programme 234.

81 See Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 542–554; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 16/1 (2009), 57; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 16/2 (2009), 69.



Anna and Alma's mother Anna Moll. The family arrived in Cherbourg on 19 April and went to Paris on the same day. There until the end of the month they stayed at the Hôtel Bellevue in the Avenue de l'Opéra. During this time Auguste Rodin produced his famous bust of Mahler. Throughout May Mahler remained in Vienna and his summer holiday began on 8 June. First he went with his wife and daughter and a governess to Levico near Trento, where Alma was to take a cure lasting several weeks. They arrived on 9 June, and two days later Mahler travelled alone to Toblach. He stayed there for almost three months until 6 September, broken only by an excursion to Salzburg in mid-August with Alma, who had come to Toblach on 13 July. The compositional outcome of this summer was the Ninth Symphony.<sup>82</sup>

Thus Elgar's and Mahler's travel routes overlapped twice in this spring: On the one hand both of them were with their families in Paris on 19 and 20 April. On Mahler's activities during these days no detailed information seems to have survived. In Alice Elgar's diary, however, are to be found these entries:

19 April:

At Hotel des deux Mondes arranged packing & waited for Pippa. E. & she to settle tickets &c. A. & C. to Magasin des Louvres. Very hot. Lunched at Hotel, Pippa too. Mr. Whittemore came in taxi & took us lovely round, Notre Dame, S. Etienne du Mont, S. Gervais, S. Germain des Près, S. Sulpice - &c &c, & to see his flat -

20 April:

Left ~~Par~~ Hotel at 10. Lovely day. E. quite sorry to leave his nice little room. Quiet comfortable start. Pippa met us at S. Lazare. We had our sleeping Comptmts. & arranged ourselves. Very pretty thro' the pleasant pays de France. In Evening beautiful mountains & sunset. Aix les Bains & Lake lovely. Went to bed early & most slept well.<sup>83</sup>

On the hotel mentioned in the first entry, two letters from Edward contain its address: 'Hôtel des Deux Mondes, 22, Avenue de l'Opéra, Paris'.<sup>84</sup> Mahler's Hôtel Bellevue was equally situated in the Avenue de l'Opéra and had the house number 39.<sup>85</sup> Both composers therefore lived quite close to each other.

The second overlapping of their travel routes took place on 8 June. Elgar that day was travelling with Alice and Carice by train from Verona via Trento, Bolzano and the Brenner Pass to Innsbruck. Mahler, by contrast, travelled with Alma and Anna from Vienna via Innsbruck, the Brenner Pass and Bolzano to Trento – on the same railway route in the opposite direction.

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82 See Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 376–406; Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 344, 354f., 357f.; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 4*, 395–410, 415, 457–471, 495–505.

83 Many thanks to Martin Bird for these informations.

84 Letter to Ivor Atkins, 17 April 1909; Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2012), 237f. Letter to Charles Gorton, 18 April 1909; Elgar Birthplace Museum letter 8942 (again many thanks to Martin Bird).

85 See Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 344; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 4*, 401.



### **December 1910:**

While in the second half of 1909 Elgar had made some attempts to proceed with his Violin Concerto (B minor, op. 61), only in January 1910 did he really get ahead. The short score was finished at the end of June, the full score in early August. With Fritz Kreisler as the soloist, Elgar conducted the first performance of the concerto on 10 November 1910 at the Queen's Hall, and once more it was an outstanding success, comparable to that of his First Symphony. Still in November, Elgar addressed himself to his next big composition, the Second Symphony (E flat, op. 63), on which he was intensely working during the following weeks and whose full score was completed already at the end of February 1911.

During the work on his new symphony he made a trip to Germany. Edward and Alice left Hereford on 12 December and arrived the next day in Krefeld. After several rehearsals, Elgar conducted on 17 December his First Symphony, which received tremendous acclaim. On their way back the Elgars saw the families Buths and von Weise in Düsseldorf. On 19 December they were back home.<sup>86</sup>

With the spectacular first performance of his Eighth Symphony in Munich in September Mahler had achieved an outstanding success, probably his biggest as a composer. He had arrived on 25 October in New York for his fourth season there. On 29 November and 2 December he conducted at the Carnegie Hall for the first time in his life a composition by Edward Elgar: the *Enigma Variations*.<sup>87</sup>

### **March 1911:**

Not long after the completion of his Second Symphony Elgar went for another short concert tour. With Alice he started from London on the evening of 8 March for Brussels, where he conducted his First Symphony four days later. During the final rehearsals and the performance Eugène Ysaÿe did him the honour of leading the orchestra he usually conducted. On 13 March the Elgars returned to London.<sup>88</sup>

This journey, too, was happening during Mahler's fourth season in New York, and again he had just added one of Elgar's works to his repertoire as a conductor: the *Sea Pictures*, from which Louise Kirkby Lunn sang four songs on 14 and 17 February at the Carnegie Hall.<sup>89</sup>

### **March to May 1911:**

Elgar had planned to travel to North America on 18 March, only a few days after his return from Belgium. The Sheffield Choir was to start on a world tour and Elgar to conduct concerts during the first weeks in eastern Canada and the United States. But he had caught a serious cold and had to postpone his departure. He then sailed on 25 March, without Alice, but accompanied by a valet. On board the *Mauretania* he arrived in New York on 31 March. Three days later he was in Toronto, met there with the choir and conducted a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* on 4 April, before the tour went on to Buffalo. After that there were no duties to conduct for some days,

86 See Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 555–611, for Krefeld 598; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 17/1 (2011), 69.

87 See Martner, *Mahler's Concerts*, 286f.

88 See Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 612; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 17/1 (2011), 69.

89 See Martner, *Mahler's Concerts*, 304–307.

and he took the opportunity to see friends like Julia Worthington in New York from 10 to 16 April. Then other concerts followed in Cincinnati (18 April), Indianapolis (21 April), Chicago (24 April), Milwaukee (26 April) und St. Paul (28 April). On 1 May Elgar returned to New York. Two days later he boarded again the *Mauretania*, and on 9 May he was in Hereford.<sup>90</sup>

Mahler had awoken on 20 February in New York with fever and a sore throat, but had insisted on conducting the next day. Then his health deteriorated so much that his concertmaster Theodore Spiering had to take over the remaining concerts of the season. Mahler suffered from an endocarditis lenta that wasn't treatable at that time, and asked to be allowed to die in Vienna. On 8 April he went aboard the *Amerika* with Alma, their daughter Anna and Alma's mother. Eight days later they reached Cherbourg. Mahler's mother-in-law Anna Moll had come to support Alma. She had arrived in New York on 31 March with the *Mauretania*, on which Edward Elgar was, too.<sup>91</sup>

Mahler and Elgar thus both were in New York from 31 March to 2 April. The dangerously ill Mahler stayed in his rooms at the Hotel Savoy.<sup>92</sup> Elgar lived after his arrival in Julia Worthington's palatial flat. This was located 4 West 40th Street and therefore at a distance of about 1.5 km from Mahler's hotel. It is a matter for conjecture whether Elgar might have had the intention to call on Mahler, for instance to thank him for the recent performances of his works or because of mutual friends like Walter Damrosch. Should that have been the case, then a meeting between both composers probably would have been impossible due to Mahler's health.

Concerning Elgar's short stay in New York some further information can be found. It is evident that he took an overnight train to Toronto on 2 April, a Sunday.<sup>93</sup> The next day he wrote from there a letter to Carice. Among other things he told her:

I went to the Concert at the New Theatre on Sunday afternoon & when I appeared in the box the whole orch. applauded & so did the audience – I smowed & biled [jokingly for: bowed & smiled] – tell the Paint [nickname for Alice] this.<sup>94</sup>

It was a concert of the New York Symphony Orchestra conducted by Walter Damrosch. According to a review in the *New York Times* from the next day, the programme comprised the first and the third movements from Wagner's early Symphony in C major, the concert version of the *Karfreitagszauber* from *Parsifal*, Beethoven's First Symphony op. 21 and Anton Rubinstein's Fourth Piano Concerto op. 70, with Josef Hofmann as the soloist. The review tells us as well:

An interesting incident of the concert was the presence in one of the proscenium boxes of Sir Edward Elgar, the English composer, who recently arrived in New York on his way to a Canadian and Western tour with an English choral society. At Mr. Damrosch's initiative the orchestra welcomed the visitor with a round of applause, which he acknowledged by a bow.<sup>95</sup>

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90 See Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life*, 612–614; Geoffrey Hodgkins, '100 Years Ago ...', *The Elgar Society Journal* 17/1 (2011), 69.

91 See Gustav Mahler, *Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma*, 465–467; de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 4*, 1240, 1242.

92 See Brenner, Kubik, *Mahlers Welt*, 322f.

93 See his letter to Frances Colvin from Toronto, 3 April; Moore, *Letters of a Lifetime*, 266f.

94 Edward Elgar, *Darling Chuck. The Carice Letters*, edited by Martin Bird (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2014), 201 (here is inadvertently printed 'Tuesday' instead of 'Sunday').

95 Many thanks to Martin Bird for sending me a copy of the review and giving me information about Julia Worthington's flat.

As already mentioned, Elgar returned home to Hereford on 9 May. A few days later, on 14 May, he went to London with Alice to begin the rehearsals for the first performance of his Second Symphony, which then took place on 24 May at the Queen's Hall, as part of the London Musical Festival.<sup>96</sup> For the 18 May Alice's diary entry reads:

E. very busy & started for Cambridge before lunch - Lovely day - Rehearsal & Concert in Evening.  
Went splendidly & E. returned about 12.30 very pleased -

The concert to which Alice here refers took place at the Guildhall in Cambridge. Elgar conducted the London Symphony Orchestra in a programme of Joseph Haydn's Symphony in B flat major Hob. I:102, the *Enigma Variations* and Johannes Brahms' Third Symphony.<sup>97</sup> That same evening at five minutes past eleven Gustav Mahler passed away in Vienna.

### ***Results and prospects***

The considerations I have presented here should have shown that Edward Elgar and Gustav Mahler came quite close to each other only a few times. The only possible dates for an encounter are

- on 22/23 July 1892 in London
- on 24/25 August 1893 in Munich
- on 9 August 1895 at the Attersee
- [on 3 June 1902 in Düsseldorf/Cologne]
- on 19/20 April 1909 in Paris
- [on 8 June 1909]
- from 31 March to 2 April 1911 in New York

The sources which were scrutinized, suggest however, that it is not very probable that they indeed met. Notwithstanding this, both composers had numerous mutual colleagues and friends, among them Richard Strauss, Julius Butts, Walter Damrosch, Hans Richter etc. In a continuation of these reflections I will therefore try to answer the question to what extent Elgar and Mahler were acquainted with each other's oeuvre. And finally it might be interesting to look for similarities between some of the compositions of these two highly individual composers.

(To be continued)

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96 See Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 614f.

97 For the text of the diary entry and for information about the concert in Cambridge once more many thanks to Martin Bird.



**28<sup>th</sup> August, 1895: the Pennys' Wedding Reception at Hasfield Court. RBT, WMB, Dora and the Baker boys are much in evidence.**

# From Keeper of the Archives to Keeper of the Flame: the ‘Dorabella’ Bequest at the Royal College of Music (part one)

**Kevin Allen**

Suddenly he took me by my two hands and half lifted me up:

‘And how did you like *yourself*, my Dorabella?’

Then I tried to tell him how wonderful I thought it, and how it was far too delicate and lovely for the likes of me.

‘Well of course it is! We all know that.’

But I wouldn’t be put off and I said how marvellous it was to feel oneself part of the music which had been acclaimed by half the world as being his greatest work.

‘You dear child’, he said, and kissed me on the forehead.

*Mrs. Richard Powell: Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation*<sup>1</sup>

I was so delighted to get your book ... it is so fresh and vivid, and is such a wonderful picture of EE and his surroundings of those days, that I find my youth renewed and a hundred scenes brought to my mind of events which happened in my own experience ... Was there ever such a companion? And, if you had a sense of humour and sympathy, what a world would open for you in those days! You tell your story so happily and it all moves along so easily that you are bound to give people of ever later generations, a delightful glimpse ... of the dear happy creature that EE could be, and was.

Letter to Dora from Ivor Atkins, 31<sup>st</sup> August 1947

In two previous Journal articles<sup>2</sup> Sylvia Bennett traced the somewhat erratic fate of much correspondence and other material – scores, programmes, photographs, cuttings, manuscripts, paintings, notes and drafts for talks – the personal collection of Mrs. Richard Powell, ‘Dorabella’ of the ‘Enigma’ Variations. There can be no doubt about the authenticity of her intentions for the immediate location of this important material. In a formal signed statement dated 13<sup>th</sup> July, 1960, some four years before her death, she informed her Executors that ‘notwithstanding the contents of my Will I wish you to give my Elgar collection (if I have not already done so in my lifetime) to the Sheffield and District Elgar Society.’ Mrs. Powell<sup>3</sup> had strong connections with this Society (which gave her iconic status) as did Carice Elgar-Blake, May Grafton, and Wulstan Atkins. It was a proudly independent body, not connected with the Elgar Society itself, and was in existence

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1 1<sup>st</sup> edn. (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 24.

2 Vol.14, No.6, November 2006, and Vol.15 No.1, March 2007.

3 Pronounced ‘Pole’.

between 1951 and 1983; its records, mainly of a routine administrative nature, are lodged in the Sheffield Archives.<sup>4</sup> For some years after the Society's demise – an eventuality that Mrs. Powell had evidently not foreseen – her material was retained in zealous private hands in Sheffield, and may even have been partially plundered, but it was ultimately rescued at the determined insistence of her eldest son, who fulfilled what he claimed were his mother's ultimate intentions by depositing her papers in the Library of the Royal College of Music in 1986.<sup>5</sup> The choice of location may seem a strange one, the institution being one with which Mrs. Powell had no apparent connection, and the composer himself very little, while the Elgar Birthplace Museum might seem an obvious choice. Perhaps because of its very separateness from Broadheath, the collection has remained largely unresearched and the letters which are part of it have now been transcribed by the writer so that any items deemed to be of significance can ultimately be made available as part of the 'Collected Correspondence'.

Mrs. Powell's circle of correspondents was a wide one. The Dorabella Bequest contains some four hundred letters to and from a variety of correspondents including many writers, critics and musicologists past and present: figures such as Diana McVeagh, Eve Barsham, Reginald Nettel, Hubert Foss, Frank Howes, Cecil Barber, W.R. Anderson, A.E. Keeton, Eric Blom, Frank Bonavia, Ernest Newman, Reginald Hunt, William McNaught, A.T. Shaw, and Frank Carruthers. She was in touch too with musicians such as Henry Wood, Evelyn Barbirolli, Michael Mullinar, Alan Kirby, Astra Desmond, Percy Hull, Paul Kilburn, Alexander Brent Smith, and Granville Bantock, together with Elgarians such as Rosa Burley, Troyte Griffith and his family, Alan Webb, and Ivor Atkins. There is also much correspondence with bodies such as the BBC, the Oxford University Press, Novello, and the Sheffield Elgar Society; members of the Elgar family, including Carice and May Grafton, members of her own family, and admiring members of the public.

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'On the 8<sup>th</sup> Feb., at Swindon Vicarage, near Dudley, Mrs. ALFRED PENNY, of a daughter', announced *The Times* of 13<sup>th</sup> February, 1874. With this modest fanfare the life and career of a remarkable lady, best known to music-lovers the world over simply as Dorabella, was launched. It was an inauspicious start, for her mother contracted scarlet fever and died less than a week after the birth; perhaps it was indicative of strong genes and a degree of innate stamina and vitality that the child survived. Her name was registered as Dora Margaret, but she preferred to be known as Dora Mary, after the mother she never knew. The Reverend Penny was so traumatised by the loss of his twenty-three-year-old wife that he sought prolonged escape abroad, serving continuously in the Melanesian Mission for no less than twelve years. Dora was brought up at Hemel Hempstead by her widowed grandmother, Judith Heale, in a household which included six other relatives, a visiting Governess and no less than six servants. Material comfort may have been assured, but even by Victorian standards, it cannot have been a normal childhood for Dora, deprived of normal parental affection and a home of her own. Although in later life she, characteristically, said little about her early years, she once let slip that she had had no experience of nursery rhymes as a youngster<sup>6</sup> and her eldest son wrote that Judith Heale 'ruled her family with the proverbial rod of

4 Ref. MD7069-7080. The Archive also contains an undated typescript, *The Sheffield and District Elgar Society: A Short History*, by E.D. Mackerness.

5 RCM Library, ref.5571.

6 Dora to Everard José, undated.



Sept: 18<sup>th</sup>, 1937.

WOODEND  
BROADHEATH  
N<sup>o</sup>. WORCESTER

HALLOW 24

My dear Dora,

Thank you so much -  
How Jean finish - I know to few  
people abroad - but there are 2, whom  
will send -

I want in Dec. I visited 2  
Evenings ago - she seemed so  
pleasant & have got the book - spoke  
very much about it - it had made  
her refer to her own changes of view  
her with an interest looking it up  
confirming your dates! Which I wish  
were correct - She has written you  
but not having your address wrote  
the publishers - I dare say you have  
got it by now - She was very nice  
about it all - I don't think you need worry  
about her at all - I'm sure she is an  
ill woman & perhaps she just felt  
like she spoke the other day - She is

A letter from Carice

iron'.<sup>7</sup> And many years later when Dora's book was first published, one of those many relations wrote that it gave her a 'new knowledge and understanding of my dear niece, whom I have always loved, but possibly not quite understood, which was probably the fault of a selfish unsympathetic old aunt'.<sup>8</sup> Perhaps Dora, whose notable stammer was presumably another inheritance of these years, welcomed being sent away to St. Katharine's, a boarding school at Eastbourne. And even on the Reverend Alfred Penny's return to Staffordshire, it would be another six years before he could confront the reality of day-to-day living with the daughter who must inevitably have so much reminded him of his loss. Meanwhile she was allowed holiday visits, enabling her to become familiar with the Potteries and to attend the Hanley Festivals.

In 1895 Alfred Penny was appointed Rector and Rural Dean of Wolverhampton and Dora, now twenty years of age, finally went to live permanently with him there. It might have proved something of a liberation for her, but father and daughter must have been, to a greater or lesser extent, strangers to each other. The Reverend Penny's character might be best summed up by his obituary, which dubbed him 'A Warrior of the Church'.<sup>9</sup> He was of a decidedly High Anglican persuasion and one whose Christianity, according to his grandson, 'did not extend to the suffering of fools gladly'.<sup>10</sup>

Dora's musical education had evidently not been neglected. While she loved to play the piano and sing, and, encouraged by Henry Wood, formed and directed a string orchestra, her father's interest in music was largely confined to hymns and glees; and while she maintained a lifelong, conscientious Christian faith, participated in all the usual parish doings, and taught a Sunday-School class, she had no difficulty in finding intense enjoyment in the social world of local balls and dances. Within the bounds of Victorian propriety she craved excitement with all the enthusiasm of youth. Her favourite and most frequent diary criticism of any event was that it was 'deadly dull'. In fact Dora seems to have thrived on her unorthodox upbringing, and came to Wolverhampton as an independent-minded, self-reliant, high-spirited, confident young woman with a great love of music and a questioning intelligence. Inevitably perhaps, father and daughter clashed.

Alfred Penny may understandably have felt that an extra female presence in the household was urgently called for. Accordingly, soon after the move to Wolverhampton, he married Mary Frances Baker, a sister of William Meath Baker<sup>11</sup> of Hasfield Court, Gloucestershire. Now in her mid-forties, 'Min', as she was known, was a wise choice; good-humoured and tactful, she bonded well with her suddenly-acquired much younger step-daughter and often smoothed matters between her and the sometimes authoritarian and sarcastic Reverend Penny. As well as oiling the domestic wheels, the marriage also provided Dora with a ready-made set of interesting new relatives and friends. Baker himself was an early Alpinist and wealthy philanthropist with a great love of music shared by his wife, an accomplished amateur singer. Min's erudite sister Dorothea became a writer and historian, like her eccentric husband Richard Baxter Townshend,<sup>12</sup> a Cambridge Classics scholar who had spent some years adventuring in Colorado and New Mexico, with an endless

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7 Dora M. Powell, *Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation*, (4<sup>th</sup> edn: Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), 1.

8 Helen Neale to Dora, 8<sup>th</sup> September 1937.

9 *Lichfield Mercury*, 15<sup>th</sup> November 1935.

10 *Memories*, 4<sup>th</sup> edn, 2. He forbade Dora to attend the 1904 Covent Garden Elgar Festival as it took place during Lent. *Memories*, 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. 77-78.

11 W.M.B. of the 'Enigma' Variations.

12 R.B.T. of the 'Enigma' Variations.



fund of anecdote as a result. The pair would eventually settle in Oxford. Another member of the circle was Min's girlhood friend Alice, who had herself contracted a late marriage, to an obscure violin teacher whose compositions were beginning to be noticed, Edward Elgar. The loyal Min was a devoted supporter of the pair and no doubt Dora heard a great deal about the musician that intrigued her.

She first met him at Wolverhampton Station in December 1895, as she related, together with much else, in her book *Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation*, first published in 1937 and subsequently enlarged and revised three times.<sup>13</sup> The meeting led to an openly flirtatious friendship between a safely married man on the verge of middle age and an impressionable, innocent younger woman with a tendency to hero-worship; perhaps it was Dora's first experience of a relationship with a man on equal terms. It was an unorthodox relationship for the times, but countenanced openly within the wider family circle and indeed encouraged by Alice Elgar. The pair often found themselves alone together. In a talk to the North-West Branch of the Elgar Society Dora's son Claud said:

I have more than once been asked if the relationship between Elgar and Dora was other than innocent, and the answer is emphatically no. Anyone who knew her would agree that it would have been totally out of character – not least by reason of her fondness for C.A.E. However, she herself told me that their behaviour together was at times apt to be a good deal more demonstrative than she had been prepared to admit in her book.<sup>14</sup>

Over a period of nearly twenty years Dora's willing rôle became that of an accepted member of the Elgar household, visiting frequently – sometimes summoned by Alice – enjoying various *tête-à-tête* outings with the composer, dancing to his music, undertaking the maintenance of his press cuttings, and generally laying herself out to divert and amuse a man of contrasting and unpredictable moods. She heard many of his works in the making and became, of course, the subject of the tenth of the 'Enigma' Variations. In compiling her *Memories of a Variation* she was therefore in a unique position to provide a first-hand account of Elgar, although it was one seen very much through the prism of the teasing, jocular kind of relationship that met their mutual needs.<sup>15</sup> There was a side of Elgar that she must have seen, but did not wish to emphasize: 'black despair' was not part of Dora's typically English middle-class temperament and the stoicism she must have developed during her years without a real home of her own. On its first appearance the book received generally respectful reviews. W.R. Anderson wrote that it was 'stimulating to be taken into the midst of the exciting domestic-artistic doings at the turn of the centuries [*sic*], and to have the whimsical, masterful E.E. brought to vivid life in his great days'.<sup>16</sup> Edward Baughan, while initially inclined to wish for a

13 The first edition was published by Oxford University Press in 1937; the second (and enlarged) edition by them in 1947; the third edition, identical in content to the second, was published by Methuen in 1949; the fourth, revised and edited by Dora's son, Claud Powell, and containing additional material from her talks and broadcasts, was published by Scolar Press in 1994. References are to the earliest edition in which a quotation appears.

14 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1991. Script in writer's possession. The Elgar-Dora relationship has been sensitively explored in Keith Alldritt's novel, *Elgar on the Journey to Hanley* (London: Andre Deutsch, 1979).

15 A friend wrote that the book 'gives an amusingly vivid account of the more boisterous and facetious side' of Elgar. Rosa Burley and Frank Carruthers, *Edward Elgar: the Record of a Friendship*, (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1972), 94.

16 *The Gramophone*, November 1937.

more purely musicological kind of study, admitted that ‘meanwhile, all the same, one soon falls under the spell of Mrs. Powell’s very attractive and artless presentation of her experience of the great man and is grateful for a contribution to his biography, which, however slight, does much to deepen one’s knowledge of him as a singularly striking personality’.<sup>17</sup>

If these reviewers had qualms about any aspect of the book, reticence generally held sway in those days. *Memories of a Variation* remains a classic, but not perhaps in ways that its author undoubtedly hoped. It has been left to a later, less deferential phase of Elgar criticism to offer a deconstruction. In his book, *Elgar the Man*, Michael De-la-Noy wrote

Dora Penny ... has contributed perhaps the most fascinating personal account of life in the Elgar household, a book which seems to a surprising extent to have been accepted till now at face value. With its picture of Elgar in the role of amusing, hearty genius, Dorabella as his capable and sympathetic Girl Friday, and Alice as Elgar’s simpering, incompetent little wife, I find this, because officially sanctioned by Carice Blake, the most revealing personal account of all.<sup>18</sup>

But Mr. De-la-Noy had many axes to grind in his now largely forgotten book. What cannot be disputed is that the Elgar-Dora relationship, once so vital and intense, gradually burnt itself out. The private performance of the Violin Concerto by Elgar and Billy Reed during the Gloucester Festival of 1910 marked the last musical occasion of which Dora was able to offer a personal account. The composer’s moves to Hereford and London, his creative absorption with the ‘Windflower’, and Dora’s own awareness of the passing of time, meant that meetings grew increasingly rare. But she never lost a fascination, obsession almost, with the meaning of the ‘Enigma’; Elgar had teased her about a hidden melody and she later admitted to spending days going through popular songs of the time trying to make them fit.<sup>19</sup> But as time passed and the relationship changed, Dora’s continuing questioning began to prove an unwelcome irritant. Jerrold Northrop Moore states that her suggestion of ‘Auld Lang Syne’ as the hidden melody during a visit to Severn House in 1912 was ‘virtually the end of their friendship’.<sup>20</sup> It was evidently not a good-tempered conversation.<sup>21</sup>

Dora gradually realised the need to centre her life elsewhere. In January 1914, before it was too late, therefore, she married an engineer, Richard Crofts Powell, from a clerical background like herself, with an evident taste for cars and aeroplanes (he gained his pilot’s licence that year) and a splendid Elgarian moustache. She was in her fortieth year; Richard was no less than twelve years younger. That spring there was a definitively final meeting with Elgar when the couple lunched at Severn House; she never saw him again. The rejection must have been deeply hurtful to her, and the break did not pass unnoticed among members of her circle; ‘was it your growing friendship with Dick?’<sup>22</sup> one relative enquired, in all innocence. For his part, Richard must soon have discovered, if he did not already know, that there were to be three people in this marriage.

The couple settled in pretty, old-fashioned East Grinstead in Sussex, far away from Dora’s previous homes in the Midlands, with all its associations. It was then a quiet semi-rural market town boasting many timber-framed houses and various other historic buildings, and easy rail links

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17 *Birmingham Post*, 28<sup>th</sup> September, 1937.

18 London: Allen Lane, 1983, 12.

19 Roger Fiske, ‘The Enigma: A Solution’, *The Musical Times*, November 1969.

20 *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, (Oxford University Press: 1984), 637.

21 Fiske, *loc.cit.*

22 Helen Heale to Dora, 8<sup>th</sup> September 1937.

to London. There would be two children, Claud (1915-2004) and Alan (1919-1985), both to follow their father's footsteps as engineers. Their family life seems to have been a typical respectable middle-class one of the time, with, one imagines, a maid and/or a cook, sustained by a comfortable professional income and worthwhile yields from Investments.<sup>23</sup> But reticence over Elgarian matters seemed to hold sway. Claud recalled that the household contained no gramophone when he was a child, and the first he knew and heard of his mother's Variation was when he was in his teens at Lancing School; a recording was played to him by his French teacher, Alan Webb,<sup>24</sup> later an early Curator of the Elgar Birthplace Museum, or 'Birthplace House', as mother and son preferred to call it. Dora and Richard remained in East Grinstead all their lives, settling in a large detached house standing in its own grounds which they named 'Poels' in honour of the family name. The musicologist Roger Fiske, then a student at the Royal College of Music, later a BBC producer, recalled an invitation to tea sometime in the mid-1930s. 'Richard ... was a quiet agreeable man with beautiful Edwardian manners, and though he was out-talked by his animated, voluble wife, he held his own with her; I thought them an unusually intelligent and charming couple'.<sup>25</sup> They became familiar local figures. Dora was remembered as riding a tall upright bicycle – a hangover from earlier youthful days when she would ride from Wolverhampton to Malvern – and remained keenly interested in musical matters. She was a member of the Operatic Society, and sang in the Church choir, conducting it in the Choirmaster's absence.<sup>26</sup> Both Powells were immediately striking.



**Richard Crofts Powell in 1913** (*Royal Aero Club*)

I have a most vivid memory of Dorabella as an old lady. She used to come in to shop in East Grinstead every Saturday morning driven in a rather rakish old open Bentley by her somewhat alarming looking husband, Mr Powell, who had a fierce walrus moustache. She wore a sort of Edwardian scarf and was really very beautiful.<sup>27</sup>

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- 23 A stray bank statement of March 1937 among the Bequest papers records payments of dividends from various Railway stocks and Baldwin's, amounting to some £60.00, roughly equivalent to £3,500 today, based on the RPI. (MeasuringWorth.com)
  - 24 Recounted in a talk to the Elgar Society North-West Branch, 2<sup>nd</sup> March, 1991.
  - 25 Fiske, *loc.cit.*
  - 26 Letter to the writer dated 1<sup>st</sup> June, 1993 from H.G.P. Creasey, esq., who also recalled Richard Powell as 'a very military-looking gentleman.'
  - 27 Letter to the writer dated 7<sup>th</sup> June, 1993 from Colin Davis, esq. (not the conductor, as he was at pains to assure me).

A picture of inter-war East Grinstead was sketched by a local journalist Brian Desmond in a contribution to the East Grinstead Society *Bulletin* of Spring, 1985. He remembered the town's Literary and Scientific Institute with its reading and games rooms, its Library, Saddlery, Garage and Bicycle Shop, its Thursday cattle market with its associated Sussex characters, and the advent of the first Labour member on the Urban Council.

One other outstanding personality was Mrs Dora Powell, who lived in Moat Road. She was a great friend of Sir Edward Elgar who wrote the Enigma Variations that included 'Dorabella' as a tribute to her. I got to know Mrs Powell particularly well when she organised the annual lawn tennis championships held annually on the courts of the East Grinstead Lawn Tennis Club in Ship Street. She used to guide me in taking down day by day the results of many spectacular games that drew players pre-Wimbledon from all parts. She suffered from a stammer, yet when she broadcast from the BBC a fascinating talk on Elgar there was no trace of it. I wrote her a letter expressing my enjoyment. She wrote back expressing her pleasure at receiving it – the first 'fan mail' she had ever received.<sup>28</sup>



**Cattle Fair in East Grinstead High Street, late 19<sup>th</sup> Century** (*Crawley Reference Library*)

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28 Copy kindly supplied by M.J. Leppard, esq., in a letter to the writer dated 25<sup>th</sup> August, 1973.



Moat Road, East Grinstead, early 20<sup>th</sup> Century (Crawley Reference Library)

Dora's influence went wider than tennis. In an earlier letter to the *East Grinstead Observer* Brian Desmond recalled the town as being 'one of great culture, behind which she was the moving spirit'.

I recall the Oxford University Extension lectures, held in the one-time Oak Room of the Whitehall, for which she always presented me with a season ticket. It was not wasted, and of great value as the courses were generally on literary subjects. Mrs Powell also organised a number of musical afternoons in the self-same Oak Room, which I attended through her kindness; they instilled a sense of musical appreciation, if, at times, somewhat above my head.<sup>29</sup>

Dora had fifty years of life left to her after the break with Elgar, and it is clear that amidst her rôles as busy wife, mother and community stalwart, her relationship with him continued to dominate her life as she wrote and revised her Elgarian days in *Memories of a Variation*. She was prepared to take on all comers in her insistence on her special position and authority, as her correspondence, often carefully drafted and subsequently indexed, shows. The material preserved at the RCM begins in 1937, the year of the publication of the first edition of her book, and continues until the late 1950s. In what follows I can do no more than offer a personal choice of certain aspects of it. Firstly, some accounts of the good and great.

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29 28<sup>th</sup> August, 1969.

## Elgar

Dora's correspondence yields many passing mentions of names familiar from the Elgar saga, such as Billy Reed, Winifred Norbury, Sidney Loeb, 'Pippa' Worthington, the Jebb-Scotts, the Nevinsons, August Jaeger and Adrian Boult. But of course of most interest are several references to the composer himself, some short, others more substantial. A former organist of St. Michael's Tenbury told Dora how he remembered the young Elgar playing viola in a scratch orchestra in the 1880s, and recalled him as being 'quiet & refined. We heard that he was writing & that some composition of his was likely to be played at Birmingham'.<sup>30</sup> Another correspondent, an assiduous one, and a devoted Elgarian, a certain Charles Kent of Exeter, relayed his memories of a performance of the 'Meditation' from *The Light of Life* at Gloucester in 1898:

I remember meeting the Tenor Lay Clerk Charles Eynon Morgan after the performance. His first words were "What did you think of that lovely bit of music by a Mr Elgar, after that brassy overture of Lloyd's? That Elgar will go a long way." He was a mercurial person I think. He literally ran on the platform. There's a live man! said I to myself. It was the first time I saw him ... he seemed to me like a Lion in a cage and looking round to see how he could get out.<sup>31</sup>

Mr. Kent later added:

The next occasion I saw Sir Edward was Covent Garden 1904 the third night. What a wonderful reception he had and also how embarrassed he was in getting the huge laurel wreath off the platform. How he was recalled time and again after the "In the South" Overture. Hans Richter who stood inside the Stage Door [*sic*] and as Elgar came up to him he put his hands on his shoulders and kissed him on both cheeks – at the same time handing him his baton to conduct the Pomp & Circumstance March in D.<sup>32</sup>

As a former Manchester resident, the writer also had memories of the composer directing the Hallé Orchestra in a performance of the 'Enigma' Variations at the Free Trade Hall.

I can recall [it] as if it were yesterday. Elgar, grave, dignified and immaculately dressed with his fob seal dangling from his watch pocket came on and conducted amid great enthusiasm. When he came on the platform there was a burst of applause. He bowed politely, turned right, walked up to the desk, looked all over the orchestra at the rapt attention of the players, smiled, took up his baton, raised it and the Hallé orchestra played it as I have never heard it played since. There was an inspired smile on his face ... that was the last time I saw Sir Edward. It will be another 2 or 3 hundred years before England looks on his like again.<sup>33</sup>

And he related a story told by a friend who had been admitted to a Richter rehearsal of *Gerontius*. Things were not going well. 'Shtop', said the great man. 'The poem written by the ecclesiastic Cardinal Newman, the Soul of Gerontius, music composed by the great Elgar. You are playing it like a sole in a fish shop'.<sup>34</sup>

30 Walter James Lancaster to Dora, 30<sup>th</sup> March, 1938.

31 Charles Kent to Dora, 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1939 and 6<sup>th</sup> June, 1944.

32 Charles Kent to Dora, 21<sup>st</sup> October, 1939.

33 Charles Kent to Dora, 16<sup>th</sup> September, 1945.

34 Charles Kent to Dora, 1<sup>st</sup> November 1939.



A totally unexpected memory of Elgar was provided by a certain Gilbert Wiblin of Oxford, who recalled seeing Elgar during a visit he made to that city in February 1905 to receive an honorary degree at the hands of Sir Hubert Parry, Director of the Royal College of Music and Professor of Music at the University. The relationship between the two composers was outwardly one of mutual admiration and respect, but privately there were reservations at times. The recognition of an Oxford degree was welcome to the self-taught composer, but nevertheless even such a benign confrontation with Academe may not have found Elgar quite at ease. During his three days in the city he took delight in meeting the celebrated Spooners, and made sure to visit the Townshends at their large house on the Banbury Road; but Parry recorded in his diary that after the conferring of the degree, its recipient was on the defensive; 'Elgar made a long-winded explanation of his attitude toward the College', he noted.<sup>35</sup> After a dinner in his honour that evening, Wiblin wrote that he ...

... attended the weekly chamber concert of the OU Musical Club, of which I was then a young and inconspicuous member, with no status warranting personal contact with the distinguished guest. But the Club room was very long for its width, and the seating was arranged in two blocks facing each other, with the performers in the middle, so that listeners in the front seats faced one another across a space of some nine or ten feet. It so happened that Elgar sat in the front row on one side, and I was just opposite him on the other. One of the works played was Parry's *Grosses Duo* for two pianofortes, which I believe was new to Elgar and most of the rest of us; and I think I got as much thrill from watching Elgar's face as he listened as from the music ... Elgar's reaction to it, as I remember his face, was comparable to Keats's astronomer 'when a new planet swims into his ken' – lively interest and delight; I was rather young then to judge its enduring qualities, but as far as I remember it was distinctly 'Parry-ish'.<sup>36</sup>

Pride of place among such glimpses must go to an account of the first performance of *The Apostles* contained in an autobiography, *My Life in General Practice*, by a Dr. W.H. Pooler.<sup>37</sup> The passage was copied for Dora by a Birmingham correspondent, Alfred Williams.<sup>38</sup>

I have written of the love of music which I shared with my wife. Without doubt the greatest experience we ever had ... was the first performance of *The Apostles* at the Triennial Musical Festival in October 1903, with Elgar himself conducting. My wife and I had been fortunate in securing seats in the second or third row on the ground floor, just near enough, but not too near, to the orchestra, on the strings side. Just in front of us were some steps leading from the floor to the platform, and on these steps sat Hans Richter, the Festival conductor, with Stockley, the conductor of the Birmingham Festival Choral Society and Orchestra ... The principals were the first oratorio singers in the land: Ffrangcon Davies as Jesus, Muriel Foster as Mary Magdalene, Albani as the Blessed Virgin, John Coates, Kennerly Rumford and Andrew Black ... When Elgar appeared we saw a tall figure with rather bowed shoulders and slender nervous hands. He was simply dressed in the ordinary evening dress of the ordinary citizen; there was nothing ostentatious about him, neither in person or in demeanour; no wide flowing tie or long hair advertising the 'Maestro' that he was. On the contrary, he seemed shy and retiring, just the plain man of everyday life. As he came on to the rostrum he was given, of course, a great welcome, but, with the first tap of his baton a tense silence ensued, not to be broken until the storm of applause signaled the close of the oratorio. Two great moments ... left us with an indelible memory.

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35 Diary of Sir Hubert Parry, 7<sup>th</sup> February, 1905.

36 Gilbert Wiblin to Dora, 16<sup>th</sup> January 1948, and 6<sup>th</sup> February 1949.

37 London: Christopher Johnson Ltd., 1948, 77-79.

38 Alfred Williams to Dora, 3<sup>rd</sup> August 1955.



The first was the dedication of St Peter to the Service of Christianity. 'Thou art Peter and on this rock will I build my Church.' This was sung by Ffrangon Davies with an intense fervour, that sent a thrill throughout the great audience ... And the second great moment came, again from Ffrangon Davies, in the last exhortation and promise of Christ to His Apostles as he was ascending: 'Go ye, therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost: and lo I am with you always even until the end of the world'. The preliminary sentences ending with 'But ye shall receive power, when the Holy Ghost is come upon you', Davies sang quietly, almost unemotionally, thus emphasizing what was to follow, but, with the 'Teach all nations', his voice rose and rang through the hall thrilling the immense audience with its religious enthusiasm, and then came the great climax, when as if with Christ actually ascending, the voice dies away almost to a whisper as he reached the end. Spellbound, we listeners were silent, but underneath emotions were surging. We were awed beyond all outward expression, and as Elgar's sensitive hands fell slowly down, for he also appeared to be feeling the tension of the moment, I saw Richter turn to Stockley and whisper 'magnificent'.

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### **'Nimrod'**

Dora was fond of all her new Hasfield relatives, but she enjoyed a particularly close and poignant friendship with another most important member of the Enigma circle, August Jaeger. She visited him at his house in Muswell Hill during his last gruelling illness, often reduced to tears afterwards on the journey home. She dedicated her book to his memory, and included in it a moving account of the special Memorial Concert that was supported by Elgar, Parry, Walford Davies, Coleridge-Taylor and Hans Richter. One of the many letters she received on the first publication of *Memories of a Variation* in 1937 was from one of Jaeger's friends, Arabella Wells, neé Wright. The friendship had been close enough for Arabella to join him at the Queen's Hall on the occasion of the first London performance of Elgar's First Symphony; 'the Handsome, tall lady you saw me with was not my wife',<sup>39</sup> he told Sydney Loeb, Hans Richter's future son-in-law, who had paid for a chauffeur-driven car to ensure that the terminally ill Jaeger was able to hear the Symphony he so much wanted Elgar to produce. It was close enough, too, for her to be entrusted with a priceless collection of Elgar's letters. Arabella recounted all this to Dora, and concluded with a recollection of Jaeger's uninhibited enthusiasm, a characteristic which sometimes stood in his way among the English.

The Elgars themselves I only met en passant, so to speak, at Festivals, but Carice I think would allow me to call her a friend. You, I met once! I wonder if you will remember? At Muswell Hill Station on a very wet afternoon & I offered you a lift in my cab (there was only one!) When I asked you where you wanted to go & said 37, Curzon Road, I said 'Dorabella'! I often used to go there & after reading your book I went upstairs & fetched a bundle of Nimrod's letters down & spent such a delightful evening reading them all again – he often mentioned you & he used to say the three nicest women he knew had names ending in 'Ella' – Isabella his wife, Dorabella & Arabella (my maiden name was Wright).

I went with him to hear EE's first performance by Richter [*sic*] at the Queen's Hall of his First Symphony (but I was not one of the friends who sent him in a taxi there!). We met at the Hall & he gave me the proof sheets of it all with his marginal notes<sup>40</sup> – a great possession which I value

39 Letter dated 9<sup>th</sup> December 1908.

40 Jaeger's pencil annotations on the proof sheets of the piano reduction of the Symphony include the phrase 'the bewitching Dorabella casts a merry glance' over the clarinet and bassoon demisemiquavers immediately before Cue 70. Allen, *August Jaeger; Portrait of 'Nimrod'*, (Aldershot: Ashgate, 2000), 267.

highly. He also let me sort out & put in chronological order (as best I could) all EE's letters to him – a somewhat difficult (but most enthralling) task as many of them were undated: & as he wrote them he often sent me notes of his notes on 'The Kingdom' – it was a lovely time & how I enjoyed it all. I first met him in 1905 at the Worcester Festival & so well remember at supper at the Atkins' after a performance of 'Tod und Verklärung' him jumping up & crying 'Ach but it takes one up to heaven' & I responded inwardly, but with the usual English reserve didn't jump up & let myself go as I should have liked to. From then on till his death we were fast friends & to me as to you he sent a loving goodbye through his wife.<sup>41</sup>

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## *Carice*

When Dora came to write her book she knew she would inevitably be reliant on the approval and assistance of the one person who could help her above all, the composer's daughter, Carice, whose relationship with Dora seems to have been unaffected by the break with her parents. The two women became friends and frequent correspondents, although Dora privately remained a little wary. When revising her book for a second edition during the War, for example, she wrote to Eric Blom of 'a possible dissident – of whom I, very definitely have to be careful, and that is my great friend Mrs Carice Elgar-Blake, whose mental make-up is very much like her mother's. A good deal of what I wanted to say in my "Revised Version" has had to be tempered by this fact. I would not hurt her feelings for anything. Will you keep all this to yourself, please?'<sup>42</sup>

Carice's special position, her essential good nature and sense of obligation to her father's memory, meant that Dora consulted her on matters large and small, although it is easy to gain the impression from Carice's often delayed and hastily written replies, of a busy, sometimes harassed and forgetful correspondent not always entirely at ease with the situation. 'Terribly sorry to be so slow', 'My New Year resolution was to answer letters at once! But I have been badly defective lately' were typical refrains.<sup>43</sup> 'I cannot at this moment go into diaries again. I haven't a minute' was another.<sup>44</sup> And Dora, single-minded as she was, could prove hypersensitive to perceived slights, as when something went amiss over a permission for the second edition of her book. 'But now,' she wrote in exasperation to Ralph Binfield of the Oxford University Press, 'I wait a word of regret or apology for her forgetfulness of me, from Mrs E-B. I know she has sent me the permit but her letter implies "I send it, as you ask me for it, but I am relying on your good sense & nice feeling to let the matter drop"''.<sup>45</sup>

Dora was relentless in her quest for information, and always succeeded. There can be no doubt as to the stronger personality. Carice was herself anxious to establish facts for posterity – 'I must get on with my skeleton of his life ... before history gets disturbed out of all knowledge',<sup>46</sup> she wrote, but her problematic domestic situation tended to stand in the way. Her marriage had

41 Arabella Wells to Dora, 24<sup>th</sup> June, 1938.

42 Dora to Eric Blom, 24<sup>th</sup> September, 1944.

43 Carice to Dora, 31<sup>st</sup> October 1938 and 9<sup>th</sup> February, 1950.

44 Carice to Dora, 23<sup>rd</sup> September, 1943.

45 Dora to R.D. Binfield. (Undated ink draft, c.1946).

46 Carice to Dora, 10<sup>th</sup> May 1937.

proved less than satisfying. In 1936 she and her farmer husband Sam moved from their home in Sussex to Broadheath to be 'on the spot' but the move must have been something of a wrench for him. 'I'm finding it difficult to get down to,' she continued, 'because I must make some sort of life for my husband. I am collecting people for him & he gets bridge – so it's better but it takes time. Then I simply cannot have any more papers in the house till I have another room ... & I can't build that till we've got some more land & the man is asking so much too much for it'.<sup>47</sup> Sam Blake's deteriorating health proved another burden, just at the time when Carice had her hands full with the acquisition and preparation of the Birthplace Cottage. In May 1939 she told Dora, 'Everything here is most difficult & so pathetic. There's nothing to be done – I feel I shall go mad. But say nothing please'.<sup>48</sup> Sam had to be admitted to a Nursing Home, and died at the end of August. Mrs. Goodman, the first Curator of the Birthplace, remembered how Carice returned from the funeral, took off her rings, banged them down on a table, and commented, 'Well, that's that!'.<sup>49</sup> Two years later she found happiness when she met Sybil Russell, late of the WRAF, and the pair became lifelong companions. She broached the important new relationship to Dora with studied casualness.

I think I told you I had a very nice girl living here with me, & all goes well & happily, & she enters into all my doings & is most helpful. We seem to run from morning to night, & to have got involved into so many things, but we work well together. Market stall takes time especially as we are going to have 2 days a week.<sup>50</sup>

Understandably, there were times when Carice sought an identity other than that of simply being Elgar's daughter. The market stall was a W.I. affair, largely created at the suggestion of Carice, an active member. She and Sybil were also active in running a 'tea room' for visitors to the Birthplace, and sought further activities, especially during the War. Carice told Dora 'I have been and am busy here. Just started a Club in Foregate St for W.I. members to sit & rest & eat their sandwiches when waiting for buses etc. It is going well, & great fun to do ...'.<sup>51</sup> More fun at times, one is tempted to think, than being a sort of Elgarian maid-of-all-work. Perhaps Carice was one of those people who found that the War provided an outlet and a scope of which they could otherwise only have dreamed.

In 1938, seeking to correct a statement by Frank Bonavia, Dora asked Carice for definitive information concerning the often-quoted story that all Elgar's honours were buried with Alice. Carice replied:

The facts are "like what I said." He buried the court sword with my Mother – (subsequently had to get another) but it was never discussed that the orders should be buried. Several incidentally he had not even got – the news of the Belgian Order had come but the insignia had not when Mother died – as I know very well having been sent to fetch it myself from the Belgian Ambassador. He didn't have the Victorian Orders till [19]30 something nor the Baronetcy, or the less important gold medals. I think all he can have had was the O.M. The diplomas were always somewhere, it was more or less a gesture of despair that they were all on the landing (first landing) at Marl Bank simply because you could not have them lying about in hopeless heaps ...

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47 *Ibid.*

48 Carice to Dora, 9<sup>th</sup> May, 1939.

49 Anecdote communicated by Arthur Reynolds.

50 Carice to Dora, 23<sup>rd</sup> May, 1942.

51 Carice to Dora, 27<sup>th</sup> September, 1942.

[Letter continues two days later] Yes, here is some more. I have not got the Times article but the enclosed from the Worcester paper is probably copied. It explains why I could never find any papers about the Institut de France. Of course I asked no questions & did not really know what he did – but now I read this it comes back to me that these three things, ie, the sword – ribbon of the Order of Merit & the Diploma of the Institut de France were placed in the grave. The ribbon of course was replaced for practical purposes ... Terribly sorry to be so slow, much love, Carice.<sup>52</sup>

Inaccurate statements in newspaper reports and radio broadcasts provided Dora and Carice with frequent opportunities for complaints and expressions of mutual indignation, although it was Dora who usually took up the cudgels in public. Following a broadcast in 1942, for example, she wrote to *The Times*.

Sir – It has become the fashion, when speaking or writing of the enigma in Elgar's 'Variations,' to suggest that the mystery is not concerned with a second tune but with the personality of the composer, the outline of the Malvern Hills, or anything else that may occur to a fertile imagination. If this matter of the enigma is worth mentioning at all, the contemporary evidence should not be ignored.

As the only surviving member of the 13 friends to who the Variations were dedicated, I feel obliged, for the sake of truth, to say that Elgar plainly told me while the work was being written that there was another, unheard, melody. Furthermore, he twitted me on more than one occasion about my failure to find it. But the facts do not rest on my testimony alone. I have letters from others of the "friends pictured within" which give ample confirmation. I know also that "Nimrod" knew the secret, and refused to give it away.<sup>53</sup>

(The *Daily Telegraph* and *Radio Times* were similarly handbagged over other matters which aroused Dora's ire.) Carice was not entirely happy with the broadcast, but maintained a more relaxed attitude. 'It's a nuisance being bracketed with a thing one really did not sponsor at all,' she wrote, 'but I'm not going to fuss about that. I think it's better to let it be now.' But she continued supportively:

To return to your letter, I am glad you wrote it, for one does get so tired of all these speculations when one knows the facts! ... We know there was a tune. Father offered to tell me once but I refused to know. I thought it was so essentially his & Mother's own 'game' that I was not going to intrude on it. Everyone thinks I am mad to have done so, but I should do so again.<sup>54</sup>

There seems to have been no end to Carice's diffidence, even, or especially, over matters connected with her parents. But perhaps she was wise in deciding to reject her father's offer, the substance of which might well have turned out to be more of a burden to be shouldered than anything else. In response to another frequently mentioned Elgar legend, about the press cuttings, Carice had this to say:

What I am getting so tired of is this newspaper cutting business! They all say father pretended never to read them – well he never did read the d— things till all the volumes came out of store in about 1930 to Marl Bank – when he did amuse himself in looking through them. But never before. It was not a

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52 Carice to Dora, 31<sup>st</sup> October / 1<sup>st</sup> November, 1938.

53 15<sup>th</sup> June, 1942.

54 Carice to Dora, 28<sup>th</sup> June, 1942.

pose – he simply did not read them – oh dear!<sup>55</sup>

There seemed to be no end to Dora's curiosity over matters great and small; at one point she sought information about the composer's pens. But after the cuttings, she turned her attention to his pipes – more of a 'prop' perhaps, than is generally realised. Carice reacted to a Lambert photograph of her father smoking one:

The date of the photograph is extraordinary. He was of course by then in the flat in St James Place, where I know the bag of pipes went & was lying about. For several years before that he was off pipes really, though he tried to smoke one quite often but always gave up saying it was no pleasure but he still tried. I think he loved his long pipes which were made for him – made long on purpose to keep the smoke out of his eye when he was writing & everyone admired & noticed them. It was partly a little bit of vanity if you know what I mean & partly really wishing he could use them & enjoy them, that made him get them out for Lambert to photograph – I should think – mind you this is pure guesswork. For the last few years he never even tried them & they got eventually into the boxroom at Marl Bank ...<sup>56</sup>

Carice's letters offer various pen-portraits of Elgarian characters, including the celebrated Pietro d'Alba, and the complications he caused.

He was a great pet & used to run about the balcony at Plas Gwyn & come into the drawing-room for his milk at tea-time & go into the study. We were heartbroken when he died of old age. Father invented the name Pietro d'Alba as the author of one of the Part songs (Owls?) & had to kill him off when it came to royalties. Father of course just received them & said P d'A was living abroad & he would forward it!<sup>57</sup>

Another glimpse is of Winifred Norbury. Carice worked hard to publicise *Memories of a Variation* on its first appearance and made sure that Winifred, then an ailing and unhappy lady with just months to live, received a copy. She had long quitted Sherridge on her brother's inheritance of the estate, and there had been bitter family disputes over the selling of many precious family heirlooms in the harsh economic climate of the twenties and thirties. Now Winifred was living with her younger sister Betty and her daughter in London Road, Worcester; Florence had died the previous year.

I went in to see Winifred 2 Evenings ago - & she seemed so pleased to have got the book & spoke very nicely about it. It had made her refer to her own diaries & given her such an interest looking it up & verifying your dates! Which luckily were correct. She has written to you but not knowing your address wrote to the publishers. I daresay you have got it by now. She was very nice about it all. You see she is an ill woman & perhaps she just felt like she spoke the other day. She is apt to be a little sort of sarcastic always I think.<sup>58</sup>

Carice's recollections of Julia Worthington, the Elgar's gracious American friend, betrayed a Victorian and Edwardian upbringing.

55 Carice to Dora, 25<sup>th</sup> October, 1937.

56 Carice to Dora, 9<sup>th</sup> July, 1947.

57 Carice to Dora (undated).

58 Carice to Dora, 18<sup>th</sup> September, 1937.

I suppose you never saw Julia Worthington. She was quite the loveliest person in face – & character. She was always known as Pippa. We adored her. It was she we went to stay with at Careggi near Florence. I don't know much about her unhappiness. I was seventeenish when we first knew her & those sorts of things were not told to me. I believe her husband was a brute & she was separated. She had 4 sons I gathered one was a worry. We were terribly upset when she died of cancer in 1913.<sup>59</sup>

The range and variety of reference contained in the Dorabella Bequest is one of its delights for the reader. In a final tribute to a much-loved musician, I quote Carice's endorsement of a new Worcester Cathedral Organist on his first Three Choirs Festival, together with an implied comment on his long-serving predecessor.

The Festival went very well. Mr Willcocks is marvellous & one had none of the awful qualms one has had of late years expecting a calamity at any minute! I never heard such a climax in Gerontius. The cinema is vile for sound but he did the last movement of the Symphony more movingly than I have heard it for years.<sup>60</sup>

(To be continued)

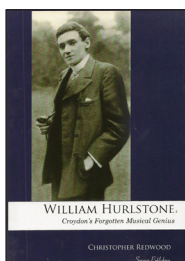
*Kevin Allen has written about several of Elgar's closest friends and supporters, notably August Jaeger ('Portrait of Nimrod') and Winifred Norbury and her family ('Gracious Ladies'). He is currently working on a study of perhaps the most important, if often taken-for-granted of Elgar's early supporters, the progressive Worcester Cathedral Organist Hugh Blair. It was through Blair's agency that 'Sursum Corda', 'The Black Knight' and the Organ Sonata came to be written and performed. Kevin Allen's talk 'Hugh Blair: Worcester's Forgotten Organist' will be part of this year's Three Choirs Festival programme.*

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59 Carice to Dora, 16<sup>th</sup> July, 1946.

60 Carice to Dora, 30<sup>th</sup> September, 1951

## BOOK REVIEWS



### **Christopher Redwood: *William Hurlstone – Croydon's Forgotten Musical Genius***

Highbridge, Somerset: Sequoia Publishing, 2017

There must be many composers of quality who have failed to obtain recognition as a result of an accident of history, in some cases because of an early death. It is exciting to discover that there are great composers whom one has not yet encountered, particularly if there is scope for filling the gap in one's knowledge.

A case in point is William Hurlstone. The West Country scholar, Dr Christopher Redwood, also Chairman of the South Western Branch of the Elgar Society, has published a biography of 'Croydon's Forgotten Musical Genius'. Elgarians will be interested to see that Elgar was well aware of Hurlstone. He said to his friend Robert Nichols "Did you ever hear of William Hurlstone?" "Well, look out for some variations of his. . . the expression on his face as he said the words was troubled. Perhaps he was thinking how inscrutable destiny is."

Not only is Hurlstone Croydon's forgotten musical genius, he is a musician of national calibre, may be international calibre, but his death at the age of 30 in 1906 deprived us of the full expression of his genius, as well as resulting in his compositions being less well known than would otherwise have been the case. None the less there are many fine works available to us, and a number of these are available on CD as well as on YouTube.

Christopher's book is the perfect introduction to Hurlstone. It is the product of his PhD thesis, and covers his life in detail, drawing on an astonishingly wide range of sources. He also provides a detailed analysis of all the major works, so this is a book for serious musicians as well as for the lay reader. The volume includes a catalogue of his works and a list of CDs and a bibliography.

We learn that Hurlstone was better known in London than Elgar until Richter's performance of the *Enigma Variations* in 1901. Following his death *The Musical Times* wrote "To procure the publication of works by Hurlstone is to do justice, not only to the composer's genius, but to British music. It would be hard to name a finer collection of chamber music by a British composer than the series of works given to the world by Hurlstone during his short life".

Any reader of this review who is curious to sample Hurlstone's music could do worse than sample the slow movement of his String Quartet, and YouTube provides access to a remarkable Trio for Clarinet, Bassoon and Piano, Four Characteristic Pieces for Clarinet and Piano, and a Bassoon Sonata. There is also a very fine Cello Sonata.



A further benefit for readers who are interested in English music of this period is that there are copious references to Hurlstone's contemporaries in addition to Elgar, including Frank Bridge, Coleridge-Taylor, Thomas Dunhill, Holst, John Ireland, Stanford, and Vaughan Williams.

Michael Butterfield

## CD REVIEWS



Hallé

CDHLL7544

### **Elgar: *The Spirit of England*, Op. 80**

Rachel Nicholls, soprano

Hallé Choir

### **Elgar: *A Voice in the Wilderness* (*Une voix dans le désert*), Op. 77**

Joshua Ellicott, narrator

Jennifer France, soprano

### **Elgar: *Grania and Diarmid*, Op. 42**

Introduction, Funeral March & 'There are seven that pull the thread'

Madeleine Shaw, mezzo-soprano

### **Arnold Bax: *In Memoriam***

Hallé Orchestra

Sir Mark Elder

The first time I heard *The Spirit of England* is etched on my memory. It was in the days when some of us travelled long distances across country to hear a rare performance of Elgar's music and when others hid microphones under seats or bought expensive reel to reel recorders to ensure we could listen again and again to broadcasts of *The Apostles*, *The Kingdom* or even *Carillon* and *Une voix dans le désert*! I admit that travelling to Tunbridge Wells was not that far (from London) but the journey personifies the world I inhabited then (the very early 1970's).

So it was that I heard the Australian conductor Myer Fredman conduct (he had just broadcast *The Light of Life*, for the first time) and hearing Elgar's three Binyon settings was a profound and unforgettable experience. Then, a few years later – at last – Chandos released the LP of Sir Alexander Gibson's recording in 1977 and took my experience to a higher level. Never mind *The Coronation Ode* (the coupling) – it was *The Spirit of England* I played over and over again. It became a very personal work and as other commercial recordings have appeared all had to compete, in my opinion, with the standard set by Teresa Cahill, the soprano in the Gibson recording. Her identification with the work, its sentiments and the journey from the idealism in 'The Fourth of August' to the state of determined resignation at the end of 'For the Fallen' remains unique. It is true the recording now sounds dated and Gibson's tempi can be slow at times (the recording was made in Paisley Abbey) but Cahill is compelling in the detached simplicity of her singing. This adds to the emotion of the performance contrarily making it more emotionally engaging for the listener.

Many years later I greeted Dame Felicity Lott's performance with great anticipation but for once this great singer disappointed me. Somehow the innocence and detachment conveyed by Cahill was missing and to me there was a sense that Richard Hickox and his performers were feeling their way

into unfamiliar music which may have been the case. Then I came across the late Graham Mayo's recording made live in Gloucester Cathedral.<sup>1</sup> Here was a performance that nearly matched the Chandos disc, the soprano Clare Martin following the Teresa Cahill approach by playing down the emotionalism of the words and allowing Elgar's music to reach moments of transcendent beauty in such moments as 'Your hope, your dread' in 'To Women'. This was and is something special. I also found the 1938 performance by Elsie Suddaby and Sir Adrian Boult equally moving – every performer having experienced the world war that ended twenty years to the day the broadcast was made.<sup>2</sup> It is these three performance that are my yard stick – they may not be the best played or recorded but they get to the heart of this tribute to all those lost lives and dreams and distil the essence of Elgar's last great choral work.

This Hallé disc is the seventh commercial recording to be released and there is at least one more to come by the end of 2018. It has glorious singing from the large and committed choir, the orchestra is on the top of its form and my feeling is that Sir Mark Elder's tempi are just right. Today some of Laurence Binyon's verse can sound anachronistic and even mawkish on occasions and the challenge is to keep the music flowing without damaging the way Elgar sets the verse. In 2014 I was at the live performance that is at the heart of the recording and I recall being deeply moved by the time we came to the end. With these forces, aided by the acoustic of The Bridgewater Hall, Elder creates a luminous sound that was not possible in London's Royal Festival Hall when he gave a performance of *The Spirit of England* in 2007. The balance between orchestra, chorus and organ is perfect – the way the organ adds subtle colour to the entry of the chorus in 'The Fourth of August' shows off the advantages of recording in the Hall. The strength of the choir and Elder's obvious attention to detail is deeply moving when the opening verse is repeated at 3 bars before cue 7 for example.

In 'To Women' Rachel Nicholls is at her best segueing in after the opening bars with a wonderful directness: 'Your hearts are lifted up'. She blends superbly with the orchestra and chorus as they come together with the choral 'Your hope, your dread'. Sir Mark manages the ending subtly and movingly as the poignant nod to *Gerontius* at the words 'but not to fail' sets up the last bars. The innate sadness that pervades 'For the Fallen' is overwhelming but this performance allows the steady tread established at the outset to vary sufficiently to breathe in air when necessary. Nicholls is heart-breaking at Cue 21: 'We will remember them' and the repeated oboe phrase that begins at 5 bars before Cue 20 is like a distant keening. The final bars are magical – Elgar's resources balanced correctly – the hushed ending allowing tears to be shed at last.

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1 Recorded with the English Heritage Orchestra. The disc was available for purchase at the Elgar Birthplace.

2 This performance recorded live suffers brief gaps in the performance as the recording discs came to an end.

I return – always – to Teresa Cahill. In his notes Michael Kennedy writes, regarding ‘The Fourth of August’: ‘Compassion and dignity are the keynotes, with radiant ecstasy for the soloist’. That is what Cahill produces: her warm but clear soprano, her attention to detail and the directness of her approach remains unequalled. Rachel Nicholls is an opera singer of great range and versatility and it takes time, I feel, for her to settle in ‘The Fourth of August’. Nevertheless, she understands the role she has: to the fore in the first two parts and as a complement to the choir in ‘For the Fallen’, and she is deeply affecting when it matters.

In the last issue of the Journal I welcomed the ‘French’ version of *A voice in the desert* in Martyn Brabbins recording for Hyperion. This now receives an entirely different performance but one that hits the mark, brilliantly. When Cammaerts wrote his poem it is clear that his narrator was an ordinary soldier. In this performance Joshua Ellicott takes on the guise of a Lancashire Tommy gloomily observing the ruined cottage standing alone in the desecrated Belgian landscape. On stage (in the Bridgewater) he stood in shirt sleeves, khaki battle-dress trousers, braces, boots and puttees before he was joined by Jennifer France as the defiant ‘girl’ singing of the longed-for spring. This is a convincing and compelling performance of a miniature masterpiece.

To Ireland and Elgar’s music for a version of the tale of *Diarmuid and Gráinne* duly anglicised as Andrew Burn points out in his excellent note. Although the Incidental Music and Funeral March have been recorded by several labels, the direct comparison with the complete music is with Bryden Thomson’s recording with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1989 in which the soprano Jenny Miller sang ‘There are Seven that pull the thread’. Here is another occasion when Elgar was restricted to writing for a pit orchestra. Sir Mark gives us all the music (with full orchestra) beginning with the mysterious Introduction with horn and trumpet calls which lead into the great Funeral March, its delicate colours touchingly realised. Diarmid, a cross between Tristan and Siegfried, is killed on a hunting trip not by treachery (like Siegfried) but by a boar. Dying, his body is borne centre stage. A tam-tam stroke signals Diarmid’s death and the colours change before the music sinks into the mists of ancient Ireland. Madeleine Shaw sings Laban’s spinning song warning man of the fate he cannot ignore. This is all beautifully balanced, these pieces being recorded in Hallé St Peter’s, Ancoats. For Chandos Thomson is more measured; considerably so in the Funeral March. Sir Mark is fleet of foot (without compromising the nature of the music), with Sir Adrian Boult in 1975 cutting a middle road between the two. Jenny Miller, the Chandos soloist, is excellent, as is Madeleine Shaw for the Hallé, both paying attention to the words in this Celtic version of Wagner’s Norns.

A seventeen-minute orchestral work by Arnold Bax completes the disc. Written to commemorate the 1916 Easter Rising, it reflects Bax’s shock at the execution of those he knew from his time living in Ireland and his despair at the turn of events. After an introduction, a dignified tune takes the listener into a dark place as the development section hints at mists, military activity and a sinister landscape. The piece is beautifully and originally orchestrated and brought to the listener

with conviction and some glorious solo playing in this heartfelt performance.

This CD can also be recommended for the inclusion of Michael Kennedy's notes for *In Memoriam* and especially *The Spirit of England* in which he explains with great clarity why it is an unjustly over-looked masterpiece. This was the last Elgar music Michael heard live and about which he writes in the notes: 'In this consummatory choral masterpiece are Elgar's "stately sorrow", his "heroic melancholy", the moods he sounded most surely and effectively. It is the vocal equivalent of the *Larghetto* of his Second Symphony.'

I have little doubt that this wonderful, original and important recording should be in the collection of all Elgarians. In the music of 'For the Fallen' Elgar created music of great beauty combined with a wearied grief. In this recording these opposites are conveyed with clarity and great sensitivity; the Hallé forces sounding a glorious farewell to their most devoted supporter as Michael Kennedy and the music of Edward Elgar are honoured by performers, performances and this recording.

Andrew Neill

**Elgar: Piano Quintet**

**Payne: Piano Quartet**

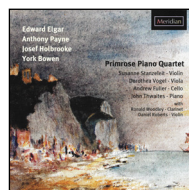
**Bowen: Phantasy Quintet**

**Holbrooke: Ballade**

The Primrose Piano Quartet

Daniel Roberts, Violin

Ronald Woodley, Bass Clarinet



Meridian Records

CDE84640

Elgar's symphonies, concerti and large choral works firmly place him as one of the heirs to the grand German tradition. The unwary listener may therefore be shocked on a first hearing of his late chamber works, which, to my ear, far more reflect the influence of Fauré and Debussy than they do Brahms or Schumann. In this latest addition to the recorded versions of the Piano Quintet, one can certainly recognise instrumental textures that would be anything but out of place in a Ravel chamber work.

The Primrose Piano Quartet, whose members are drawn from groups such as the Lindsay, Maggini and Allegri quartets are, as one would expect, a highly polished ensemble. They are joined for this recording by violinist Daniel Roberts. Together they have assembled an unusual programme consisting of the Quintet, Anthony Payne's Piano Quartet of 2015, a Phantasy Quintet for bass Clarinet and Strings by York Bowen and Joseph Holbrook's Ballade for Bass Clarinet and Piano. For the last two the group are joined by Clarinetist Ronald Woodley. This, in itself, makes a pleasant change from the usual pairing of the Quintet with the String Quartet.

In terms of overall timings, this new recording is marginally quicker than many of its predecessors. However, the differences are small and there is no sense that the music is being rushed. The mysterious opening of the Quintet is given a somewhat gentle treatment leading to the introduction of the first

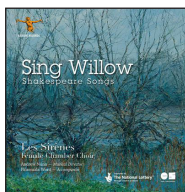
subject proper, which benefits from the more urgent approach adopted by Peter Donohoe and the Maggini Quartet. As the movement progresses, the Primrose's performance, which is generally less broad than that of the Maggini, reveals a wittiness that is lacking in many other recordings of this music, without sacrificing any of the drama that emerges as the movement progresses.

The second movement adagio is appreciable quicker than many of this recording's main rivals, coming in at a relatively brisk 11.37. Nevertheless, the relaxed beauty of the music is allowed to come through and I found this central movement to be among the most satisfying of the recordings that I auditioned.

Elgar's chamber music, just like his larger works, is littered with playing directions. I counted no fewer than 15 in a nine bar section of music. This may lead one to imagine that there is little for a musician to do in terms of interpretation. The Primrose players prove that this is anything but the case in the final movement of the Quintet. They have identified a musical line that allows the music to ebb and flow to produce a very satisfying conclusion to the work.

Overall, this is a Piano Quintet that can compare favourably with any of its rivals. If ultimately I prefer the Maggini/Donohoe recording, it's not by much and is balanced by the other music featured on the Primrose disc.

Stuart Freed



### **Vaughan Williams and others: Shakespeare Songs**

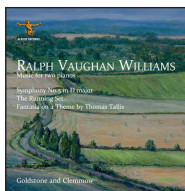
Les Sirènes, directed by Andrew Nunn with Fionnuala Ward (piano)

### **Vaughan Williams: Symphony No.5, *The Running Set*, *Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis***

Anthony Goldstone and Caroline Clemmow (two pianos)

Albion Records

ALBCD030



Once again the *Journal* includes reviews of two issues from the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society. Sadly I am unable to greet these recordings in anything like the glowing terms used in December by Richard Wiley.

I have made no secret of my dislike for recordings of piano arrangements of orchestral works. Such arrangements had their place in times when recordings were unknown and live performances few, and, indeed, they still have a place in private use. That of the Fifth Symphony, by Michael Mullinar, was in fact made with the approval of the composer, who revised it.

But whereas Elgar had the ability to make the piano suggest an orchestra when he was playing, these arrangements – wonderfully played and recorded as they are – give the music an aura a million miles away from their original versions. Imagine Gloucester Cathedral in 1910 and the thrill of hearing for the first time the opening chords of the *Tallis Fantasia* in that setting, the

Albion Records

ALBCD031

theme introduced by gently plucked lower strings. Then compare it with bare piano chords, the theme knocked out staccato ... such an arrangement has its place as a means of studying the piece, but it is nevertheless a travesty of the composer's conception. *The Running Set*, based on folk tunes, works well enough, but that accounts for less than seven minutes of the CD.

The second CD, by Les Sirènes, is of some two dozen compositions and arrangements for women's voices by a variety of British composers, Vaughan Williams, John Rutter, David Willcocks and Bob Chilcott among them. Here I have no qualms about the music or the arrangements, but I do have very considerable misgivings about its performance.

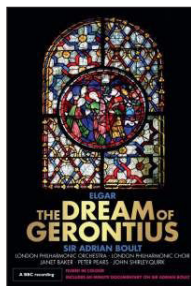
The choir consists of thirty students and graduates of the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland and, unfortunately, as recorded here they do not blend as a vocal unit. Their strong voices have varying degrees of vibrato on a scale rising past 'fruity' towards 'wobble'. A session photograph showing the singers widely spaced in two straight lines may help to explain why individual voices can be identified readily within the sound picture, each with its own degree of vibrato. Compare the sound here with that produced by the professionals of the Choir of the King's Consort in their recent and quite astoundingly good recording of 'British Choral Masterpieces' and you will hear that 'vibrant, passionate, full-blooded and utterly committed' choral singing (to quote Robert King) does not have to come at the expense of blend. And under Andrew Nunn the performances are careful where they could and should be carefree: it's a long time since I heard a piece by John Rutter come across as po-faced!

Richard Wiley described the *Dirge for Fidele* as 'the duet to which I keep returning ... ravishing and irresistible', sentiments with which I agree wholeheartedly. On this disc – same notes exactly but sung as a duet for thirty voices rather than two – it sounds merely mundane.

Martin Bird



## DVD REVIEWS



ICA Classics

ICAD 5140

### **Elgar: *The Dream of Gerontius***

Janet Baker (mezzo-soprano); Peter Pears (tenor); John Shirley-Quirk (baritone); London Philharmonic Choir and Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult

(1968 BBC recording and broadcast from Canterbury Cathedral)

### **A Portrait of One of the Century's Greatest Musicians, Sir Adrian Boult C.H. (1889-1983)**

(1989 BBC documentary)

In July 2014, I received a letter out of the blue from Peter Graham, a member of our West Midlands Branch, and it commenced: 'I've been working on a little Elgar project on and off for several years and I have now managed to convince myself that I'm making progress!'

Thus began a two-year project that has culminated in Peter's achieving his ambition, and the finished product is a tribute to him, his late wife, Margaret, Aurélie Baujean of ICA Classics, and Stephen Wright of ICA Artists.

Some members of the Elgar Society will still remember the televised broadcast in 1968, one of the early essays in colour television from an age when there were only nine colour cameras in the country – and eight were there at Canterbury! It is a measure of the BBC's commitment to great artists and great music that this expensive project was conceived and executed.

It is paired with the documentary of Sir Adrian Boult, presented by Vernon Handley and broadcast in 1989, the centenary of the conductor's birth, which is a fascinating, if one-sidedly reverential portrait of the man's life, technique and personality. In a way, it is better to start with this documentary, to arm the viewer with insights into his performance practice – helped in no small measure by Andrew Neill's fine introductory essay and the extract from Boult's autobiography *My Own Trumpet*. As Andrew Neill puts it 'Boult, over the years, did as much as anyone to ensure that *The Dream of Gerontius* 'lived' and to take a natural place as one of the chosen works for British choral societies. This film shows his secure and magisterial technique that is analysed in the accompanying film which also demonstrates Boult's wide-repertoire and catholic tastes.'

Armed with all this background material, we can enjoy the performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* all the more. We perhaps do not appreciate, until we are reminded by the words of Boult himself, that it was a new technique to intersperse traditional shots of the performers with scenes designed to illustrate the meaning of the work. Thus the setting of the cathedral was reflected in the camerawork that is essentially a close exploration of the interior fabric of the building, the film making the wonderful venue integral to the religious expression of the text – and the lit brilliance of the windows must

have delighted the audience unused to colour TV. The shots of the conductor and orchestra work happily, although close-ups of solo singers never show humans at their loveliest.

These two DVDs are historical documents that were well worth publishing in such a well wrought production. It may not be the greatest television by modern standards, but it is a devoutly filmed work of giants of British music-making at the time, performing one of the great masterpieces of British music. *Si monumentum requies, circumspice.*

Steven Halls

Boult's performance of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius*, given in Canterbury Cathedral, is the first-ever classical music production filmed in colour and broadcast on BBC2 in 1968 (dear reader, I was there, glued to the family screen), and now it has been released in a handsome DVD format by ICA Classics.

The Cathedral itself plays a major part, not least the gargoyles during the vicious Demons' Chorus, imaginatively lit and filmed as a counterpoint to the music's progress. And what a revelation is this performance!

Boult, despite his own manual on conducting forbidding the overuse of the left hand, lets his own left hand mirror the right so often, as his mile-long baton drops below players' sightlines, and ensemble from the London Philharmonic Orchestra is accordingly occasionally ropery.

But who's cavilling, when this is an amazing, valuable performance, significant for so many reasons. All three soloists sing from memory, freedom from printed scores allowing them genuine expression of body-language. Janet Baker, still at an early stage in her illustrious career, is a radiant Angel, the guardian of Gerontius's soul, John Shirley-Quirk is magnificently authoritative as the deathbed Priest and as the Angel of the Agony, and Peter Pears is simply outstanding as Gerontius.

He makes one slip ('the hurt has wearied me', when it should be 'pain'), but so what? This is a totally engaged assumption of the role, intelligently delivered, his hands mostly clasped but occasionally unfolding to genuine effect. I've never heard 'Use well the interval' sung so significantly. Pears was soon to record *Gerontius* for the Decca label under the baton of his life's partner, Benjamin Britten.

There's a bonus to this release, with an hour-long DVD recounting Boult's biography from cradle to grave. Time and again we see photographs of him at various stages of his life, and always the eyes are magnetic, charismatic -- such a contrast from the popular image of him as a buttoned-up military blimp.

CBSO fans will be thrilled to see footage of the much-loved onetime CBSO concertmaster Felix Kok leading the Philharmonia in Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro for Strings* (and I think I spied Barrie Moore, onetime CBSO associate leader, alongside him). And the whole biography is narrated by Boult student Vernon Handley, whose last conducting work before his sadly early death was doing great things with the English Symphony Orchestra.

Christopher Morley



**Elgar: 'Enigma' Variations**  
**Liszt: Piano Concerto No.2; Totentanz**  
**Mussorgsky: *Pictures at an Exhibition***

Saint Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Yuri Temirkanov

Idealeaudience

3075528

This DVD was filmed at live concerts at the Annecy Classic Festival in 2014. Annecy is an attractive town in the French Alps. I know it well, but didn't know that they host a Classical Music Festival there. The DVD consists of two separate occasions. At the first, Denis Matsuev, a big beefy fellow, gives a big beefy performance of Liszt's Second Concerto (wonderful playing, although I could have done without the taradiddle on the last chord). He follows it immediately by a blistering account of the same composer's *Totentanz*. The other concert consists of Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* and the 'Enigma' Variations. Yuri Temirkanov has done quite a bit for Elgar over the years, and he brought his St. Petersburg players to London earlier this year for a well-received performance of the 'Variations'. After the flamboyance of the Mussorgsky, the Elgar receives a serious, sensitive and thoughtful performance, with well-judged tempi and wonderfully sonorous playing from the orchestra. The shots of Temirkanov's face show quite clearly what joy he is getting from the music. I enjoyed the whole concert, and well done to the Russians for bringing Elgar to this corner of France.

Barry Collett

# LETTERS

## ***Felix Salmond and the Elgar Cello Concerto***

*From Christopher Morley*

May I suggest a correction to Tully Potter's fascinating article about Felix Salmond and the Elgar Cello Concerto? When Salmond played the work under Elgar's direction in Birmingham Town Hall on November 10 1920 it was with the newly-formed City of Birmingham Orchestra (the 'Symphony' was only to be added over a quarter of a century later on the insistence of George Weldon). There never was a 'Birmingham Municipal Orchestra'. This was the CBO's inaugural concert in the Town Hall.

## ***Elgar and Joan Elwes***

*From Martin Bird*

Following my article in the December *Journal* 'An enduring friendship: Elgar and Joan Elwes' I received an email from Joan's daughter, Louise Grattan, which included an important correction concerning an illustration I used:

'I was very thrilled to receive the Elgar Journal with EE and my mother on the cover! ... The photo said to be of the Manor Barn Chesham Bois, is in fact the Manor House, a Queen Anne house where my grandmother, the painter Louise Jopling, lived at the end of her life. There was a big Elizabethan barn in her garden which for a while she used as a studio. When my parents married they converted the barn into a 4 bedroom house for themselves, and that is where they brought up us three children and created a lovely garden. The Manor House was sold when Louise died in 1933.'

Louise distributed copies of the *Journal* among her family, and in January a small parcel arrived unexpectedly with a note: 'I enclose a few letters which my cousin passed on to me yesterday – just in case any of them may be of interest. Do have a look ...' There were letters to Joan from, among others, Rutland Boughton, Adrian Boult, John Coates, Harold Craxton, Dan Godfrey, Leon Goossens, Ivor James, Vaughan Williams and Henry Wood; and one more from Elgar, written in November 1926 following her appearance at Eastbourne in *The Spirit of England* at which, on the evidence of Frank Howes, she made such an impression of Elgar.

NAPLETON GRANGE,

KEMPSEY,

WORCESTER.

TELEPHONE: KEMPSEY 3.

Mr 22<sup>nd</sup> 1921

My dear Miss Joan Elwes:

I am so sorry your very kind note has remained unanswered

I have been away & found it here. I go up to London tomorrow & shall be there until Friday (I live here) & will try to see if you are in town. All the thanks are due to you for enthusiasm - none to me

With kind regards

Believe me to be

Yours sincerely  
Edward Elgar

P.S. If this does find you in town wd be glad to send a word to Mrs. K's club  
St. Francis St.  
W

Napleton Grange, Kempsey, Worcester

Nov 22<sup>nd</sup> 1926

My dear Miss Joan Elwes,

I am so sorry your very kind note has remained unanswered. I have been away & found it here. I go up to London tomorrow & shall be there until Friday (I live here) & will ring you up & see if you are in town. All the thanks are due to you for Eastbourne – none to me.

With kind regards

Believe me to be

Yours sincerely

Edward Elgar

PS. If this does find you in town wd you send a word  
to Brooks's Club  
St. James's St  
SW



## ***The Elgar Complete Edition***

*From John Pickard and Iain Farrington*

*(Co-General Editors of the Elgar Complete Edition)*

We wish to comment on the section in Martin Bird's review of the Accompanied Part-songs volume in the Elgar Complete Edition (ESJ Vol.19 No.6, pp.45-49), in which he draws attention to apparent 'discrepancies and contradictions' in the volume's first item *Spanish Serenade*. The three different versions of the work, which this volume brings together for the first time, caused the editorial team more agonies and soul-searching than any other item in the volume. Mr Bird appears firstly to suggest that there is an editorial inconsistency in our claim that differences between the two SATB scores (one with orchestral accompaniment and one with piano accompaniment) are the result of engraver error, whereas the discrepancies between the SATB and SS scores were intended by Elgar. There is no inconsistency. The two SATB scores are used interchangeably: a chorus singing in a performance with orchestra will be singing from the vocal score (ie the piano version), so the vocal lines must perforce be identical between the vocal score and full orchestral score if confusion in rehearsal is to be avoided. Moreover, there is no documentary evidence that Elgar ever intended the work to be performed with piano accompaniment (which of course has not stopped choirs from performing it in this form), so there is no reason to suppose that he intended the scores to be different. By contrast, there is documentary evidence that for his various arrangements for different choral configurations, Novello applied pressure on Elgar to simplify his original scores for wider accessibility. Had Elgar simply taken the soprano and alto parts of the SATB version and transferred them directly to the SS version, there might (perhaps) be grounds for standardising. But he didn't; they are effectively two separate versions and need to be treated as such. These issues are clearly outlined in the relevant Foreword and Sources sections of the volume.

More contentious is the claim that 'changes to rhythm and notes [which are] inconsistent between occurrences of similar passages ... must be Novello's errors rather than Elgar's changes'. This suggestion displays a lack of understanding not only of the source material available to the volume's editors but also of Elgar's compositional methods. True, no autograph manuscript of the SS version (published some twenty years after the SATB version) survives, but Mr Bird is perhaps unaware that separate parts for the two solo violins, which he added not just to the SS version of *Spanish Serenade* but also to the two Op.26 part-songs, testify to the accuracy of the engraving process, making it extremely unlikely that two engravers working independently of each other could have erroneously introduced over 50 identical inconsistencies between recurring figurations. What raises Elgar above the level of most other British composers of his time is his ability to introduce subtle changes which add variety and interest to repetitions of similar passages.

The Elgar Complete Edition is a collective endeavour, involving a whole team of editors, typesetters and proof-readers. It reaches its conclusions after months of study, through the best quality peer-review it can achieve and with soundly reasoned argument. The present volume, as with all Elgar Complete Edition volumes, aspires to the highest standards possible, as befits the music of this great composer.

## ELGAR VIEWED FROM AFAR

Several primary sources and documents reveal how Elgar's reputation spread internationally. The immense *Illustrierte Geschichte der Musik* (*Illustrated History of Music*) by Hans Merian was published in Leipzig in 1914. Elgar is mentioned on page 803-804 as 'the most important of the younger English' composers. According to the author Elgar's 'compelling expressiveness' mainly reveals in 'his ecclesiastical works'. Of the orchestral works only the 'Variations on an Original Theme' (without the adjunct 'Enigma') and the *Cockaigne* overture get a mention, not the violin concerto or the symphonies. However, as Merian records Mahler's departure on 18 May 1911 it would have been thoroughly possible to include these works as Elgar's second symphony was premiered just a week later on 24 May 1911. Other British composers mentioned are Arthur Sullivan (the only one with an illustration), Alexander and Walter Cecil Macfarren, Alexander Mackenzie, Frederic Hymen Cowen, Charles Villiers Stanford and Granville Bantock.

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Nationale Strömungen.

William Edward Elgar (geb. 2. Juni 1857 zu Broadheath bei Worcester), der sich autodidaktisch zum Komponisten herangebildet hat. 1904 erhielt er den persönlichen Adel (Sir) und eine Professur an der Universität zu Birmingham. Elgars Können zeigt sich vor allen Dingen in seinen kirchlichen Werken, in denen er über eine packende Ausdruckskraft verfügt (*Lux Christi*, Oratorium, 1896; *Der Traum des Gerontius*, Oratorium, 1900; *Die Apostel*, Oratorium, 1903; Kantaten usw.), doch hat er auch in seinen Orchesterwerken Glänzendes geleistet, so vor allem in den Variationen über ein eigenes Thema (Op. 36), in denen er eine Reihe musikalischer Porträts von seinen Freunden, wie Eingeweihte behaupten mit erstaunlicher Deutlichkeit, gegeben hat, und in der Ouvertüre *Cockaigne*, einem wunderbar realistischen Großstadtbild in Tönen. — Granville Bantock (geb. 7. August 1868 zu London), ein außerordentlich fruchtbarer Komponist, ist in Deutschland durch eines seiner letzten Werke *The Pierrot of the Minute*, eine geistvolle Lustspielouvertüre, rühmlichst bekannt geworden. Sonst schrieb er noch verschiedene Opern, Oratorien, Symphonien und Ouvertüren.

## RECORDING NOTES . . .

We have seen how Elgar attended at Hayes to make records of *The Starlight Express* on 18<sup>th</sup> February 1916, nearly 100 years ago as I write. I suppose this was the moment when he also confirmed his credentials as a competent conductor for records, for eight publishable 12” sides was a good day’s work, not lost, no doubt, on the HMV staff, all of whom had stories to tell of temperamental singers, to say nothing of the time at Italian HMV when Leoncavallo – conducting not his forte? – was engaged to supervise a complete *Pagliacci* (but it was Maestro Sabajno who actually conducted the band and the singers).

Meanwhile, Elgar – with Lady Elgar, as usual – went to Hayes on 28<sup>th</sup> February 1917 and he achieved another selection of publishable titles: the first *Bavarian Dance*, *Cockaigne*, *Gerontius* & a lively ‘Wild Bears’. About this time, Elgar also began to mention his wish to record *Gerontius*. Two fragments cobbled together (the ‘Prelude’ and ‘Angel’s Farewell’) were not much of a start for *Gerontius* on record, but it makes for better listening than the first *Cockaigne* on record, where the transitions bring one up with a start. *Polonia*, where the music (less well known) is also much abridged, is easier on the ear, but it is worth remembering what pleasure Elgar derived from the much shortened Edison Bell Velvet Face set of *Gerontius*. This preceded the weighty British Council post-war set from Huddersfield, which offered the work complete on record for the first time, with all the benefits of electrical recording. It is also worth remembering that 11<sup>th</sup> June 1917 brings us to one of those happy occasions when Elgar was on hand to conduct a première of one of his own works (with a recording shortly to follow). *The Fringes of the Fleet* went very well in the London Coliseum (then a Hall of Variety and not yet an Opera House). A recording was made (which remained available for many years) and a national tour followed. The robust, manly sentiments of the songs and the nautical attire of the motley matelots on stage seemed to have appealed to all but Rudyard Kipling, the author of the words. He never recovered from the death of his son on active service.

Michael Plant

## 100 YEARS AGO ...

At the beginning of 1917 Elgar, once again, was feeling unwell, and on 5<sup>th</sup> January he went to see his doctor, Sir Maurice Abbot-Anderson: 'Throat again burnt with electric cautery – poor ducksie'. He saw him again on the 11<sup>th</sup>, afterwards writing to Windflower 'I went to the doctor yesterday & am no better today; I am trying the dentist this afternoon but I do not see beyond to-day!' It was a bitter winter, and on the 21<sup>st</sup> 'E. & A. crept down the hill very slippery, & went by train ... to Sloane Square Theatre to see Lalla [Vandervelde] in B. Shaw's horrid little Play' *Augustus Does His Bit*.

Meanwhile Ina Lowther, whom the Elgars had known since their Malvern days, had come to Severn House. She was planning 'A Review of Chelsea' to raise money for Lena Ashwell's 'Concerts at the Front', and Elgar agreed to write the music for a short ballet – *The Sanguine Fan*.

On the 9<sup>th</sup> the Elgars were 'shocked to read in paper Dr. Sinclair died suddenly, such a break with past times & loss of a devoted sincere friend'. He was 54, and had been organist of Hereford Cathedral since 1889. It was a sad time, for on the 24<sup>th</sup> 'E. heard his Uncle Henry Elgar was dangerously ill'. He died later that day.

By the beginning of March the ballet music was all but finished and Elgar was 'busy with R. Kipling Songs'. Their friend Admiral Charles Beresford had requested a setting of some verses that had appeared in a booklet of essays and poems by Kipling, *The Fringes of the Fleet*, that had been published in 1915.

On the 5<sup>th</sup> the Elgars went to Leeds for the Choral Union's performance of *Gerontius* and the two completed parts of *The Spirit of England*: 'E. conducted masterfully & splendidly. Everybody impressed & delighted'. On the 14<sup>th</sup> they travelled to Worcester where Elgar conducted 'For the Fallen' in the Cathedral on the 15<sup>th</sup>. They returned home next day to 'Startling news ... Revolution in Russia & Czar deposed – May it have all success!'

The first rehearsal of the ballet was on the 17<sup>th</sup>: 'very poor unworthy orchestra – made A. start from her seat at some of the noises they made'. The first performance was on the 20<sup>th</sup>: 'perfectly beautiful, music exquisite & enchanting & actors delightful'.

April opened (and continued) with 'frightful weather & heavy snowstorms'. On the 12<sup>th</sup> the final part of *The Spirit of England*, 'The Fourth of August', was finished and sent to Novello.

The 20<sup>th</sup> was a 'lovely Sunny day much warmer ... After lunch went on omnibus to Westminster, most reviving to see flags flying, numbers of American, & cheerful looking crowds out in the bright sunshine. Saw the strange sight of American flag waving from Victoria Tower': the USA had entered the war on 6<sup>th</sup> April.

At the end of the month Elgar went to stay for a fortnight with his sister Pollie and her family in Stoke Prior.

Martin Bird

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