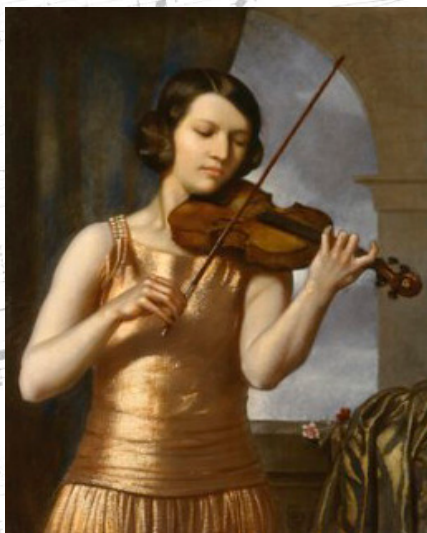


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Front Cover: Jelly d'Arányi (1893-1966; by Charles Geoffroy-Dechaume, oil on canvas, c. 1920s, 904 mm x 733 mm, by kind permission of the National Portrait Gallery, London) and Edward Elgar (1857-1934; Arthur Reynold's Archive).

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

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At the end of the essay, add about a hundred words about the author, please.

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Salut d'Arányi – but con Sospiri? An Elgar letter fleshed out

Christopher Gordon

I believe it is customary in good society to take some slight refreshment at five o'clock.

Oscar Wilde (*The Importance of Being Earnest*)

1920 was a leap year and on the afternoon of Sunday 29 February, the brilliant young Hungarian violinist Jelly d'Arányi together with her then favourite pianist, Ethel Hobday, performed for the Elgars and some invited friends at their London home. 'Severn House' in Netherhall Gardens, Hampstead NW3, was the Elgars' enormous mansion commensurate with their post-1911 establishment status. This recital was the last occasion on which Lady Elgar was to hear live music played semi-formally at home. She died there five weeks later (on 7 April).¹ The programme consisted of Brahms' D minor Violin and Piano Sonata followed, after the teatime refreshments, by the Elgar Sonata.

My particular interest in this event and its aftermath stems from my happening to have the autograph letter that Elgar wrote to Jelly d'Arányi confirming the details of her recital visit.² The text is as follows:



Jelly d'Arányi (born 30 May 1893 in Budapest; died 30 March 1966 in Florence)

- 1 Lady Elgar had managed to attend a recording session at Hayes, Middlesex, for Fred Gaisberg's 'The Gramophone Company' on 24 February. Her final attendances at public concerts were made, with some difficulty, to the Queen's Hall on 16 March for what she described as a 'wonderful performance' of Elgar's Second Symphony, conducted by Adrian Boult, and to Wigmore Hall on 23 March to hear all three late Elgar chamber works.
- 2 I purchased the autograph letter in 1970, having come across it by chance in a miscellaneous bin at a London dealer in drawings and documents. I suspect it was affordable to me at the time only because – the 'Edward Elgar' signature notwithstanding – the brief content appears mundane and the letter is undated. It intrigued me in particular at the time for the Jelly d'Arányi connection. She had been a heroine of my violin teacher (in Edinburgh, when I was a child), Maimie Waddell. Donald Tovey took Fritz Busch to hear the Waddell Junior Orchestra in 1935, with Busch so moved that he left in tears – leaving his hat behind! Maimie's father, William Waddell, had studied for two years at the Leipzig Konservatorium under Ferdinand David, leader of the Gewandhaus Orchestra, and returned to Edinburgh around 1870 to teach and make music there. It was Ferdinand David who 'rediscovered' Vitali's *Chaconne* in an MS in Dresden

From Sir Edward Elgar, O.M., Severn House, 42, Netherhall Gardens,
Hampstead, N.W.3.
Telegrams – Siromoris, Swiss, London. Telephone – Hampstead 4771

Saturday morning

Dear Miss d'Aranyi,
It is most kind of you to come & play to us tomorrow, I am very grateful.

I have ordered a car to call for you on Sunday at 3.30 at 10, Netherton Grove* and to call for Mrs Hobday. I trust that this will be quite convenient: if not – you may be at some other address – will you kindly ring up and let me know.

Believe me to be
Yours very sincerely,
Edward Elgar

[* The Netherton Grove address is crossed out, with '26 Gilbert St' written above.³ A note along the length of the left-hand side of the notepaper adds 'I have this moment had this address given me'.]

The Arányi family

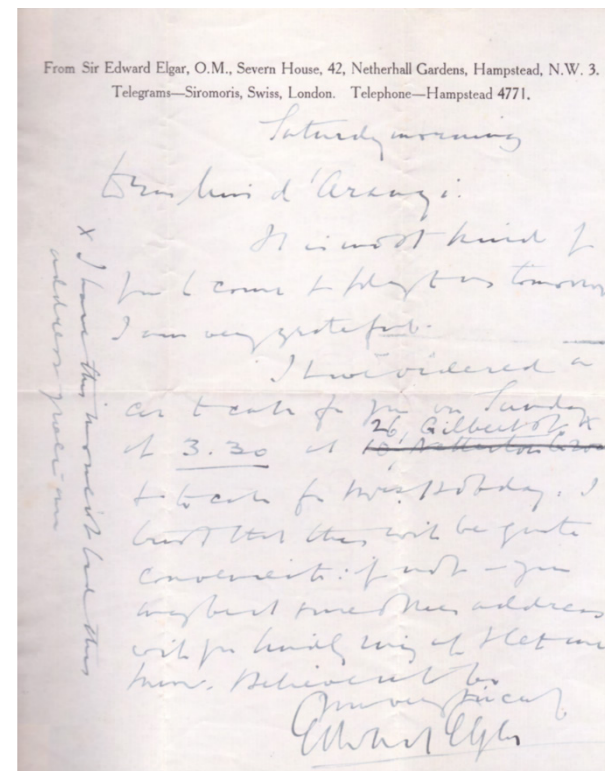
Jelly d'Arányi (Jelly Arányi Hunyadvári) was born in Budapest on 30 May 1893 and died in Florence on 30 March 1966. She was, by maternal descent, a great-niece of Josef Joachim and was the youngest sister of the violinist Adila Fachiri (b. Budapest 1886, d. Florence 1962), who inherited and played on one of Joachim's Stradivarius violins.⁴ Adila married a British Inner Temple lawyer who became Secretary to three successive Masters of the Rolls (Alec Fachiri was originally Greek-American). These two sisters became celebrated performers in Britain and abroad (Italy, France and the USA mostly) – not least of Bach's D minor Concerto for Two Violins. They were to be the inspiration and dedicatees of Gustav Holst's Double Violin Concerto and numerous other compositions. Joachim, who died in 1907, had said of his sister's ten-year-old grand-daughter, Jelly, 'a talent like this is born only once in a century'. Aldous Huxley, who met Jelly through her Balliol College, Oxford, connections, thought she was 'a bit of a genius'. They corresponded for two decades, notably about their shared passion for Bach.

and published it in his renowned 1867 *Die hohe Schule des Violinspiels*. This became a Jelly d'Arányi showpiece. A 1928 recording of her playing it is accessible on YouTube. According to the reference book *Musical Scotland* (published 1894) William Waddell[1] had also formed the 'Edinburgh Ladies' Orchestra' and gave series of 'Free Musical Evenings for the People' as well as exhibiting as a painter in oils at the Royal Scottish Academy. His wife, Patricia, was the daughter of the President of the Royal Scottish Academy (from 1876) Sir Daniel Macnee. She had studied piano in Berlin (1886) with Xaver Scharwenka, noted Chopin interpreter. Her diaries in the National Library of Scotland show that surplus proceeds of the children's concerts were donated to the 'Free Breakfast Fund' and 'Children's Holiday Fund'.

3 Netherton Grove in Chelsea (SW10) was the residence of Adila and Alec Fachiri, Jelly's oldest sister and her husband. Jelly moved in with them permanently in 1927. Gilbert Street is in Mayfair (W1).

4 Jelly in 1920 would have played on her favourite instrument, a 1733 Carlo Bergonzi violin, later purchased from Adrienne Camilloni, Adila's daughter, by Isaac Stern whom the Arányis greatly admired. The sisters seem to have shared use of the 1710 'Lord Dunraven' Stradivarius that now belongs to Anne-Sophie Mutter. Adila had inherited the 'Joachim-Aranyi' 1715 Stradivarius (<https://tarisio.com/cozio-archive/>).

Elgar's letter to Jelly d'Arányi



Adila and Jelly played the Bach Double Concerto fifteen times at London Promenade Concerts between 1922 and 1940 – all but one of those performances conducted by Sir Henry Wood (latterly they were paid £10 apiece). Jelly usually played the second violin part, though contemporary criticism indicates that the piece sounded somewhat different when the sisters occasionally reversed roles. Adila was impulsive, but her playing style was the more 'classical', her technical studies with Joachim in Berlin having been much more thorough than her sister's Budapest training. Jelly was more of a 'natural' but had little formal tuition beyond the age of fourteen; her studies from 1901 to 1904 having been under Vilmos Grünfeld and Jenő Hubay (himself a Joachim Berlin student for five years). Jelly's lack of rigorous grounding was, some suggest, an issue that surfaced as a problem from the mid-1930s. The sisters premiered the Holst concerto at a Prom in 1930, eight days after having performed the Bach Double at another. Jelly performed at the Proms on 43 separate occasions, for the last time in 1944. The first was in 1920 when she played Lalo's *Symphonie espagnole* under Henry Wood, who wrote of her 'what a personality and what a born violinist'.

The middle sister of the d'Arányi family, Hortense Emilia (known as 'Titi'), was born in 1887 and was more shy and delicate than her two sisters. A pianist and very competent accompanist (taught in Budapest by the young Bartók), she stopped performing professionally – other than occasionally to accompany her sisters – after her marriage in April 1915. Her husband was a future

senior Treasury economist, Sir Ralph Hawtrey (she died in 1953).⁵ Hawtrey as an undergraduate had been one of the Cambridge ‘Apostles’ in 1900 and a lifelong friend of another more celebrated Apostle in the 1903 list, John Maynard Keynes, the founder of modern macroeconomics, Bloomsbury set habitué and founding chairman of the Arts Council of Great Britain in 1946.



Three sisters – Hortense, Adila and Jelly d’Arányi (l. to r.)



Jelly d’Arányi, Béla Bartók and Ethel Hobday

Jelly had perfect pitch, was an excellent sight-reader and rapid learner, and a resolute champion of contemporary compositions. She was the inspiration for Ravel’s 1924 violin showpiece *Tzigane* and Vaughan Williams’ *Concerto accademico* (1925, now more usually known as *Concerto in D minor for Violin and String Orchestra*) amongst other works. Both violinist sisters were very important catalysts in Bartók’s compositions for the instrument.⁶ It was Jelly who premiered both sonatas in London, and then also played them in Paris with the composer (1921, 1922).⁷ Ravel was present for the first of these, and was hugely impressed; Szymanowsky and Stravinsky were both

5 Joseph Macleod’s fascinating *The Sisters d’Aranyi* (London, George Allen and Unwin, 1969) traces the lives and careers of these extraordinary musicians. He knew Adila and Jelly well as near neighbours in their retirement in Italy from 1957. The diaries of F.S. Kelly (see below) have numerous entries about the d’Arányis and his music making with them – from their arrival in Britain in 1909 until spring 1916. He observes on 26 June 1909 that ‘Hortense played badly and spoiled both her sisters’ performances’.

6 The sisters were the focus of a weird, many think dubious, story concerning the belated premiere of Schumann’s Violin Concerto, his last completed orchestral work. Schumann’s having heard Joachim play the Beethoven Concerto in May 1853 in Düsseldorf inspired the composer to write two late works for the violin. Joachim and his son Johannes, however, had a major role in suppressing the concerto, finding it inferior (‘morbid brooding’) and believing it revealed too much of Schumann’s waning powers. Although the work was dedicated to him when completed in 1853, Joachim never performed it in public. On Joachim’s death the autograph score was given to the Prussian State Library on condition that it should not be published until 100 years after the composer’s death (i.e. 1956). The d’Arányi sisters claimed to have learned about the piece and ‘rediscovered’ it directly from Schumann at a séance in 1933, with further instructions from Joachim at a second one about the score’s location. Jessica Duchén accepts this bizarre story, at least for fictional purposes, in her novel *Ghost Variations* (www.unbound.com, 2016). See also Jessica Duchén, ‘Romantic Spirit’, *BBC Music Magazine*, December 2016.

7 Halsey Stevens, *The Life and Music of Béla Bartók* (London: OUP, 1964).

also in the audience.⁸ The high spirited Jelly apparently found Bartók completely devoid of any sense of humour. He had an unrequited passion for the young Adila, and later a serious crush on Jelly (who felt somewhat apprehensive when left alone in the room with him!).

Joseph Macleod heard from Jelly that while her two sisters were generally regarded as ‘beauties’, their irascible Hungarian martinet of a father, Taksony, had been in the habit of introducing her to people as ‘the ugliest and the best’ (*sc.* of his daughters). He was Budapest’s chief of police and an authority on fingerprints, co-author with Dr Béla Gábor of a textbook, *Dactyloscopia*, on the developing science of dactylography, published in 1905. He was apparently quite a good amateur *cimbalom* player. He died in Budapest in March 1930 and was given a spectacular military funeral, with the police band officiating. Jelly’s anti-Semitic paternal grandfather, Lajos, was an ardent Hungarian nationalist who became Director of Pest University.

The Arányis’ residence in Great Britain

From February 1909 Adrienne Arányi (née Nievarovich de Ligenza) and her daughters spent four months in England giving concerts arranged through friends of Joachim’s, followed by a tour of Italy, France and Switzerland before returning to Britain as interim base. They were thinking of returning to Budapest from a short Continental trip in 1914, but their aspirations were blocked at Ostend as there was no guarantee of any trains travelling beyond Frankfurt. With Europe rapidly disintegrating, Adrienne made the decision to return to the UK and settle there permanently with her daughters. Money appears not to have been a critical worry at the time; by 1912 they seem to have managed to be more or less self-supporting. Taksony remained in Budapest in his policing role (they took summer holidays in Austria together, and during the war corresponded via the neutral Netherlands).

The Arányi women, helped by their Joachim relationship, made extraordinarily successful social connections at the highest level quite early on – not least with the Balfours, and with the Asquiths and Bonham-Carters across the Tory/Liberal political divide. As upper-middle class Jewish-Hungarians, the family seems to have moved with ease in British society and their contacts helped them avoid the worst of being treated as ‘enemy aliens’ or overtly suspected as spies during the war (though given their being Austro-Hungarian, and with the suspicions then rife, they quite often seem to have travelled in surprisingly cavalier fashion in an era when passports were not generally required within Europe). At least they avoided internment.⁹

Jelly only got round to applying for British naturalisation in 1935; her sisters both acquired UK citizenship through marriage. The sisters throughout their lives all retained a commendable contempt for snobbery (probably imprinted through their Budapest childhood’s reaction to Viennese Habsburg condescension to Hungarian provincials).¹⁰ We know that this trait surfaced

8 Ravel paused work on *l’Enfant et les Sortilèges*, due for Monte Carlo Opera, to write for Jelly. She had three and a half days in which to learn *Tzigane* prior to its first performance!

9 Macleod records that the police once investigated the Arányis while they were staying with the Asquiths at their country home near Abingdon. The Prime Minister himself drove them to Didcot Police Station!

10 Prior to the First World War the family had used the surname ‘von Arányi’ although they had resolutely refused to speak German in Hungary (a ‘nationalist’ stance that Bartók had already identified with on first encountering the Arányi parents and girls in Budapest). Because of the Austro-Hungarian Habsburg connotations, the girls’ mother, Adrienne, changed the surname to ‘d’Arányi’ to make it seem more acceptably French sounding. During the war Adrienne had a police visit and interrogation in London about her reasons for having changed the family name. In the end it was only Jelly who retained the patronymic.

in some of Jelly's reaction to Elgar as an individual and to his posturing. She did not respond well to his, or anyone else's, flattery. Macleod claims that neither Adila nor Jelly had any social or 'careerist' ambitions as such. He notes that when Jelly met the deposed Greek King George at a dinner party she found him pathetic, observing that 'all that curtseying and Majestying is such a mockery' and she generally disliked small talk.¹¹

Jelly's hapless unrequited love

'To live on still in love, and yet in vain...'
(Elizabeth Barrett Browning, *Sonnets from Portuguese XI*)

Jelly, who never married, received her first proposal aged sixteen in Paris from the dramatist René Fauchois (librettist of Fauré's opera *Pénélope*). In her very early twenties she was seriously enamoured of an influential fellow performer, the Australian-born composer, pianist and wealthy concert promoter, Frederick Septimus (F.S.) Kelly. Kelly's father was Irish, an emigré from County Westmeath who made a fortune from wool and mining, while his mother was native Australian (née Dick). These strong romantic feelings seem not to have been reciprocated. Some consider Kelly may have been emotionally traumatised by the deaths of both his parents in Australia (in 1901 and 1902 respectively) while he was an Oxford undergraduate, even if this did liberate him financially. Jelly kept a framed copy of a picture of him on her piano for the rest of her life. A rapid charcoal portrait session with John Singer Sargent had been organised for him by Kelly's older sister, Maisie, before he went to the Western Front in 1915. His letters to Jelly never ended with anything more effusive than 'yours sincerely' and his copious diaries reveal nothing of a sexual nature.¹²

Product of Eton College and Oxford University, Kelly was the Lewis Nettleship music scholar at Balliol College in 1900 immediately following Donald Tovey (1898). Both were protégés of the college organist (composer and Brahms devotee) Ernest Walker. After Oxford, Kelly pursued his music studies in Germany from 1903.¹³ He was also a gold medallist rower for Britain at the

11 Macleod, *The Sisters d'Aranyi*, 155.

12 'She fell deeply in love with this handsome young man, his piercing blue eyes, his keen face; but saw no signs that her passion was returned' (Macleod, op. cit., 61) Kelly 'knew all the right people' and 'was the life and soul of any house party: witty, engaging and invited everywhere'. (Thérèse Radic in *Context No. 40*, University of Melbourne, 2015). Radic in 2014 observed 'Kelly's sexual orientation is not known' while Macleod in 1969 wrote 'one is surprised that [Jelly] never married. If Kelly had lived, something might have come of that' and 'either Jelly loved the wrong person, or the wrong person loved Jelly' (op. cit., 279). Radic, as editor of Kelly's Diaries, writes 'He was welcomed everywhere as an eligible bachelor with a considerable amount of charm ... who loved the company of women' (12-13 Introduction). 'Septimus', as his name declares, was indeed the seventh child, fourth son, in the Kelly family. See *Race Against Time; the Diaries of F.S. Kelly*, ed. Thérèse Radic (Canberra: National Library of Australia, 2004).

13 Kelly was a student for five years at the Frankfurt Hochschule Konservatorium (composition under Iwan Knorr – who taught Bloch and Pfitzner – and piano under Ernst Engesser), along with Cyril Scott, Balfour Gardiner and Roger Quilter. Percy Grainger, whom he had previously encountered, had been a Frankfurt student from the age of thirteen. Leonard Borwick played the piano part in Kelly's Violin Sonata at a memorial concert at the Wigmore Hall on 2 May 1919. Jelly sight-read the piece at an after dinner run through with Kelly – on leave in London – on 6 March 1916. They then played it at a

1908 London Olympic Games.¹⁴ His diaries from 1909 to 1915 contain frequent references to the Arányis (mostly about rehearsals and concerts) and are full of fascinating detail about professional musical life in England in the years immediately before the First World War.

Kelly and his sister rented a large country house (Bisham Grange, near Marlow, Buckinghamshire – the dower house for Bisham Abbey, fronting the Thames). After 1908 he also shared the lease on two London flats with his older, close friend, the pianist Leonard Borwick (another Frankfurt graduate, who had been a favourite student of Clara Schumann's), at 34 Wimpole Street and then 29 Queen Anne Street, W1. One of Kelly's older brothers, Bertie, who returned to Australia, had been a pupil of Joachim's. Kelly's Violin Sonata, written at Gallipoli and in Egypt for Jelly, was publicly premiered by her and Tovey at Balliol College, Oxford.



Bisham Grange (courtesy Oxfordshire CC)

Kelly first encountered 'Mrs Von Aranyi', her three daughters and Miss Dolly Joachim (another great niece of the virtuoso) at Haslemere on 19 March, 1909. This was the first of three pre-arranged concerts during Jelly's initial visit to the UK, at which she also first met Donald Tovey. Kelly after 1906 ran the 'Classical Concerts Society' (successor to the Joachim Quartet Society) with Tovey. The two were close friends – although the relationship could, at times, become quite prickly. 'Sep' Kelly's diary entry for 5 February 1910, vividly records his impressions after he had arranged for, and shared, transport to a concert he gave with the Arányis at the Northern Polytechnic Institute on London's Holloway Road:

All the Aranyis talked at once, during the drive there and back, in a sort of semi-intelligible German and it was a task far beyond my powers to try to answer all their questions at once and follow the trend of their thought.

A pupil of Adela's (and of Jelly later on) records that the sisters 'were devoted to each other and offered to all around them a wealth of generosity, humour and, above all, vitality.'¹⁵ Tovey in his

private evening session after dinner at the Bonham-Carters four days later, and on several other domestic occasions over the next three weeks before Kelly was posted to the Western Front.

14 The crew of the victorious Leander Class rowing eight included Albert Gladstone, grandson of the former Prime Minister. He survived his Great War service (Gallipoli, and then Mesopotamia) unlike Kelly and two of the others in his rowing eight.

15 Michelle Carte, see article on Adela on www.estastrings.org.uk/resources/articles/lessons-with-adila-fachiri.html

diary stated ‘they were in love with everyone and everyone with them’. In relation to the address correction on Elgar’s letter to Jelly about the February 1920 recital at Severn House, Kelly’s diary has an entry on 13 March 1916 that states ‘I took a Turkish bath at 5 p.m. I dined with a Mr. and Mrs. Fowler at 26 Gilbert St., friends of Jelly Aranyi. She was dining there, too ... [live music followed]. The Fowlers seemed to me delightful people. The house contained many good things ...’ Kelly seems to have been a Turkish bath addict, believing that it was an effective way of keeping his weight down for his rowing.

Serving as a volunteer officer in the ‘Hood Battalion’ of the Royal Naval Division, Kelly survived Gallipoli, where he was twice wounded and decorated DSC. He got to know Rupert Brooke well, having previously met him in London, and possibly having taken part in the abortive relief of Antwerp in September 1914 with him. He officiated as a member of Brooke’s small burial party on Skyros. Kelly was one of the last three officers remaining to supervise the Gallipoli evacuation under heavy fire.¹⁶ He was killed at the Somme leading a successful charge on a machine-gun post on 13 November 1916, aged 35. He had completed copying out his violin sonata on the voyage back to Britain after the Gallipoli withdrawal. Jelly seems also to have been attracted to another highly athletic, older male. This was the (married since 1914 and with three children) mountaineer George Mallory, who disappeared on his 1924 ascent to the summit of Everest.¹⁷ Kelly’s diary for 16 September 1914 records his having come across Mallory, describing him as ‘an admirer of Jelly’.¹⁸ Jelly was godmother to the eldest Mallory child.

16 See Radic, *Race Against Time; the Diaries of F.S. Kelly* passim and Christopher Latham *F.S. Kelly: Unsung Australian hero* (Limelight Magazine, Melbourne, 17 January 2017). Radic is sceptical about Kelly’s having been at Antwerp. The last commanding officer at Gallipoli to leave, General Sir Frederick Maude, was the subject of a mocking, parody version of Balfe’s parlour song setting of Tennyson’s ‘Come into the garden, Maud’ (‘Come into the lighter, Maude, and never mind your kit ...’) for causing lethal delays in attempting to save and transport a large quantity of his personal baggage.

17 Mallory had Cambridge and Bloomsbury connections (Strachey, Brooke, Keynes and Duncan Grant were friends). His wife Ruth’s architect father knew William Morris well, and she was at school with Aldous Huxley’s mother. Mallory took part in all three British Everest expeditions in the early 1920s. His fate was uncertain until his body was finally found in 1999. Whether he succeeded in reaching the summit with his climbing partner, Sandy Irvine, remains tantalisingly unknown. Mallory in his last letter from Tibet imagines Jelly’s face appearing through his tent flap.

18 ‘I went to the Ship restaurant in Whitehall to meet Eddie Marsh and W.D. Browne with whom were Rupert Brooke and a man called Malory [sic], an admirer of Jelly d’Arányi.’ (Sir) Edward Marsh who was Churchill’s private secretary from 1905 to 1915 became Rupert Brooke’s literary executor. Denis Browne, composer and music critic for *The Times* and the recently founded *New Statesman*, was killed at Gallipoli. He was with Rupert Brooke when he died, and he and Kelly sorted out Brooke’s belongings on the ship from Skyros taking them on to the Gallipoli landings. Kelly and Browne shared a cabin at their Blandford training camp in 1914, frequently dined together and went to the opera and theatre with Brooke en route for the Dardanelles (*Tosca* in Malta on 8 March 1915) and in Egypt. Browne was a prodigious musical talent; he had deputised for Holst at Morley College and was greatly admired by Vaughan Williams. Both Marsh and Brooke were Cambridge Apostles in their time, while the former was a major arts sponsor as well as being a discreet, but influential, figure within Britain’s homosexual community for decades.



(above, left): Kelly by Sargent (1915)
(National Portrait Gallery, London)

(above, right): Frederick Septimus Kelly
(1903)

(left): Kelly rowing (Royal British Legion)



Jelly d’Arányi’s burgeoning post-war career

Following the end of the War, Jelly was free to develop her international concert career, though predominantly in the UK. She was at her peak during the 1920s and 1930s – although during the latter part of that decade she began to be troubled with arthritis, which exacerbated some of her alleged technical deficiencies. Her first post-war concert engagement – after recovery from a bout of the virulent Spanish ‘flu that killed so many – was in January 1919 at St Leonard’s School in St Andrews.¹⁹ Jelly from the age of fifteen upwards had given regular recitals with her sisters, between

19 An exclusive Scottish girls’ school founded in 1877 on the progressive principle that ‘a girl should receive an education that is as good as her brother’s, if not better’. I am amused to record that my Aunt Kathleen, my father’s sister, was sent back to her family in Edinburgh in disgrace from this same institution circa 1928. She had bribed a cabbie to let her drive his horse-drawn vehicle at speed down Market Street, only to be spotted by a teacher who reported her misdemeanour to the headmistress.

1908 and the outbreak of the war, performing in Vienna, Paris and a variety of places in Italy, Switzerland and the UK. Her first fully ‘public’ postwar concert in London took place at Wigmore Hall on 10 February 1919 (she had played with Adila at the former ‘Bechstein Hall’ in June 1909). The St Leonard’s recital was a continuation of the string and piano quartet/quintet concerts that she had been involved in at private schools and country houses in Britain during the war years.

So far as images for posterity are concerned, there is a three-quarter length oil portrait of Jelly playing her violin (in a neoclassical setting, resplendent in gold dress) in the National Portrait Gallery by Charles Geoffroy-Dechaume (1920s).²⁰ Augustus John made sketches (now lost) for a portrait that would have paralleled his famous painting of the cellist, Guilhermina Suggia, but it was never finished. Jelly also sat for William Rothenstein, in July 1920. There is a substantial photographic archive. Recordings of her spirited playing style – some with Ethel Hobday accompanying – can be found on YouTube (see list at the end of this article for a small selection; several clips show still photographs of her). Jelly became a prolific recording artist from the mid-1920s onwards and for about twenty years she and Myra Hess were regular recital partners. After the Second World War Jelly’s public appearances declined markedly and recitals predominantly only took place in private settings with Adila. Her last solo appearance was in a Medici castello slightly north of Florence in October 1965.



Jelly and Myra Hess (note early BBC microphone)



Myra Hess and Jelly – camping it up for the camera in reversed roles at the same recording session

The Hampstead recital on Sunday 29 February 1920

Elgar’s confirmation letter to Jelly must have been written on 28 February (‘Saturday morning’) 1920. ‘Mrs Hobday’ was 21 years Jelly’s senior and would therefore have acted as a useful chaperone. She was Irish, born Ethel Sharpe in Dublin in 1872 and married to Alfred Hobday, a noted professional viola player who had been a member of the Joachim Quartet. In Vienna as a student, Ethel had known Brahms three years before he died (she died in 1947). She accompanied Jelly on her first American concert tour in 1927. The pair enjoyed travelling together, although it seems Ethel had an unfortunate habit that she never quite lost of leaving her music on trains and in taxis!²¹ Jelly liked to practise in moving trains.

20 Accession number NPG 5735.

21 Jelly later on frequently played with Myra Hess (including the National Gallery lunchtime concerts during the Second World War). There is a photograph of them in a BBC studio, camping it up in reversed

Joseph Macleod’s book provides us with Jelly’s recorded feelings about the recital and its setting, from a handwritten note. Clearly this spirited, attractive and somewhat unconventional Hungarian felt less than comfortable being put on display before a salon of post-Edwardian stuffed shirts.

Jelly didn’t enjoy it much – ‘I went to Elgar’s and played there for a lot of early Victorian antiquities; I felt chilled to the bone at first, and wanted to kick everybody and thing during I [sic] played Brahms and at tea.’²²

Nor did she condone Elgar’s snobbish side and his conventional social pretensions – or at least the external manifestations of them that she had disliked at their very first meeting. Neither does it sound as if the polite teatime conversation did anything to moderate the twenty-seven-year old Jelly’s already negative impressions.²³

Martin Bird, who is adding the letter in question to the *Collected Correspondence*, has provided me with important additional information and the Elgars’ separate diary entries for what took place that afternoon.²⁴ The recital would have been in the ‘studio’ at Severn House, a sizeable half-oak panelled room dedicated to music (measuring 36 x 24 feet). The transcriptions of both the diaries for that Sunday record the following:

instrumental roles, but a later falling out seems to have contributed to the decline of Jelly’s career. By that time, however, she was beginning to suffer from arthritis (she had already shared her fears about this in letters to Tovey, a fellow-sufferer who died in 1939). She was awarded a CBE in 1946, having performed around the country for CEMA during the war, but tackled no ‘new’ repertoire thereafter. Both Jelly and Myra Hess were present for the interment of Vaughan Williams’ ashes in Westminster Abbey in September 1958. Adila and Jelly emigrated to Tuscany in Italy in 1957, following Adila’s daughter, Adrienne, who had married an Italian.

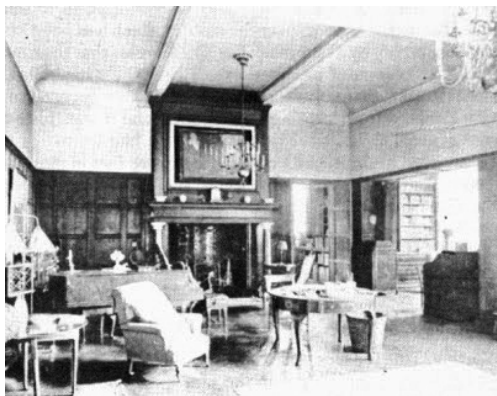
- 22 Yehudi Menuhin writes of this ‘period of the European *Salon*, when romanticism had become domesticated ... Perhaps the most popular form of this devolution is tea music or *le fiv’ o’clock* as the French call it. Although it is an English institution, on the Continent it has usually been accompanied by music, whereas in England it was conversation rather which marked the tea period and, for this reason, it is perhaps difficult to place Elgar’s *Madame* or *Mademoiselle Capricieuse* in English life.’ Menuhin is locating Elgar the violinist’s *salon* pieces such as *Salut d’Amour* and *Capricieuse* in their European – rather than English – context alongside Kreisler’s *Schon’ Rosmarin* and *Caprice Viennois*.
- 23 Joseph Szigeti, a fellow scion of Budapest (and only nine months Jelly’s senior) described Jelly as ‘that picturesque personality’. Both sisters studied with Jenő Hubay at the conservatoire, later known as the Franz Liszt Academy, as did the slightly younger Eugene Ormandy. Adila had previously studied with Joachim up until his death (Jelly was too young for that). Hubay’s pupils were all said to be rather too susceptible to adopting his excessive vibrato – wide and rather slow. Joachim had warned his great-nieces against that Hungarian ‘Gypsy’ habit – ‘never too much vibrato! That’s circus music’. The preferred Joachim style had more bowing attack but less vibrato. It was Kreisler’s approach to vibrato, constant and rapid (even in technical passages) that necessitated a higher bowing elbow and stronger hand grip, thus making it appear stiffer than had been customary during the Romantic period – cf. Wilhelmj’s 1894 advice: ‘To gain a looseness which also has strength, the weight of the hand must rest on the bowstick – the weight of the hand only, not the force of the upper arm’. (Preface to Wilhelmj-Brown’s *Modern School for the Violin*). It seems likely that the young Elgar would have heard Wilhelmj play at a concert he gave in Worcester.
- 24 See short biographies in *An Elgarian Who’s Who*, compiled by Martin Bird (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2014).

Edward Elgar's diary (29/02/20):

Fine day.
In afternoon sent car (which went to wrong address) for Jelly & Mrs. Hobday. They played Brahms D minor before tea & my sonata after.
Lady M. Boscawen
" Petre
Mr. & Mrs. A. W. Foote
L. [Foote]
Leopold Griffith
Mr. & Mrs. Johnston
Sir S. & Lady Colvin
Hobday came to tea

Alice Elgar's diary (29/02/20):

Very delightful aftn.
Muriel & Ludo [Foster]
Sidney & Frances [Colvin]
Lady Margaret B[oscawen].
Kitty Petre [Lady Margaret's daughter]
Miss [Kathleen] Boscawen
Leopold Griffith
Mr. & Mrs. Foster Brockhampton
Lawrence Binyon
Mrs. [Ethel] Hobday. Master [Ralph] Hobday
Mad^e Jelly D'Aranyi
Mr. A. Hobday
Mr. & Mrs. Johnson
'Jelly' & Mrs. Hobday played Brahms Sonata finely then tea & then E.'s Sonata perfectly beautiful
Slow movement quite inspired. Mrs. Hobday said she felt quite overcome. One of the most beautiful movements in existence. E. & A. must have enjoyed aftn Everyone in such sympathy.



The Music Room at Severn House

While Elgar himself makes no comment on the quality of the music making, it is amusing to note him recording that – revised instructions on the letter to Jelly d'Arányi notwithstanding – the ordered car went to the wrong address! If this caused some embarrassing delay for Jelly and Ethel in reaching Severn House, it can surely only have increased the violinist's unease at what she would already have suspected was in store for her, albeit – as we know from Kelly's diaries and other sources – that she was very well accustomed by 1920 to regular recitals in the homes of the British upper-middle class, up to and including No.10 Downing Street. Margot Asquith was fond of her.

Lady Elgar, for her part, seems to have recovered from something of a fluster earlier in the day and thoroughly enjoyed the recital. Her diary records that in the morning she 'tried to go to Spanish Place but had two failures at starting, 1st shut in door 2nd no purse – so late.' 'Spanish Place' refers to the large Victorian Gothic, Roman Catholic church of St James in George Street, Marylebone – very close to Manchester Square and the Wallace Collection (not one of the Elgars' 'local' churches – which were St Mary's, Holly Walk, and St Dominic's Priory, Haverstock Hill). Alice by this time was, of course, in poor health, though Elgar in a note to Edward Speyer, sent on 27 February, wrote 'We are much as usual: my dear Alice is better but not strong yet and gets out but little – however she is improving.' Lady Elgar had become unwell just one week after the disastrous, under-rehearsed 27 October 1919 premiere of the Cello Concerto. Elgar had written to Laurence Binyon on 14 January telling him that Alice had been for a short walk the previous day – 'the first time she has been out of the house for 10 weeks'.



St James, Spanish Place

The 'early Victorian antiquities' elucidated

Both the Elgars' diaries for the day concerned are revealing, not least for who is, and is not, mentioned by each, and how their names are recorded. Their friends listed within, far from being enigmatic, reveal a neat, almost archaeological section of the Elgars' metropolitan life in 1920. The 'early Victorian antiquities' whom Jelly felt she 'wanted to kick' ranged from hereditary aristocracy to commoners living in the next street, with a decidedly Conservative, 'establishment' and Roman Catholic seasoning (the Arányis themselves were Catholic and certainly no closet pinkos).

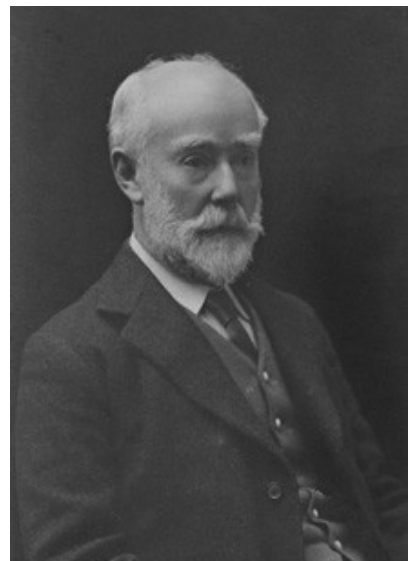
The earliest dated stratum would be represented by Leopold Griffith, younger brother by eight years of Elgar's architect friend 'Troyte', subject of Enigma Variation VII – and designer of

his Severn House library bookcases (which were paid for by Edward Speyer as a housewarming present). Leopold was Professor of Civil Engineering at the Madras College of Engineering in Imperial India (an institution founded in 1794 by the East India Company in order to train surveyors).

Muriel Foster had sung the Angel in the triumphant Düsseldorf *Gerontius* in May 1902 and at its first London performance in 1904. She was also a soloist for the 1902 premiere of the *Coronation Ode*. Regular favourite Elgar interpreter, she was the contralto in many other first performances (including *The Apostles*, *The Kingdom* and *The Music Makers*) and sang at the memorial concert for Jaeger in January 1910. Family members and medical practitioners excepted, she was the last person to see Alice Elgar alive. Jelly would have heard Muriel Foster sing a Kelly composition at the Wigmore Hall concert in his memory on 2 May 1919 (Frank Bridge conducted) – an event Jelly was hurt not to have been asked to participate in.

The Colvins had been close friends and correspondents of the Elgars since 1904. Sir Sidney Colvin came from a prominent Anglo-Indian family (a ‘house’ at Haileybury College is named after them) and he had been Keeper of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum. He was, through his Irish wife, a close friend of Robert Louis Stevenson, who made him the addressee in his affectionate preface to *Travels with a Donkey* (an early published work in 1879). Sidney and Frances Colvin were the joint dedicatees of Elgar’s Cello Concerto.

Laurence Binyon by 1920 was Keeper of Oriental Prints and Drawings at the British Museum (prior to which he had been Assistant Keeper of Printed Books). Although his name was canvassed by the press in 1913 as a possible next Poet Laureate, the appointment went to Robert Bridges. Other rejects include Thomas Hardy, John Masefield and Rudyard Kipling. Binyon’s essay *The Flight of the Dragon* (1911) was an important early interpretation of Zen thought and Chinese and Japanese aesthetics for an English-speaking public.



Sir Sidney Colvin (1916)

The Petre family had been staunch Roman Catholic aristocrats since Tudor times, and were Lords Lieutenant of Essex (Ingatestone Hall near Chelmsford was the family seat). The Petre barons were able to retake their seat in the House of Lords after the passing of the Catholic Relief Act of 1829. Catherine – ‘Kitty’ – Petre (b. 1891) was a close friend of Carice Elgar’s (b. 1890) and since September 1915 had been a war widow. She had two children, the younger one born after her husband’s death. He, Lionel George Carroll Petre, the Sixteenth Baron, was a captain in the Coldstream Guards following Sandhurst and died of wounds sustained at the Battle of Loos (aged 24). He had been educated at the Oratory School, Edgbaston, which was founded in 1859 by (Cardinal) John Henry Newman. Kitty and he were married in Westminster Cathedral in 1913. Lady Petre’s father-in-law, the Fifteenth Baron Petre (1864–1908), had been a key member of Cardinal Manning’s committee that fundraised for, and oversaw the design competition and construction of the Church of St James, Spanish Place (dedicated 1890), where

Alice Elgar went on the morning of 29 February 1920. Kitty subsequently remarried, becoming the wife of a baronet, Sir Carne Rasch, Conservative MP for South East Essex and Chelmsford.



Lord and Lady Petre at Perranwell, Cornwall, in 1913 shortly after their return from honeymoon.

(Mary Evans Picture Library)



Binyon by William Strang
(National Portrait Gallery, London)



Muriel Foster

Kitty’s mother, the Lady Margaret Boscawen on the invitation list, was a Byng (b. 1861), daughter of the Earl of Strafford (third creation, second earl). The Boscawen family into which she married were Cornish aristocrats – Viscounts Falmouth, residing at Tregothnan Hall near Truro. There is a narcissus named after Lady Margaret. Her niece, ‘Miss Kathleen’, the daughter of the Viscount, would have been aged seventeen at the time of the recital.



Tregothnan Hall

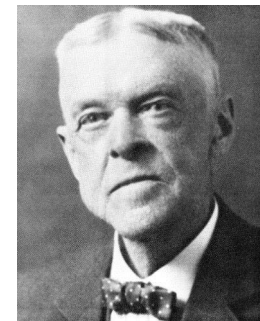
Mr & Mrs Foster 'Brockhampton' had first met the Elgars in 1907. They lived as benevolent gentry, having been gifted Brockhampton Court, near Hereford, by Mrs Foster's American father who bought it. Arthur Foster's family were actually Yorkshire textile manufacturers, wealthy owners of Black Dyke and Queensbury Mills near Bradford. Elgar was invited in 1919 by one of the family to hear the mill's band play. The Revd Arthur Foster (the Mr Foster on the invitation list) had resigned his ecclesiastical sinecure living in 1893, after marrying into the money of his wealthy American retail trade heiress wife, Alice Madeline Jordan, prior to relocation to Herefordshire. The Elgars went to dinner at the Fosters' London home a fortnight after the recital; the Petres were also there.

Alfred Hobday, the piano accompanist's husband, was leader of the violas in the Royal Opera and the London Symphony orchestras. He had played in the quartet for the premiere of the *Introduction and Allegro* with its famous 'Welsh' tune – hauntingly introduced on the viola – in 1905 (Elgar himself conducted). The work was composed for the recently formed LSO to show off its virtuosic calibre. Ralph Hobday would have been aged twenty at the time, a student of architecture. He later became Senior Architect to the Commonwealth War Graves Commission.

Arthur and Annie Johnston were Hampstead near-neighbours who lived at 70 Maresfield Gardens, the next street to Netherhall Gardens. They first encountered the Elgars in April 1913 over a local dispute. Arthur Johnston was a lawyer and Clerk of Hampstead Metropolitan Borough Council. He became national President of NALGO, the local government trade union (1924-31), following which he was knighted in 1932.

The Footes' omission from Alice's list may imply they were transient professional contacts of Elgar's whom she did not know (maybe from his final, solo visit to the USA and Canada in 1911?). It has so far proved impossible to corroborate their presence in London in February 1920, but it is likely that 'Mr A.W. Foote' refers to Arthur William Foote (1853-1937).²⁵ He was an American

composer, a devout Unitarian church musician and claimed as the first wholly American trained composer of note, albeit within a largely derivative German-influenced tradition. He was a graduate of both the New England Conservatory and Harvard (which awarded him the first ever Masters degree by an American university) and one of the 'Boston Six', Edward MacDowell being the best-known today.²⁶ Foote, who preferred the church to the concert hall (though he did compose a cello concerto in 1893), had a substantial output of organ, chamber and choral music – specialising in anthems. He was an early advocate in the USA for the music of Berlioz, Brahms and Wagner, often visiting Europe, to go to the Bayreuth Festival in particular (he was at the first *Ring Cycle* in 1876). The Foote's daughter, Katharine, worked in Europe during the war, and Foote in 1919 published a set of three songs set to First World War poems (the text of the middle one being Rupert Brooke's *The Soldier*).



Arthur W. Foote

Severn House: the setting for the recital

'Severn House' (originally 'Kelston', renamed by the Elgars) was designed by Norman Shaw for the successful Victorian genre and portrait painter Edwin Long RA. It was built in 1887, replete with billiard room, 60ft-long picture gallery, 'oriental' room, library, large drawing room, studio (converted in 1912 into the Elgars' music room), five bedrooms, stabling, a garage and additional bedrooms for live-in servants – and with a Roman mosaic from Carthage incorporated into the floor of the entrance hall. Long, whose chief patron had been the philanthropist Baroness Angela Burdett-Coutts (widely reputed as 'the richest heiress in England') had died in 1891. The house had been found for the Elgars by Lady Alice Stuart-Wortley ('Windflower'). It was the only house they ever bought together. They purchased it in 1911 – though on a mortgage, Lady Elgar having first had to take protracted legal steps to vary some Trust deed conditions in her mother's will.

The move from Hereford was completed on 1 January, 1912. This elevated level of London respectability had been deemed necessary following the OM award in the June 1911 Coronation Honours List. Note the status-conscious palindrome 'Siromoris' telegraphic address on the letterhead, agreed to by the post office, presumably, for telegram deliveries via its Swiss Cottage branch. Elgar wrote at the time 'I ape royal state under my wife's kindly direction ...'²⁷ The house was demolished in 1937, its site then being used to construct no fewer than four new residences. Sir Adrian Boult, reminiscing in conversation with Michael De-la-Noy, described the house as 'so absolutely pretentious it wasn't funny'. Elgar, tellingly, even had to sell his violin in order to buy the billiard table.²⁸

25 My thanks to Paula Best, Wigmore Hall Archivist, and to Martin Bird for their helpful, but fruitless searches of programmes and shipping passenger lists to try to establish the Footes' presence in London in early 1920.

26 Elgar, on being asked in New York in 1906 what he thought of American music, guardedly answered: 'I do not know it thoroughly so cannot express an opinion. We have heard in England some of the oratorios of Professor Parker of Yale and I know some of the works of MacDowell and Chadwick', quoted in Richard Smith's *Elgar in America* (Elgar Monographs No. 3, Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2005), 58.

27 Letter to Canon Gorton, Rector of Morecambe, 16 July 1911.

28 See Pauline Collett's *Elgar lived here* (London: Thames Publishing, 1981), which provides a detailed description of the house and reconstructs the floor plans.

Imposing as the house clearly was, Carice Elgar-Blake characterised it as ‘by no means everybody’s house as it would only accommodate a small family such as ours, as everything was sacrificed to the long stately corridor and the large music room and annexe, large dining room and large basement’. It seems that the combination of Edwin Long’s picture gallery, the basement billiard zone and the lavishly appointed first floor rooms did not add up to much of a family ‘home’, though it clearly did provide Lady Elgar with a suitably grand setting for her Saturday afternoon ‘At Home’ sessions, which attracted famous guests.²⁹ These included Siegfried Wagner, the Paderewskis, Feodor Chaliapin, Alexander Ziloti and his wife Vera Tretyakova. So far as the social parading of Elgar’s ‘improved’ status is concerned, we should not forget that one of Alice’s aunts instantly cut her out of her will on learning of her engagement in 1888 to marry such a social inferior from trade.

One trenchant assessment of those Severn House rituals opines that ‘Whether all the social gatherings that had taken place there since 1912 had been an unqualified success remains a matter of opinion. Rosa Burley thought they had not.’ She is quoted as having written ‘The training and outlook of the Elgars were of course such as to make an unbuttoned mood very difficult for them except when they were strictly *en famille* ... the effect was a little chilling. Parties were given, but their stiffness hardly ever relaxed into anything like joviality and the guests rarely felt wholly at ease.’³⁰ This instantly evokes Jelly d’Arányi’s ‘chilled to the bone’ comment. Centrally heated throughout Severn House may have been, but *froidueur* often appears to have been the prevailing social and emotional temperature.³¹

Severn House

Dora Penny (‘Dorabella’) on first visiting Severn House commented to Elgar ‘you are in clover here’. But the downbeat response was apparently ‘I don’t know about clover – I’ve left that behind in Hereford – and Hereford is too far from London, that’s the trouble.’³² Elgar in a letter written to Frank Schuster from Brinkwells, in Sussex, observed that Alice was ‘bored to death’ there while he was in the ‘seventh heaven of delight’. It seems incontestable that Alice would have felt very much more comfortable with the trappings of London status than



Severn House

29 See Percy M Young, *Alice Elgar: Enigma of a Victorian Lady* (London: Dennis Dobson, 1978), 167.

30 q.v. Michael De-la-Noy, *Elgar: The Man* (London: Allen Lane, 1983).

31 It has been suggested that this early example of costly, full central heating had probably been specified by Long to Norman Shaw and the builders of the house for the comfort of models posing in his studio. They were admitted at the servants’ side entrance. Elgar in a letter to Alice Stuart-Wortley (4 January 1912) wrote ‘I think, entre nous, it was designed for the comforts of Long’s nude ladies’. James Hamilton-Paterson, in his novel *Gerontius*, has an amusing paragraph in which Elgar muses on Long painting in the house (London: Faber & Faber, 1989), 99.

32 *Edward Elgar: Memoir of a Variation*, Mrs Richard Powell, 119.

Elgar himself ever did; they were clearly now living well beyond their means, increasing his perennial anxiety over money and his ability to sustain the family lifestyle from his independent, unsalaried existence.³³

The Elgar’s London home had been burgled a few months before the recital while they were in Sussex, the house having been unoccupied at the time as they could no longer afford to keep residential servants (staffing and upkeep had, in any case, grown increasingly difficult since the outbreak of war). Two Hampstead policemen, a sergeant and a constable, were convicted and sentenced to four years’ hard labour – no doubt particularly shocking for Elgar as a former, early wartime volunteer special constable in the Hampstead Division! At the same time they had the worry that someone was trying to forge Alice’s cheques. They were already in the process of attempting to sell the Hampstead property having been forced to conclude that they could no longer afford it. As Michael De-la-Noy saw it, the Elgars’ entry into metropolitan life after 1912 had precipitated an acute attack of *folie de grandeur* – while there was still a regrettable tendency in both of them sometimes to behave like parvenus, for all of Alice’s upper-middle-class origins and social pretensions. J.B. Priestley, his language reflecting the class assumptions of his time, sums this tendency up in the following way:

Apart from his music and all that it involved, Elgar was a modest man, almost naïve; he was a self-made provincial musician, who married a woman a few years older than himself, a member of a socially superior family ... (Elgar was deeply devoted to his wife, the daughter of a major-general, and it is more than likely that his tendency to be ultra-conservative and chauvinistic was the result of her influence.)³⁴

Fred Gaisberg recalled his impression on meeting Elgar for the first time:

I thought I had never seen anyone who looked less like a musician. The Elgars seemed a prim and comfortable family of the country class, very provincial and sheltered – a product of some cathedral town of England where afternoon tea was the chief social ceremony of the day.³⁵

Ernest Newman commented that ‘He gave me... the impression of an exceptionally nervous, self-divided and extremely unhappy man.’ By 1920 Elgar no longer seemed to want, or feel he required, a London base. (‘London’ made constant demands and he complained that the phone rang all day, making space for composition unthinkable). After Alice’s death, the conclusion in 1921 of the protracted sale of Severn House and the surrender of the lease on Brinkwells (rented since 1917), Carice helped her father find and rent a small London serviced flat, 18/37 St James’s Place, SW1. This served as the Pall Mall base, very close to Brook’s Club, for the increasingly withdrawn, widowed country gentleman on his visits to the capital for a couple of years until his effective

33 See Harper-Scott, quoted in Drysdale. (J.P.E. Harper-Scott *Elgar: An Extraordinary Life*; London: RSM Associated Board, 2007). ‘Now demolished, it was a quite vast and absurdly expensive pile ... and led (Elgar) in financial desperation to compose *The Crown of India* ... The work’s motivation was largely financial ... His wife had run up impossible running costs, which gave him no choice.’ Drysdale points out that already in that era, visual artists and writers were better catered for legally and financially than composers. Hence, presumably, besides his genuine interest in technical innovation, Elgar’s enthusiastic engagement with the emerging gramophone recording business as a source of regular income. (John Drysdale, *Elgar’s Earnings*, Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013).

34 *The Edwardians* (London: Heinemann, 1970), 137.

35 Quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar on Record* (London: OUP, 1974), 5.

complete ‘retirement’ back to Worcestershire.³⁶ Carice married her farmer fiancé, Samuel Henry Blake, on 16 January 1922, after which they lived initially near Godalming in Surrey.



The Music Room at 10 Netherton Grove (l. to r. Alfred Hobday, Adila and Alex Fachiri, Gaspar Cassadó and Jelly d'Áranyi)

Elgar the widower – and the aftermath

Prior to the February 1920 recital at Severn House, Elgar had already heard Jelly d'Áranyi play at Wigmore Hall in late October the previous year (as replacement for her indisposed sister Adila, whom the composer held in high regard). However, Jelly had actually given her first postwar public London recital in February 1919, also at the Wigmore (Fauré's First Sonata, Joachim's *Romance*, Paganini *Caprices*, some Locatelli, and two Hungarian pieces).³⁷ The concert Elgar heard consisted of the Nardini E minor Concerto and his own Sonata. At the conclusion he sent Jelly a message of thanks on a torn blank side of a page from another concert programme. Her range of repertoire was extraordinary, and it seems that she was *the* player who demonstrated how the Bach D minor *Chaconne* could be performed on the modern instrument, thereby precipitating its revival (not least by Yehudi Menuhin, the teenaged soloist in the famous Elgar recording of his Violin Concerto, released in 1932).³⁸

Approximately one year later, after Alice's death on 6 April 1920, we learn that Elgar was exhibiting a 'violent affection' for Jelly d'Áranyi who, although she certainly does seem often to have been attracted to 'older' men, didn't feel altogether comfortable with it. While staying in London, Elgar took her out to lunch several times at the Pall Mall Restaurant. On one occasion he proposed they should go for a walk in Richmond Park. Since it was in the middle of winter and

some considerable distance away, Jelly felt able to turn down the suggestion and proposed a visit to the British Museum instead – maybe thinking there might be some comfort in the guaranteed proximity of others? Visiting the museum without a chaperone was considered to be acceptable. Jelly was the most 'intellectual' of the three sisters, with wide cultural interests (she gave Kelly a volume of Plato to take with him to the Western Front).³⁹

Furthermore, she declined Elgar's invitation afterwards to return for tea at his residence, relenting only when he was insistent that he had a book that he wanted to give her. Once there, however, a 'scene' took place – finishing up with Jelly 'cursing old men' in a taxi after she had fled. We can only guess at what may have taken place, what the intentions actually were, and whether it was all a misunderstanding or over-reaction.⁴⁰ Macleod writes of Jelly that she was a 'born flirt' and retained a 'childlike character'. He observes that 'If Elgar was bowled over, Bartók was bowled out'. Jelly was less tactless than her eldest sister but clearly had a very sharp wit. On one occasion after she played in two Mozart string quintets with Albert Einstein, a good amateur violinist, she remarked to him that his time was relative only twice'.⁴¹

Jelly obviously respected the composer and had due regard for his key position and professional influence, even if his compositional star was by then on the wane. Nevertheless, it seems that already at her first encounter with Elgar, seated next to him at a dinner party, she had formed a critical opinion of some external aspects of the great man's character and his social posturing, and she even harboured doubts about his greatness. Rosa Burley – who probably got as close to the real core of Elgar's being as anyone – wrote that Elgar was 'one of the most repressed people it is possible to imagine'.⁴² She thought he often seemed extremely difficult and profoundly unhappy. But Elgar's self-imposed conservative personality does not mean he *felt* any less deeply, but rather (as Nicholas Kenyon has observed) that the range of his feelings was inhibited. It is also worth recalling Michael Kennedy's comment that Elgar, while generally more trusting with fellow professional musicians than with the outside world, 'was a different person, depending on whom he was with'.⁴³ Jelly – like her eldest sister – was a free spirit with a low tolerance threshold for pomposity and dissembling.⁴⁴

36 Elgar in an emotional letter to Sir Sidney Colvin regrets that he is unable to buy Brinkwells, and writes of his feelings of desolation at packing up to leave for good (May 1921).

37 Macleod, op. cit., 116 and *CRQ* (Spring 2011).

38 According to Macleod (op. cit.), in that particular era it was only Lionel Tertis – on viola, of course – who was convincingly able to rival Jelly's interpretation of the Bach.

39 Macleod, op. cit., 74. The book was returned to Jelly after Kelly's death, seemingly hardly opened.

40 Jelly's blood relationship to Joachim would have meant a great deal to Elgar. During his younger (jobbing violinist and unhappy teacher) days, Elgar was a passionate devotee of the virtuoso. Joachim outlived most of his contemporaries and, as the last great exponent of the German Romantic style, would have been an acknowledged influence on Elgar's own music. Arthur Reynolds relates how after a Bechstein Hall Joachim Quartet concert in May 1905, Elgar retrieved a discarded (gut), broken E-string of Joachim's and preserved it – framed – thereafter as what he termed to May Grafton (his niece, and his secretary at the time) 'the precious relic'. Reynolds likens this trophy to 'the lock of a loved one's hair'. See Arthur S. Reynolds, 'Elgar and Joachim', *The Elgar Society Journal*, Vol. 15/2 (July 2007).

41 Macleod, op.cit., 205.

42 Rosa Burley and Frank C. Carruthers, *Edward Elgar: the record of a friendship* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1972). NB Burley's text went unpublished for decades and though her co-writer, Frank Carruthers, lived until 1958 the book did not appear until 1972 – care having been taken to avoid any hurt or offence being given during the lifetime of Carice (Mrs Elgar-Blake), who died in 1970.

43 Nicholas Kenyon *Elgar: An Anniversary Portrait* (London: Continuum, 2007); Michael Kennedy *Portrait of Elgar* (London: OUP, 1968).

44 Elgar's supporter and friend after the Leeds Festival in 1901, Edward Speyer, pertinently wrote of F.S. Kelly that while one might on first acquaintance 'be struck by an apparent bluntness of manner and a

The historian David Cannadine in a 1985 essay neatly summarised the guiding compasses of several authors in their major Elgar biographies available at that time:

Percy Young believed that the man and his music were inseparable, and presented Elgar as a ‘two-worldly character’, torn between the private poet of Worcestershire (who wrote great music), and the public poseur of London (who did not). In what remains the best and most moving book on Elgar yet written, Michael Kennedy provided the first psychologically plausible portrait, of an anguished and lonely man who became a music-maker, a seer of visions and a dreamer of dreams. And more recently, Michael De-la-Noy has depicted Elgar in yet darker colours, as a neurotic, depressed, contorted, desperately unhappy man, who conquered the world but never learned to love it, and who found happiness only in the ephemeral euphoria of composition.

Jerrold Northrop Moore’s ‘monumental’ work – its then recent publication having provided the pretext for the *London Review of Books* essay – earns the following rebuke from Cannadine:

The astonishing contrast between the music, so often tender, passionate, decisive and exuberant, and Elgar himself, who was rarely if ever any of these things, is not looked into. Above all, for a book that is so obsessed with the idea of creativity, it is quite extraordinarily evasive about sex. The account of Elgar’s abortive engagement in 1883, and the analysis of his relationship with his wife, is distinctly thin, even prudish. And the platonic flirtations between Elgar and Dora Penny, Rosa Burley, Alice Wortley and Vera Hockman, perceptively analysed by De-la-Noy, get very short and stuffy shrift.⁴⁵

Elgar during Alice’s lifetime and at the highest point of his national reputation, from the turn of the century until 1914, although generally acclaimed as Britain’s unofficial musical laureate and regarded as the nation’s greatest composer since Purcell, did not yet hold the country’s ultimate musical accolade. The Master of the Queen’s/King’s Musick throughout this period (from 1893 to 1924) was Sir Walter Parratt, Oxford professor, organist of St George’s Chapel, Windsor and noted chess player, scarcely now remembered as a composer (he was the youthful Tovey’s teacher in counterpoint).

The dominant pre-war German influence on British music

The strong musical connections and exchange between Britain and continental Europe – with Germany and Austria-Hungary in particular – are a very clear thread through much of the above. The substantial dependence of professional musical life in these years is evidenced by the German training given to British performers and composers, German musicians leading and contributing to

British musical life and German-born residents funding and supporting public concerts (e.g. Alfred Rodewald who bankrolled the Liverpool Orchestral Society and Sir Edgar Speyer who saved the Proms in 1902 and then underwrote them for twelve years. His wife, Leonora von Stosch, the daughter of Count Ferdinand von Stosch of Manze in Silesia, was a fine Leipzig-trained violinist who played under Nikisch, amongst other notable conductors).⁴⁶ Furthermore, the hypersensitive Elgar felt, not unjustifiably, that he was appreciated and recognised in Germany considerably earlier than his fellow-countrymen deigned to acknowledge his true value (notably after the Lower Rhenish Music Festival *Gerontius* in December 1901 and its triumphant Düsseldorf performance the following May).

Many of Elgar’s friends, supporters and faithful sponsors, such as Frank Schuster, Henry Ettling (‘Uncle Klingsor’, a wine merchant from Mainz), Fred Kalisch (London music critic) and Edward Speyer, were either German or of German descent. The deaths of Alfred Rodewald, his Liverpool champion (in 1903), and August Jaeger (in 1909, aged only 49) affected Elgar grievously. Berlin, Leipzig, Frankfurt and Vienna were the desirable places for advanced musical training – especially for string players.⁴⁷ Concert life in Britain in late Victorian and Edwardian times had to a large extent been dominated by German-born conductors (Arthur Nikisch, early advocate of Elgar’s symphonies in Leipzig and Berlin, was Austro-Hungarian), while Elgar’s major champions in the USA (in New York, Chicago and Cincinnati in particular), Theodore Thomas, Frank and Walther Damrosch, were all German born (Frank’s baptismal name in Breslau had been Franz – after that of his godfather, Franz Liszt).

Sir George Grove, writing to Eduard Hanslick in 1886 ahead of his first visit to London since 1862 told him ‘You will find London much changed and, I hope, its musical life too.’ Hanslick wrote afterwards (in *Letter from London*) that he thought it no accident that the three best conductors working in England were all German – Hans Richter, Charles Hallé and August Manns – and observed that in England after Purcell ‘the well of musical invention went dry’. However, he was complimentary about standards of orchestral and choral accomplishment, and about the numerous lively provincial music festivals. Ernest Newman in an article published very soon after the outbreak of war (*Musical Times*, Sept 1914) wrote ‘Of all the arts, music is the most cosmopolitan, the regular interchange, not only of compositions but of performers, has made Europe virtually a single country so far as the practice of music is concerned.’ Young, who cites this, also notes the ‘abnormal normality’ of recitals continuing in wartime Britain, as we vividly see, for example, from Kelly’s diaries.⁴⁸

46 Speyer was also the main sponsor of Captain Scott’s 1910-12 Antarctic expedition, also financially supported by Kelly.

47 Elgar had aspired to study violin in Leipzig after leaving school in 1872 but lack of finance meant that this could never be more than an unrealisable dream. He did, after saving hard, manage a fortnight’s visit to the city in January 1883 (not without its romantic interest for him in Helen Weaver). He was particularly impressed with the Schumann and Wagner he heard at the Gewandhaus and the Opera, and in rehearsals. One concert he attended included the Prelude to *Parsifal*. He and Alice heard *Parsifal* twice on holiday at Bayreuth in 1892, and *Gerontius* clearly owes a substantial debt to it. The Elgars went on holiday to Bavaria again in 1894.

48 Percy M. Young, *Elgar OM: A Study of a Musician* (London: Collins, 1955), 175. It was very different during the Second World War, with the London blackout suppressing evening concerts and theatre (only the Proms continued regularly).

disregard for some of the conventions of polite society’, one soon appreciated that this resulted from his transparent honesty and ... contempt for anything like pretentiousness or insincerity’. (*My Life and Friends*, London, 1937). Kelly’s friend and RNVF fellow officer, Arthur ‘Ock’ Asquith (son of the wartime Prime Minister), wrote that Kelly could be ‘violently intolerant of anything that bore the faintest tinge of cheapness, insincerity, pretentiousness or bad manners.’ Kelly’s diary for 9 February 1914 records Jelly spraining her ankle after falling on the stairs at his flat, following a piano lesson with Leonard Borwick. Adila had to be summoned from Queen’s Hall where she was waiting, but ‘Jelly was very unconcerned about her ankle and spent most of the time laughing!’ The sprained ankle was, however, the reason for the Arányis convalescent trip to Belgium that left them stranded at the outbreak of war.

45 David Cannadine, ‘Severnside’, *London Review of Books* Vol. 7/5 (21 March, 1985). www.lrb.co.uk (Archive: <http://www.lrb.co.uk/v07/n05/david-cannadine/severnside> accessed 30 March 2017).

The soured Anglo-German climate and severed cultural links

Elgar's letter of invitation to Laurence Binyon for the afternoon recital at Severn House, sent from Worcester and dated 26 February, contained an additional request:

My dear Binyon:

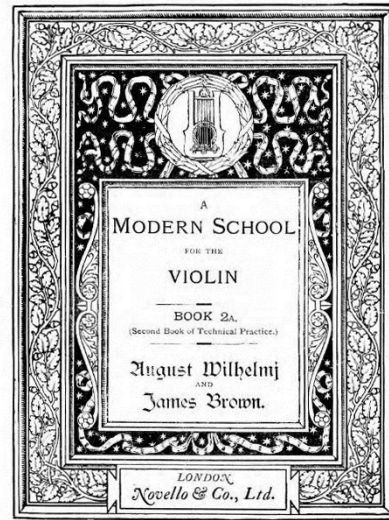
Novellos are proceeding with the shortened version of "For the Fallen" for the Cenotaph affair & wish to avoid confusion of this arrgt. with the original composition by adopting another title: they suggest "With proud thanksgiving" or "England mourns" - something from the poem. I said I wd. ask you about it: will you very kindly let me know your views. If you could come up on Sunday we cd. talk of it then. Would you object to an asterisk to England & a note at the bottom simply giving the possible variant - thus:-* Britain, The Empire etc.?

I say no more now as we may have the good fortune to see you & your cousin the singer.⁴⁹

This composition is particularly interesting as evidence of the rapidly changed national mood in relation to Germany after 1914.⁵⁰ *For the Fallen* is, of course, the title of the third and final poem set in *The Spirit of England*, Elgar's last great choral work in the series that started with *Gerontius* in 1900. Binyon revealed much later that the famous fourth stanza was the one that occurred to him first:

They shall grow not old, as we that are left grow old:
Age shall not weary them, nor the years condemn.
At the going down of the sun and in the morning
We will remember them.

Elgar's work had a difficult gestation. Sidney Colvin had referred him in 1914 to Binyon's twelve poems published as *The Winnowing-Fan* early in the war, suggesting that the texts invited musical settings. (Binyon had previously been Colvin's assistant at the British Museum.) Elgar quickly responded by selecting three to set to music. *For the Fallen* was composed during 1915, *To Women* completed in February 1916 but *The Fourth of August* was not finished till May 1917, the complete work being first performed in Birmingham that October and then repeated in Leeds. Elgar's reworking of *For the Fallen* as *With Proud Thanksgiving*, as suggested in the letter, was specifically for the unveiling of Lutyens' Cenotaph on Whitehall on 11 November 1920. It was not, however,



Wilhelmj's and Brown's *Modern School for the Violin*

performed at the ceremony and had to wait until 7 May 1921 for its first performance. (See Foreword to *Elgar Complete Edition* Vol. 10, Novello, 1986, which also gives details of the various versions of *With Proud Thanksgiving*. The organ transcription is sometimes known as *In Memoriam*).

Elgar felt conflicted in two separate ways, one professional, the other emotional. Firstly, he discovered in conversation with the organist of St John's College, Cambridge, Cyril Rootham, at a Queen's Hall concert in March 1915 that Novello had already agreed to publish a Rootham setting of *For the Fallen*. Elgar was concerned not to give offence by seeming to trump him, and waited for that publication to occur before he himself felt free to continue to completion (it still gave offence; Binyon produced an extra stanza for Elgar, to differentiate *his* setting!).⁵¹ Secondly, Elgar had particular difficulty reconciling himself to the crude anti-German sentiment in one stanza of *The Fourth of August*, 'The barren creed of blood and iron, Vampires of Europe's wasted will'. The mood of the work is elegiac and far from triumphalist, reflecting the composer's ambiguity and disillusion at the destruction of the world he knew and its disintegrating values and relationships. Michael Kennedy writes that 'Elgar did not confuse the glittering of a jubilee procession with the reality of war', while the *Musical Times* critic C.W. Orr in January 1931 judged that *The Spirit of England* was 'the music of patriotism without vainglory and sorrow, without self-pity'.

To me the tolling bell-like figure in the funeral march in *For the Fallen* has echoes of the Grail Hall theme in *Parsifal*. Might Elgar at the back of his mind have recalled the unrealised *Trauersymphonie* that Wagner wanted to write in memory of the German dead of the 1870-71 Franco-Prussian War, whose theme subsequently formed the basis of the funeral procession music in *Parsifal*? Elgar in his youth had been, for pocket money, a bell-ringer of the evening curfew at a church in Worcester – until he was dismissed for improvising! In a letter Elgar wrote to Binyon on 5 November 1918, while he was composing the Cello Concerto, he excused himself from setting the poet's new *Peace* poem, stating that 'the whole atmosphere is too full of complexities' for him to be able to 'feel' appropriate music for it.

The most public proclamation about the deteriorated national mood towards Germany came in the Royal Family's formally changing its surname to 'Windsor' in July 1917. A musical parallel to that was the Bechstein Hall's being renamed 'Wigmore'.⁵² Even Jaeger's widow felt it prudent to translate her surname to 'Hunter'. Further evidence shows in another of the Severn House recital guests' family name. 'Muriel & Ludo' in Alice Elgar's diary entry refers to the Fosters. But before the war Muriel Foster signed herself 'Muriel Goetz'.⁵³ In 1906 she had married Ludovic Goetz, a

49 Included in Percy Young's *Letters of Edward Elgar* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956).

50 *Sospiri* was first performed at a Promenade Concert on 15 August – eleven days after declaration of war, but had been composed earlier, completed in February that year (q.v. De-la-Noy, op. cit., 168). It was Elgar's memorial tribute to his recently deceased American New York friend and supporter, Julia Worthington.

51 For a detailed discussion of this dilemma see Martin Bird's 'A confusion of ideas' in *Elgar Society Journal*, Vol. 19/5 (Aug. 2016). Rootham was a progressive musical influence in Cambridge over 40 years. Percy M. Young studied composition with him while he was an organ scholar at Selwyn College from 1930. Vaughan Williams' 'Job' was partly prompted by his having seen the 'folk' choreography in Rootham's opera 'The Two Sisters' in Cambridge. The major stimulus for 'Job', however, was a suggestion from Geoffrey Keynes, eminent medical practitioner (blood transfusion expert from his wartime service) and scholar of William Blake. He was the younger brother of John Maynard Keynes and married to a granddaughter of Charles Darwin. It is clear from Elgar's 1905 Birmingham University lectures, notably in *A Future for English Music*, that he wished to disassociate himself from the 'schoolmen' for whom he had no great regard as composers or conductors. Young points out that Sir Frederick Bridge (organist of Westminster Abbey) in response 'rampaged from his organ loft' (*ibid.*, 127-9).

52 The Bechstein Hall opened in 1901, next door to the German piano manufacturer's London showroom. The renaming occurred following confiscation, also in 1917.

53 For more on the Fosters, see *Elgar Society Journal*, Vol. 15/3 (Nov. 2007) 'Clarity for Muriel' by Charles A. Hooey.

man ‘of independent means’, who was a patron of the arts and a director of the Royal Academy of Music. Early during the war they both changed their married surname to Foster. Goetz (whose father had been a Frankfurt-born merchant) was the nephew of the owner of the *Daily Telegraph*, Sir Edward Levy-Lawson, created Baron Burnham. Sir Edward Speyer (though originally American, of naturalised German parentage) resigned as a director of his family’s Frankfurt bank branch but still had his British naturalisation (granted in 1892) revoked, and his name was even struck off from membership of the Privy Council. Felix Salmond, soloist at the disastrous premiere of Elgar’s Cello Concerto, refused to play music with Jelly d’Arányi because of her Austro-Hungarian nationality.⁵⁴

On the other side of the conflict we find that Hans Richter aged 73, his eyesight having failed, had by now retired back in Germany and publicly renounced all his British honours. These included all his honorary degrees from British universities, not least his Oxford Doctorate of Music. He had been the first foreign musician to be so honoured since Haydn in 1791.⁵⁵ However, Sydney Loeb, Richter’s son-in-law in London, recorded in a letter that Richter – at least early in the war – was still known to refer to ‘unser Elgar’ with undimmed personal affection.

Jelly d’Arányi’s questionable ‘too English’ excuse

Jelly d’Arányi never did – nor seemed to want to – perform Elgar’s Violin Concerto, excusing herself by saying it was ‘too English’ for anyone who was not English to be able to interpret and play. However, we must surely deduce that there may have been something rather more personal in this that tapped into deeper reservations, judgements and feelings. After all, so far as ‘Englishness’ in musical compositions is concerned, she was happy to play music by Vaughan Williams (*The Lark Ascending* – superbly, by all accounts, *Concerto accademico* etc.), Holst and several others. Jelly’s ‘too English’ alibi for not taking the Violin Concerto into her repertoire could have been as much about her relationship with the man as his music. As Nicholas Kenyon puts it: ‘In Elgar we see a peculiarly British, a (possibly deliberately?) enigmatic combination of conservatism and progressivism, intense introversion and bold extroversion, despair and exuberance.’⁵⁶

The Elgar centenary anniversary year of 1957 saw the publication of several important articles attempting some reassessment of Elgar’s ‘Englishness.’⁵⁷ At that time Elgar’s reputation was in something of a dip, with the canard very much around that the music was too English and dated to travel and locate itself firmly within the mainstream of international repertoire, as well as being too imbued with the glow of Edwardian imperialism. Kelly, however, had written in 1909 (after noting some personal reservations about the coherence of *Cockaigne*, which he had just heard for the first time) that ‘*Pomp and Circumstance* no. 4 is a splendid march with genuine, popular music without

being vulgar, or “velgar” as some people say of his tunes.’⁵⁸

Donald Mitchell drew an important distinction between Edward Elgar, self-creator of a quintessentially English persona and image, and Elgar the composer who in his day was actually more international than all his contemporaries in his chosen musical idiom (i.e. a progressive who happened to be English and who achieved wonderful things late in the day of their chosen forms, similar to his great predecessor Purcell, particularly in relation to the Fantasias). Mitchell regarded Elgar primarily as a post-Wagnerian whose music was not really ‘English’ at all in any stylistic sense.⁵⁹ Hans Keller, while opting for a more moderate ‘middle way’, seems to have agreed with Mitchell to the extent that in rhythmic structure and thematic organisation, ‘Elgar’s innovations fall neatly into this category and could not really be described in any other way’. He nevertheless added that ‘the most relevant starting point for our investigation is Elgar’s Englishness. It is in the face of this question that the diversity of commentators’ views reaches extremes.’⁶⁰ Nalini Ghuman quotes Mitchell’s admonition that ‘To find Elgar today specifically English in flavor is to expose oneself as a victim of a type of collective hallucination’.⁶¹

Keller thought that Elgar, as an English and British composer of his era, had something of an advantage in *not* being encumbered by any particularly strong tradition. The prejudice held by Germans against *Das Land ohne Musik* (a slur sometimes misattributed to Brahms) may actually describe a more open field of possibilities than could be negotiated in continental Europe where the residual Hanslick critical controversy still divided the Schumann-Brahmsian ‘traditionalists’ and Liszt-Wagnerian ‘progressives’ into hostile and mutually exclusive camps.⁶² Keller further suggests that Elgar the reputed folksong hater did in fact have a ‘folkish’ streak that was extremely well absorbed into his European mainstream core. He judges that Elgar can be regarded as both English and not English – and he dismissed the idea prevalent in the 1950s that Elgar was not appreciated abroad. (Mitchell felt that this misperception was damaging to performance of Elgar’s work outside the UK.) Delius had observed from France in 1916 that ‘English people have very little imagination and ... wallow only in the worst and most obvious sentimentality’ (cf. Sir Thomas Beecham’s quip “the British may not like music, but they absolutely love the noise it makes”). Elgar in 1929 somewhat bitterly remarked that ‘The character of the English people musically is extremely bad; they do not care for music in the least. They follow a man for a time and then drop him.’

Matthew Riley’s thought-provoking study of Elgar cites J.B. Priestley (from *The English* and *The Edwardians*, in both of which Elgar is mentioned and discussed).⁶³ Priestley offers one view of the English as ‘chilly, reptilian creatures – incapable of feeling’. The description of his own response to Elgar’s music, states that it ‘conjures up a deep, authentic, shared identity’ that reaches behind

54 During the war he said ‘I would rather play with a viper than with Jelly d’Arányi’ although he later overcame his antipathy (Macleod, op. cit., 92).

55 Joachim had been awarded honorary Doctorates of Music from the universities of both Cambridge and Glasgow. Brahms was offered a Cambridge doctorate, but as he was averse to travelling to Britain, it was never conferred.

56 Nicholas Kenyon on the essential ‘Englishness’ of Elgar’s music (BBC talk ‘Elgar the Englishman’, 14 May 2007). Macleod records a conversation with Jelly who said, with a gleam in her eye ‘Of course Elgar’s music wasn’t really English, Vaughan Williams’ was’ (op. cit., 119).

57 *Elgar Society 50th: Half-Century – The Elgar Society 1951-2001* (written and compiled by Michael Trott, Rickmansworth: 2001).

58 Op. cit., *Diaries*, 7 January 1909.

59 Donald Mitchell (Anniversary essay ‘Some Thoughts on Elgar’ (1857-1934) in *Music and Letters* Vol. XXXVIII, 2 April 1957)

60 Hans Keller ‘Elgar the Progressive’ (chapter 13 in *Essays on Music*, Cambridge University Press, 1994).

61 *Elgar Society Journal*, Vol. 15/3 (November 2007), ‘The Third ‘E’: Elgar and Englishness’.

62 Oskar Schmitz in his *Das Land ohne Musik: Englische Gesellschaftsprobleme* (1904) quotes an 1866 reference by Carl Engel to this phrase. It seems there are earlier records of such judgements from a German traveller (Georg Weerth) in the 1840s. Queen Victoria’s and Prince Albert’s admiration for Mendelssohn and his link to the choral tradition are probably a significant indicator of progress.

63 *Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination* (Cambridge University Press, 2007).

what he sees as the superficial version of Elgar promoted by the establishment ('for all his pomp-and-circumstances *persona* he was in fact a wincingly sensitive man'). He contrasts the protective 'carapace' with the public 'clamped into his retired-colonel-off-to-the-races *persona*'.⁶⁴ This latter affectation is perfectly illustrated by Yehudi Menuhin's reminiscence of his first encounter with Elgar and his 'cultivated air of detachment', in a London hotel. A room had been arranged by HMV at Grosvenor House, on Park Lane, for the purpose of a trial run-through (with Ivor Newton playing a piano reduction of the orchestral score) prior to the celebrated recording of the Violin Concerto:

I had scarcely reached the end of the first page when Sir Edward interrupted, assuring me that he had no qualms about the performance, he was sure the recording would be excellent and – as for him – he was off to the races.⁶⁵

Coda

Elgar's alleged infatuation with Jelly is the subject of a short film made for Channel 4 TV and shown in 1996, *Elgar's Tenth Muse*.⁶⁶ It was shot on location in London and Sussex and features an appropriately restrained James Fox as Elgar and rather moving Faith Brook as the ailing Alice. Although one online reviewer dismisses the film as 'much ado about nothing', I think it has elements of more lasting value. At several points in the script genuine quotations and actual events are incorporated, and the Severn House recital scene conveys a real sense of what Jelly must have been subjected to and how she would have felt. The slightly anarchic camaraderie of the Arányi women, as recorded in Kelly's Diary, also comes across attractively and persuasively. The film's story concludes with the notorious 'scene' – although some dramatic licence is taken with the chronology and sequence of events as they are represented. The title, however, is genuinely historical, having been taken from a surviving Wigmore Hall Jelly d'Arányi concert programme inscribed in Elgar's hand 'To my Darling 10th Muse – E.E.'.

64 *The Edwardians* (London: Heinemann, 1970), 35, 137-8.

65 Yehudi Menuhin *Sir Edward Elgar – My Musical Grandfather* (address to Elgar Society, London, 19 January 1976). Newton's recollection, however, was different. He thought that Elgar had stayed and listened intently with his eyes closed, according to Jerrold Northrop Moore in *Elgar on Record* (London: OUP, 1974).

66 *Elgar's Tenth Muse – The Life of an English Composer* (Director, Paul Yule: DVD released 2007 – 51 minutes). The soundtrack has Maxim Vengerov playing the *Romance Andante* movement of Elgar's Violin Sonata and Natalie Clein in the adagio of the Cello Concerto. Script by Nigel Gearing.

Selected recordings by Jelly d'Aranyi available on YouTube as at 6 November 2017:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=p0wreazTD1I> – Bach Double Violin Concerto in D minor (BWV 1043) (Adila and Jelly, recorded in February 1926).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uGVuWV53yUk> – Paganini Caprice (the 'theme' of Rachmaninov's *Rhapsody*) with Ethel Hobday (1923 recording).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0J8fFy029AU> – Vitali Chaconne (1928).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Y0POTYPT80> – Brahms Hungarian Dance No. 8 (1928).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1JF1cPmfewY> Brahms Piano Trio C major (op. 87) (d'Aranyi, Cassado, Myra Hess).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=aK19TZfoHLo> – F.S. Kelly *Elegy for Strings: In Memoriam Rupert Brooke*.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A1-ydBOLks> – F.S. Kelly *Serenade* Op.7 (Jelly d'Aranyi and Ethel Hobday).

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Peter Rabbit: The biography of an inspired bunny¹

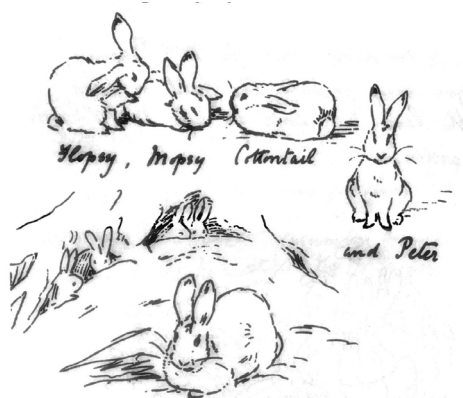
Martin Bird

Peter Rabbit, poet, orchestrator, critic, confidant and lettuce nibbler, joined the Elgar family in 1905. He wrote under the name of Pietro d'Alba, much as a generation later Christopher Robin's 'Wol' lived under the name of Sanders. The part-song *Owls* is dedicated to Peter.

Preparations had been made in April 1905 for his arrival, and on 15 April Carice and May Grafton 'brought up lovely white "Peter rabbit", E. had made him a nice house – played about with Peter all the aftn. everybody!' ² In the 1950s Carice recalled: 'We certainly had a large white Angora rabbit called Peter. 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'. ³

Two days later he was joined by a female companion – Mopsy: 'E. very busy making hutch for new little brown rabbit. Peter frolicked in the garden'. ⁴

The children's author Beatrix Potter (1866-1943) had been in the habit of sending illustrated letters to the children of her governess, and one of these, dating from September 1893, about a family of rabbits, provided the basis for her first book. *The Tale of Peter Rabbit*, published privately in 1901. It was re-published in 1902 in the form still familiar to us today, the start of an eventual series of twenty-two.



Beatrix Potter's Peter, Mopsy and friends,
September 1893

- 1 With apologies and acknowledgements of Janet Toseland of East Midlands Branch, author of *The Diary of an Inspirational Bunny* (Figaro Publishing, 2012).
- 2 Alice Elgar diary, 15 April 1905.
- 3 Undated letter to 'Dorabella', 1950s, RCM Library, ref.5571.
- 4 Alice Elgar diary, 17 April 1905.

Her father, Rupert, a gifted amateur photographer, was a close friend of the artist John Everett Millais. Millais' daughter Alice Sophia Caroline (1862-1936), known to her friends as 'Carrie', is better known to us as Elgar's 'Windflower'. Millais died in August 1896, and Beatrix wrote in her Journal:

I shall always have a most affectionate remembrance of Sir John Millais, although unmercifully afraid of him as a child, on account of what the papers call 'his schoolboy manner'. I had a brilliant colour as a little girl, which he used to provoke on purpose and remark upon at times. If a great portrait painter's criticism is of any interest this is it, delivered with due consideration, turning me round under a window, that I was a little like his daughter Carrie, at that time a fine handsome girl, but my face was spoiled by the length of my nose and upper lip. ⁵

But to return to Peter: over the next few months both he and Mopsy flourished in their new homes, though not without a hint of mischief of which the fictional 'Peter' would have been proud ...

25 April: E. & C. into town for Peter's sake – buying oats &c – ⁶

30 April: I trust that Peter is behaving well & that the fork has not been too freely used – try it on the gifted May first. ⁷

... and on 3 August Elgar wrote to Carice, who was staying in Malvern with the Acworths:

My dearest chuck:

The animals are all well & not likely to remain so I fear, as everyone who goes by their house gives them something: I find the following extras were offered & devoured –

| | |
|---------|-----------------------|
| May. | 4 Chicory leaves each |
| Mother. | 2 large Carrots: |
| Father: | 2 pea-pods (full) |

this happened in the evening: both Peter & Mopsy are lively & well after the treatment.

Mr. Atkins & May & I have put wire-net on the back garden gate most beautifully, so zu won't have to put boards for Peter & M. ⁸



Beatrix Potter in August 1886 (photograph
by Rupert Potter)

- 5 *The Journal of Beatrix Potter, transcribed from her code writings by Leslie Liner* (London: Frederick Warne & Co, 1966), p.418.
- 6 Alice Elgar's diary.
- 7 letter from Elgar to Carice, EB letter 53.
- 8 EB letter 54.

Mopsy, sadly, did not remain 'lively & well', and appears to have 'shuffled off this mortal coil'⁹ later in the year, for she is never mentioned again.

For the next year or so Peter lived the life of a typical domestic rabbit, showing no signs of the artistic talent that was to come. He was, however, frequently 'mentioned in despatches'. These two from Capri:

... there are existing in this room severally & independently, with apparently no thought of being joined perennially in heroic verse, a dog & a parrot. I fear we ate the last cat for dinner – one dish was unusually sable – it was, perdie!, cat – But it was good. We talked of Peter because there was 'dressed Brocoli'! [*sic*] Now Peter considers butter damnable & pepper worse, so this dish would not pass in our stable.¹⁰

There is another abandoned beast up the street who talks both languages & nothing decent in either: a bad bird my child, & no fit company for Peter. I hope Peter is well: I often think of him & wonder if he has any dried clover for a change: do get him some if he wants it: I know all the pen straw must be gone by now.¹¹

In October 1907 preparations were under way for the Elgars to spend the winter in Rome. Peter was to spend the winter with Elgar's sister Pollie in Stoke Prior, and on the 24th 'May [went] Home – Connolly [cab] with Peter & his luggage, Cab such a sight!'¹²

In Rome Elgar completed work on his Op.53 set of part-songs. The last of these, *Owls (An Epitaph)*, a setting of words by Elgar himself, received the dedication "To my friend Pietro d'Alba".

It was this honour that seems to have released Peter's artistic juices, for we soon find him offering advice during the composition of the First Symphony. In July 1908 Elgar wrote to Troyte Griffith ...

Do come over: I am writing heavenly music (!) & it will do you good to hear it & Peter's criticisms are rather monotonous & samey although I can have no doubt they are sound: yours would come fresh.¹³



Carice and May Grafton with Peter and Mopsy (Elgar Birthplace collection)



Carice with Peter (photograph by May Grafton, Elgar Birthplace collection)

9 William Shakespeare, *Hamlet*, Act 3, Scene 1.

10 letter from Elgar to Carice, 13 January 1907, EB letter 102.

11 letter from Elgar to Carice, 26 January 1907, EB letter 95.

12 Alice Elgar diary.

13 EB letter 7310, 19 July 1907.

... and on 17 October, after Elgar had conducted the London première of the Second *Wand of Youth* Suite, he wrote to Peter from The Athenaeum:

My dear Peter:

Your idea – the vigorous entry of the drums – was splendid.
Thanks

Yrs affectly
Edward Elgar¹⁴

Peter's fame was spreading: on 23 October he was favoured with a long letter from the Professor of History at the University of Aberdeen and one of the foremost Bach scholars of his day, Charles Sanford Terry.

Honoured Sir,

Though I have had the honour of an introduction to you, and have even met you in the smaller house contiguous to that in which you reside, I can hardly hope that my signature underwritten will recal [*sic*] the corpulent personality who now ventures to address you. I cannot, however on that account refrain from addressing you on a matter of urgent moment both to your own exalted reputation and also to the world of music of which you are so great and also unappreciated an ornament. I refer to the fact that by the ignorant your compositions are habitually attributed to the old gent who does himself the honour to live near you, offers you the daily hospitality of his verandah, but never invites you to put your paws under his ample and groaning mahogany. To the cognoscenti (I pray you to pardon the sudden glare) the fact is familiar that his scores are written by your inimitable self, and that while he is peeling for a dip, putting his nose into a pint, growing to a point, or pedalling round Tupsley Parish, you yourself are composing at his library table those vigorous drum entries that shake the universe with admiration. The ambulations of his study rug, inexplicable to him, are caused by nothing else than the paroxysms of creative effort which distinguish your work in his study, work which he allows to go out to the world as his own.

In order that your real greatness may be known to the world a few friends have subscribed to provide you with the costly gift here inclosed. [*sic*] We beg that you will attach them to the door of your hu-mansion. Never again shall your identity be concealed, and I trust that you will insist on the real authorship of your forthcoming Symphony being acknowledged.

May I ask you, if in spite of your shameful treatment you are on friendly terms with the house opposite, to be so good as to thank the young lady named Carice for so kindly sending me a relic of my recent visit. I left it behind me with some vague idea that it might be useful to you as the head of a drum-stick.

With the assurance of my high regards,

Believe me to be your profound admirer,
C. Sanford Terry¹⁵

In December, after the final rehearsal for the first performance of the First Symphony, Elgar sent a postcard from the Midland Hotel, addressed to 'Pietro d'Alba, esq: Stallagio, Plâs Gwyn, Hereford'. It read:

14 EB letter 113.

15 EB letter 116.

Your Symphony goes swimmingly
E.E.

Put your nose in a pint¹⁶

In February 1909 Peter was the recipient of further cards, this time from the Gwalia Hotel, Llandrindod Wells, where Elgar had gone to take the waters: one on the 4th showing ‘My room.’¹⁷, and another next day saying: ‘I wish you were here. 6.50 am & raining! E.E.’¹⁸



Postcard to Peter from
Wales (Elgar Birthplace
collection)

In March Elgar was in London on business and to visit his dentist. He wrote to Peter from the Langham Hotel.

Mar 27: 1909

My dear & revered Maestro Pietro D’Alba,

I congratulate you on your appearance in the public press – see the D. Telegraph of this date.

Yours ever
Edward Elgar¹⁹

Elgar had been browsing the ‘Acrostics and Puzzles’ column, and his eyes had lighted upon two replies ‘To Correspondents’ from its compiler:

“Peter”. But you cannot make “generous” out of the letters.

16 EB letter 114, 3 December 1908.

17 EB letter 9588.

18 EB letter 117.

19 EB letter 124, 27 March 1909.

B.C.K. Your comments furnish such an entertaining illustration of the danger of criticising without adequate knowledge that they deserve publicity ... You say “Ramekin ... has nothing to do with toasted cheese. The latter is sometimes called Welsh rarebit, and I don’t suppose Cymric [Welsh] rodents are spelt in this way”. As the “Century” is open before us, let us see: Vol.VI., p.4949, “Ramekin: toasted cheese, Welsh rabbit”. But there is a final shock to come In the same dictionary, p.4924, we find, “Owing to an absurd notion that ‘rabbit’ in this phrase is a corruption of ‘rarebit’, the word is often so written”. Perhaps it is going too far to ask you to admit that your comments, rather than the lights attached, are “unfair”.²⁰

Two days later he wrote again from The Athenaeum.

My dear Peter:

I was at a restaurant – a busy one [zu never get zu rest aright at any rest a wrong] & after deciding on a steak [how much is there at stake?] I enquired for vegetables – & selected with deliberation & distinct professional pronunciation Boiled potatoes and a cauliflower: my exquisitely modulated request was transformed & shouted down a tube by the waiter in a hoarse voice:- “Colly & boiled – one!”

In the train coming up I “heard a scene” which I relate in your ear when I return.

Yours devotedly
Edward Elgar

P.S. – Please thank your fishfaced Valetess * for her bulletin concerning the doings of the stallagio &c. &c.

* Valetess – gosh²¹

Now Peter’s artistic talents had taken him into the realms of poetry, and in the autumn of 1909 he was commissioned to write the texts (by ‘my confidant & adviser Pietro d’Alba’) for a cycle of four solo songs, *The Torch*, *The Shrine*, *The Bee* and *The River*. Elgar completed settings of only the first and last of these, and the texts of the others are now lost. He sent a copy of *The River* to his friend Frances Colvin, wife of Sidney Colvin, Keeper of the Department of Prints and Drawings at the British Museum, together with his part-song *Go, Song of Mine*.

My dear Mrs. Colvin:

I send you the Cavalcanti pt song which the Sheffield Choir will sing at Queen’s Hall, I hope you & Mr Colvin will hear it. With it I send a specimen of my dear friend Pietro d’Alba in his most, or almost most pessimistic mood. To read it one wd. think the carrot crop had failed or some other catastrophe acutely affecting the rabbit world was toward.²²

But these poems were to be the zenith of Peter’s achievement, for on 3 May 1910 he died at Plas Gwyn. Henrietta and Esther Weare had rented Plas Gwyn for the spring while the Elgars were living at a flat in London’s New Cavendish Street, and it was they who telegraphed the news: ‘All over very painless 11.30. Weare’. Elgar has written on the telegram: ‘May 3:1910 Peter: my

20 *Daily Telegraph*, 27 March 1909.

21 EB letter 126.

22 EB letter 3420, 2 February 1910.

friend'.²³ He wrote immediately to Frances Colvin:

My dear Mrs. Colvin:

You are always so very lenient to me in my foolishness so I write to tell you how very sad we are to-day: my dear old friend Peter left this life this morning quite suddenly & painlessly: why should I tell you this! Because I want to write to somebody (– ? everybody) and say how really grieved I am – & then only two people in the world would understand & you are one, So you will not think me a nuisance. It is terrible to think how many human beings could be spared out of our little life's circle so much easier than my confidant & adviser Pietro d'Alba.

I will write a sensible letter – or rather on a sensible subject next time.

My love to you both

Yours very desolately
Edward Elgar²⁴

Telegram telling of Peter's death (Elgar Birthplace collection)

9417 429.1

B or C POST OFFICE TELEGRAPHS No. of Telegram

RYNE & SPOTTISWOODE, London.

| | | | |
|------------------------------|--|-------------------------|----------|
| Received At From By | If the Receiver of an Inland Telegram doubts its accuracy, he may have it repeated on payment of half the amount originally paid for its transmission, any fraction of 1d. less than 5d. being reckoned as 5d., and if it be found that there was any inaccuracy, the amount paid for repetition will be refunded. Special conditions are applicable to the repetition of Foreign Telegrams. THIS FORM MUST ACCOMPANY ANY INQUIRY MADE RESPECTING THIS TELEGRAM. | Sent, or Sent out at | To By |
| | | | |
| | | | |

Handed in at Hereford 12.15pm 13

Service Instructions.

TO Elgar 58 New Cavendish St London W

All over very painless 11.30

We are

Charges to pay

May 3-1910
Peter
my friend

23 EB letter 9417.

24 EB letter 3421.

Postscript

In 1929 *The River* was chosen as part of the Royal Academy of Music's Licentiate examination, and its Professor of Singing, Irene Thompson, wrote to enquire about the poem's author.

Dear Sir.

As you are perhaps aware, your song "The River" is in this year's L.R.A.M. Syllabus, & has been chosen as one of the songs upon which the Candidates for the Teacher's Diploma have to give a demonstration lesson –

I hope you will pardon the liberty I am taking in writing to ask you if you could give me any fuller information as to the source of the words of "The River", than that which appears in the foreword to the song itself. As a professor of singing at the Royal Academy of Music, it falls to my lot to train teachers for this examination & I feel it would be an enormous help in preparing a lesson on the song in question, if one could find out the geographical position of the River, the nationality of the Author of the words, & the story to which the poem refers –

I have done my best to find all this out, but so far my efforts have been unavailing, & so, once again I beg you will forgive my troubling you to give me any information that you can in the matter.

I enclose an envelope for reply to my private address, as it may save a little time –

Believe me
Yrs faithfully
Irene Thompson
A.R.A.M.²⁵

Elgar's reply was simple and to the point: 'Mr. d'Alba died some years ago'.

Martin Bird is the editor of Elgar's collected correspondence, Edward's and Alice's diaries and 'An Elgarian Who's Who'. He also edited the *Elgar Society Journal* from 2010 until 2016.

25 EB letter 9400, 26 September 1929.

Elgar and the ‘Englishness’ label

Martin Firth

What is this deep Englishness that enchants fellow countrymen like myself?

It is easy for us to recognise and enjoy but hard to explain.

John Boynton Priestley¹

I was set to thinking about this topic of ‘Englishness’ after witnessing what became quite a heated debate between two people who didn’t know what they were talking about. I don’t mean that in a pejorative manner, but quite literally neither understood the terms which were being used, or rather, each had a different *interpretation* of terms commonly used in connexion with Elgar and his ‘Englishness’.

In 1962 Ken Russell produced an outstandingly evocative film on Elgar – one which had an immediate and lasting impact on the appreciation of the composer both here and abroad. Those of that generation will have struggled to dispel its effect, and so have much baggage to shed when it comes to an appraisal of Elgar’s ‘Englishness’ – there can no longer be an objective ‘God’s eye view’.² The idea of Elgar epitomising the English is so deeply ingrained in our collective psyche that it is difficult to disentangle ourselves from the popular concept and we merely nod agreeably when the purple rhetoric and the overused clichés are trotted out – the ‘perpetuation of tired myths or the prettifying of unsightly ideology’.³ Elgar holds no monopoly here: Delius comes in for much the same treatment: for Cecil Gray, ‘Brigg Fair’

evoked the atmosphere of an early summer morning in the English country, with its suggestion of a faint mist veiling the horizon, and the fragrant scent of the dawn in the air.⁴

For some observers the use of such language verges on the pompous and prolix, pedantic – and probably pointless. In the same way, I have been puzzled when hearing people talk of one piece of music in particular – one inspired by a German composer, dedicated to another German, composed by one immersed in Germanic music, (incidentally, hailed as a great composer by a fellow German composer) and the result of a conversation about German music – as being typically ‘English’. I refer, of course, to Elgar’s ‘Nimrod’. How on earth did this piece come to epitomise ‘Englishness’?

1 J.B.Priestly, *Particular Pleasure* (London: Heinemann, 1975), 81.

2 H. Putnam, quoted in J.A.Maxell, *Qualitative Research Design: an Interactive Approach* (London: Sage, 1996), 46.

3 M.Riley, *Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 17.

4 Quoted in E. Fenby, *Delius as I knew him* (London: G.Bell and Sons, 1936), 208.

This article sets out to explore some ideas on the term ‘Englishness’ and how it applies to Elgar. Mindful that the topic has been aired in this journal before, this offering attempts briefly to survey current thinking and scholarship; to deconstruct some of the myths, clear the mists and bring some clarity to the issue; finally, to offer some thoughts which have not, to the author’s belief, been aired before. Those seeking answers will be disappointed; as in my talks at Branch level, I prefer to share challenging ideas with an audience rather than laying down unchallengeable or immutable truths (though they might be!).

The concept of ‘Englishness’ is not, of course, limited to Music. A similar movement in Literature was evident in the first half of the twentieth-century – possibly prompted by the same stimulus and criteria as in Music. Those who have attempted to appropriate authors and poets into this genre have also met with the identical challenge: what *is* ‘Englishness’. So, too, in the folk music tradition the hitherto accepted ‘Englishness’ of the Sharpe and Vaughan Williams collections has been compellingly challenged by Sykes.⁵

The term ‘Englishness’ is used (and abused) endlessly about Elgar, but if we really are to be defenders of his music, then perhaps we need to have examined precisely (or even vaguely) what is meant when we, or others, bandy about highly emotive terms about his music. It may be instructive to read what others have said on the subject. J.B.Priestly’s opening quote (above) sets the scene, but he also finds

... the bold dramatic statements, the brooding tenderness, the underlying dreamy melancholy, of deep Englishness in all its varying moods. Out of this music, to me who know them well, the Malvern Hills rise in sunlight, in mist and dusk, in starry silence, in full sunlight again, in the vanishing days and nights of a lost summertime. And from the blaring brass down to muted strings, this is what the inspired Elgar is telling me.⁶

Kennedy offers an endorsement that Elgar’s music ‘is for many people the quintessence of Englishness’.⁷ Keller, however, offers conflicting views on the subject: he quotes Everett Helm, who opines

a widely held opinion that Elgar is a very ‘English’ composer... This quality can scarcely be defined in words, and it has nothing to do with ‘Folksiness’... [for which] ... Elgar had very little use⁸

but then adds Donald Mitchell’s assertion that

Elgar’s convention was thoroughly post-Wagnerian in character, English, in any stylistic sense, not at all ... It has, I must confess, always astonished me that Elgar has been so strenuously claimed as a representative English figure.⁹

5 R. Sykes, ‘The Evolution of Englishness in the English Folksong Revival, 1890-1914’, *Folk Music Journal* Vol. 6, No. 4 (1993), 446-490.

6 Priestly, *ibid.* 82.

7 M. Kennedy, *Elgar Orchestral Music*, (London: BBC, 1970), 16.

8 H. Keller, *Elgar the Progressive in Elgar: an Anniversary Portrait*, (London: Continuum, 2007), 105.

9 *Ibid.* 106/7.

Others, however, fed a bland mixture of elaborate metaphors and similes, yearn for something more tangible – down to earth hard evidence and examples, and less (to use the common argot) ‘airy-fairy’ language – which one other notable may have termed ‘sound and fury, signifying nothing’. Clampin neatly sums up their frustrations:

Writers .. who have referred to the Englishness of Elgar ... have been curiously reluctant to define what it is that leads them to this conclusion, and hence their arguments rarely stand up to scrutiny.¹⁰

This lack of convincing argument also resonates with Riley, who adds

The rural imagery surrounding Elgar is sometimes pushed to picturesque extremes, especially when used for promotional purposes, while the dubious practice of attributing to Elgar’s music an essential ‘Englishness’ can easily go hand in hand with undesirable and unsupportable claims about a fixed and universal ‘national character’.¹¹

There is frequent reference to the subject of Elgar’s ‘Englishness’ in writings on the great man, but few are sure enough of the subject to devote an entire article, chapter or book to it. Those that have include Crump, Cannadine, Adams and Gardiner, and reference to their work is made throughout this text. What is met with more frequently are those who make a passing reference to the term, whilst making the assumption that it needs no further definition. Amongst those to have done is no less a luminary than Nicholas Kenyon, whose article specifically states that it will be ‘an exploration of the composer’s Englishness’:

In Elgar we sense a peculiarly British, a (deliberately?) enigmatic combination of conservatism and progressivism, intense introversion and bold extroversion, despair and exuberance. It is easy to see that in the first years of the 20th century, the Wagnerian echoes of *The Dream of Gerontius* and the originality of the *Enigma Variations* must have created a powerful impression on Richard Strauss and others.¹²

Keynon’s opening sentence is the sole reference to anything remotely English, so one can begin to see Clampin’s point: ‘Englishness’ is not mentioned further.

James Day has attempted to address the issue with a chapter in ‘Englishness’ in Music. In spite of the title, the author gets tantalisingly close to the nitty-gritty of the issue on many occasions – only to veer off into unrelated material. Thus ‘The national character of a people ... is surely conditioned by the language, its institutions and social environment’¹³ is followed by a comparison of European constitutional democracies – and an opportunity is missed. Similarly, when speaking of Elgar, he quotes at length from Mosco Carner and remarks: ‘This is, I think, one of the shrewdest comments ever made on the ‘national’ element in Elgar’.¹⁴ Yet again, instead of exploring this

‘shrewd comment’ he teasingly detours into a discussion of Mahler, Schoenberg, Strauss and Hitler! Carner’s insights are left to us to unpick alone.

Furthermore, failure to grasp the real nettle of ‘Englishness’ is evidenced in his chapter on Elgar, in which he likens the character of Elgar to that of Falstaff – a most interesting read, but one which sheds no light whatsoever on the book’s title.¹⁵ Day’s contribution to the subject is highly illuminating in a wider cultural context but, to this reader, fails to focus sharply enough given the book’s title and remit.

In his contribution to ‘Elgar: an Anniversary Portrait’, the redoubtable Hans Keller explores a novel explanation for his ‘Englishness’ – the use of folksongs. Keller makes a case for Elgar using folksongs in some subliminal way – unconscious of the fact, and drawing on the pentatonic first subject of the Introduction and Allegro as an example. Keller’s argument/inference is that the pentatonic scale was a folk music idiom, and that the reason why this use of folksong

‘eluded’ him [Mitchell] and Helm and indeed everybody else is that he [Elgar] had assimilated it so thoroughly, unconsciously, elementally...¹⁶

He further maintains that Elgar is not much liked by ‘foreigners’ as they don’t understand, indeed ‘react strongly’, against our modal folksongs.¹⁷

I believe that Keller has not only mistaken the modality of the church modes (to which Elgar was exposed from an early age) for that of folksong modality, but his case is further weakened by using just one, admittedly obvious, example. This fallacy of defective induction, generalising from a singularity, is a serious impediment to his argument. The pentatonic idiom of Keller’s example is to be found in numerous chants by Elgar for use in both Roman Catholic and Anglican rite (his *G major Venite* chant a fine example).

Moreover, he rather ignores the host of ‘foreigners’ who championed Elgar’s music at the *fin de siècle* – as Kennedy notes, there is a disjoint or paradox between how the English perceive Elgar and the manner in which his music was championed by, inter alia, Richter, Strauss, Kreisler and Butts.¹⁸

‘Englishness’ by Association

Before embarking in a more critical manner on the subject of national styles and ‘Englishness’, it would be as well to dispel that most pernicious of perils – that of what I term Identification Through Association (ITA). Whilst admitting, as suggested earlier, that there can be no ‘God’s eye view’ on the issue, our subjectivity can be seriously skewed – deceived even – by identification, suggestibility and association with things English. We have to ask ourselves if there is any way in which we can identify Elgar’s ‘Englishness’ as something independent of the cultural experience of the listener – especially with Stravinsky’s admonition ringing in our ears.¹⁹ Specific to Elgar,

10 F. Clampin, ‘Those blue remembered hills: national identity in English music 1900-1930’, *National Identity*, ed. K. Cameron (Exeter: Intellect Books, 1999), 64.

11 Riley, *ibid.* 16.

12 N. Kenyon, *Elgar-the-Englishman* (DT accessed at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/culture/music/3665117/Elgar-the-Englishman.html>), 2007.

13 J. Day, *‘Englishness’ in Music* (London: Thames Publishing, 1999), 7.

14 *ibid.* 155/6.

15 *ibid.* 151-172.

16 Keller, *ibid.* 107.

17 A robust repudiation of this view is offered by J. Gardiner, *The Reception of Sir Edward Elgar 1918–c. 1934: A Reassessment, Twentieth Century British History*, Volume 9, Issue 3, 1 January 1998, 370–395.

18 Kennedy, *Elgar Orchestral Music*, *ibid.* 16.

19 ...music is, by its very nature, essentially powerless to express anything at all, whether a feeling, an attitude of mind, or psychological mood, a phenomenon of nature, etc....Expression has never been an inherent property of music.

Stravinsky's argument is taken up by Crump in rather more prosaic, if cynical, mood:

Before one is transported from suburban living room to the Malvern Hills in the golden glow of a late imperial afternoon, it may be of interest for the listener to reflect how it is that a complex series of sound patterns has so specific and literary a significance.²⁰

As usual, GB Shaw neatly summed up the problem of ITA when he averred that Grieg's music could never remind him of Norway – because he'd never been there. Equally, I am not reminded, or have visions, of Finland whilst listening to Sibelius' 'Finlandia' – again, because I've not been there; why then, we might ask, does Elgar suggest England to people who've never visited these shores? In all these cases we have, of course, been conditioned by clever labelling, association or downright 'spin'.

'Labelling' is no more than quite legitimately giving the work a title: Danse Macabre does 'what it says on the tin', and Lark Ascending similarly. As Clampin says, 'label a work [and] you have already prescribed a pattern of reception in the listener, who imagines the music will follow a certain trajectory',²¹ though I might add 'irrespective of its musical content'. It doesn't always work, however: for many years the author imagined a surreal, heavenly vision in 'The Walk to the Paradise Garden' (Delius) – only later to find that the Paradise Garden is, in fact, the name of a pub in the opera.

'Association' is a slightly different matter. With no title to guide our thoughts, we are conditioned by other means. If we hear 'Nimrod' played often enough at great English ceremonies, it will (has) become indelibly linked in our minds with something distinctly English. Equally, it is difficult to view Elgar as anything other than quintessentially English with even the most cursory acquaintances with the Last Night of the Proms. Before the advent of the much smaller CD cases, LP covers of English (and especially Elgar's) music recordings often showed rolling hills and pastoral settings, reinforcing the 'nature/rural/pastoral' part of the mythological process – even evocation of innocence, anti-modern, anti-industrial, and the assertion of traditional values. (The issue of 'association' is also dealt with most persuasively by Day.²²)

The term 'spin' has only entered the common argot in recent times; as applied to Elgar it might be better to think in terms of 're-branding', 're-invention' or 'reformulation'.²³

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory.²⁴

How prescient of Elgar to set these words of Arthur O'Shaunessey in 1912, for within twenty years Elgar's reputation had waned to the point where Sheldon, in 1926, opined that 'Today he is less

written about than the callowest [sic] of experimenters or imitators'.²⁵ Moreover, Elgar's elevation to become Master of the King's Musick in 1924 was by no means a foregone conclusion – his reputation being not quite, perhaps, what he thought it to be, though he 'lobbied shamelessly' for the post.²⁶ Sir Frederick Ponsonby, highly influential at Court, remarked:

His Majesty is... inclined to appoint some eminent musician[as Master of the King's Musick]. The question arises as to who this should be. Sir Edward Elgar has applied for the post and it seems difficult to resist his claims. At the same time it is generally thought that Vaughan Williams is the most representative of British Music; Elgar having always adopted German methods.²⁷

Elgar's death in 1934 was not marked by universal eulogies: Constant Lambert saw in his music:

aggressive Edwardian prosperity and an intolerable air of smugness, self-assurance and autocratic benevolence ... [Elgar's music] stripped of its more blatant and unfashionable militaristic associations, was redolent of a decent, prosperous and, above all, rural English past.²⁸

And *The Times* obituary:

... his music was the product of the post-Victorian interlude between the South African war and the tragedy of 1914 it exuded an air of general well-being, of contentment with leisure in a spacious world.

Even Elgar's obituary in *The Musical Times* struck a rather doleful note:

Inevitably the music that was so triumphant an expression of the spirit of the Edwardian era lost much of its appeal in the years of disillusionment.²⁹

Elgar had spent a lifetime orchestrating his own life in an opportunistic process that included posing for photographs (on the completion of *Gerontius* and even on his own death-bed), so that he would surely approved of the task of re-launching his reputation – if not exactly with O'Shaughnessy's 'fabulous stories', certainly enough to 'fashion' Elgar's 'glory'.³⁰

Both Elgar's manipulation of his position and his re-branding in the 1930s are dealt with exhaustively by, inter alia, Cannadine³¹ and Crump. As the latter explains

20 J. Crump, 'The Identity of English Music: The reception of Elgar: 1880-1935', *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880-1920*, eds. R. Colls & P. Dodd, (London: Croom Helm, 1986) 210.

21 Clampin, *ibid.* 13.

22 Day, *ibid.* 151 ff

23 Crump, *ibid.* 205

24 AWE O'Shaughnessy, *The Music Makers* (Accessed at <https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/54933/ode>)

25 Quoted in Crump, *ibid.* 205.

26 Cannadine, *ibid.* 18.

27 F. Ponsonby, quoted in J. Butt, 'Roman Catholicism and being musically English', *Cambridge Companion to Elgar*, eds. J. Rushton, & D. Grimley, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011), 106.

28 C. Lambert, *Music Ho!* (Harmondsworth. Penguin, 1948), 205.

29 *The Musical Times*, Vol 75, No.1094, April 1934, 312.

30 See also Cannadine's chapter, *ibid.*

31 D. Cannadine, 'Orchestrating his own life', *Elgar: An Anniversary Portrait*, ed. N. Kenyon (London: Continuum, 2007).

‘there was a selective reformulation in which critical effort was spent down-grading once important works of the canon in order to establish at the centre a number of core ‘great works’,³²

His life’s work was put under a microscope: those elements deemed to be unacceptable to the immediate post-war generation were side-lined, whilst a new image of Englishness was promoted, thereby shifting his musical locus from imperial pomp to rural domesticity – from world-role to ‘Little England’. This was achieved, as Crump notes, through journalism, biography (from 1931 seven biographies appeared in eight years), music criticism, concert planning/programming, and the policies of the BBC and record companies.

Our collective view, then, of Elgar and his ‘Englishness’ may well be a product of clever marketing or re-branding. As Trelawney comments: ‘Has posterity projected its conceptions on to Elgar?’³³ Possibly. So also should we note that

powerful institutions function to select particular values from the past and to mobilise them in contemporary practices. Through such mechanisms of cultural reproduction, a particular version of the collective memory and thus a particular sense of national and cultural identity is produced.³⁴

Elgar’s ‘Englishness’ based on his national acceptance

If the foregoing seems rather hard on Elgar, I should perhaps redress the balance and explore the idea that Elgar’s enduring appeal to his fellow countrymen and women, if not to the Metropolitan musical establishment (which he despised), is based upon his ability to connect at so many levels – so successfully and in so many spheres. Crump’s view of Elgar’s ‘reinvention’ is disputed by Gardiner, who argues that the claims for Elgar’s neglect in leading up to the 1930s are exaggerated, though he accepts Elgar being seen as the Edwardian archetype. Gardiner maintains that the public attitudes on his ‘complacency’ and ‘jingoism’ had been replaced by a focus on his ‘perceived rural nostalgia’ in his music³⁵, and that ‘much of the controversy had by then [1930s] played itself out’.³⁶

Setting aside the great works of his ‘golden decade’, choral and orchestral, it is easy to see how Elgar’s position in the public’s esteem was fostered in a way that the English Renaissance School and Delius did not: they represented the music composed by ‘foreigners’ – and therefore politically suspect (Carlyle and Ruskin). As Parry noted, on Elgar’s elevation to the Order of Merit: ‘He’s the right man for it. ... he has reached the hearts of the people.’³⁷

Elgar’s music, however, was very much situated within a specifically English cultural setting and appealed to the population through his use of established Victorian forms most common in the 1890’s, and to the urban masses in their music halls (during World War 1). His appeal extended to the middle classes through their domestic music making (salon music), so that by 1921 there had been no less than 25 instrumental arrangements of *Salut d’Amour* (1888) and twelve vocal ones. So, too, he was well represented and loved in the provinces through the choral festival tradition

32 Crump, *ibid.* 205.

33 Trelawney, *ibid.*

34 Morley & Robins, quoted in Clampin, *ibid.*, 69.

35 Gardiner, *ibid.*, 371.

36 *Ibid.*, 386

37 Quoted in Day, *ibid.*, 151.

and brass band arrangements. *Caractacus*, for example, was arranged to great acclaim in 1903 as a test piece for brass band championship and Elgar transcribed both symphonies for Brass Bands, with the Black Dyke Mills Band giving them over 40 performances. During WW1 Elgar was hugely active both as composer of nationalistic works and performing – even doing Music Hall tours – though whether to establish his credentials or because he was short of money continues to be debated.

Consideration of an ‘English’ Style - National/Personal Characteristics or Musical?

Having considered the concept of Elgar’s ‘Englishness’ formed through association, and how easy it is to be beguiled in this fashion, we might move on to consider slightly more objective criteria for the phenomenon, but applied more generally than simply to Elgar.

To argue the importance or excellence of a composer is bound to be subjective, and to argue, as well, that a composer exemplifies something as nebulous (and, by some aesthetic systems, profoundly dodgy) as ‘English music’ is to be faced by an almost indefinite [sic] number of possible lines of approach.³⁸

Bywater’s thinking is correct: there are multiple ways in which the subject can be approached, but for this article I shall, in the first instance, focus on what is meant by an identifiable musical style that reflects a nation, such as we might find in Vaughan Williams, Finzi, Ireland, Holst – even Delius, and then to examine and apply these criteria to Elgar’s music. So we might question whether we are considering embracing those musical traits which are peculiarly English, or the English landscape, or the English character; should it be our culture, or heritage or, more specifically, a composer’s character being a personification of the English, etc.³⁹ Students of Elgar might choose other pathways – mine are not definitive.

So how does any country’s identity become internalised into their music? One obvious source would be traditional folk-songs – either taken verbatim and woven into a new texture, or the general style of folk music used to generate new material. Vaughan Williams is a prime example of the former and Bartok of the latter.⁴⁰ We might also consider historical precedents which might influence an English composer’s thoughts – hymnody, modal tunes and cadences, false relations⁴¹, the ‘diatonic movement’, Protestantism and the English choral tradition.⁴² How much of this do

38 M. Bywater, ‘English Music: Ian Venables at Sixty’, *Musical Opinion*, issue 1506 (Jan-March 2016).

39 Matthew Riley even offers an explanation of ‘Englishness’ through the concept of ‘characteristic compositional habits’, based on step-wise bass motion in a diatonic harmonic context. See M.Riley, Processional diatonicism and musical ‘Englishness’, paper given in the City, University of London, Dept, of Music Research Seminar, February 2017.

40 Vaughan Williams’ hymn tune ‘Kingsfold’ – the basis for his Five Variants on Dives and Lazarus – is thought to be a folk-song dating from the Middle Ages and first published in 1893 in ‘English Country Songs’. For a more obvious example of direct folk-song quotation see his orchestral ‘English Folk Song Suite’.

41 Finzi’s music abounds with false relations and echoes of the Tudor ‘English cadence’ *inter alia Dies Natalis, Prelude for String Orchestra, Farewell to Arms*.

42 Vaughan Williams’ indebtedness to modes, and in particular the *diapente* and *diatessaron* segments of the modal scale, is well documented by Lionel Pike (‘Vaughan Williams and the Symphony’, Toccata Press, London, 2003, 16-18); so too his frequent use of the three note phrase (step+leap of third) derived from pentatonic folk tunes, which characterises so much of his music (*cf.* ‘Wasps’ Overture – the ‘big’ tune at ‘J’).

we find in Elgar's music? At best – very little. It is known that he was contemptuous of folk music and his occasional modality is probably derived from his acquaintance with church music at St. George's.⁴³ When asked by Troyte Griffith what he thought about folk music, Elgar (in)famously retorted "I AM folk music". Equally, we also know he had no use for the early English composers: Byrd, Weelkes, Tallis and Dowland were 'museum pieces' as far as Elgar was concerned.⁴⁴ In fairness, and as he bluntly (and inadvisably) claimed in his first Peyton lecture, he had a pretty jaundiced view of anything before Mozart anyway.

If Elgar's 'Englishness' is not to be found in musical precedent, we should perhaps consider non-musical characteristics.

National identities are notoriously hard to pin down, especially as many people deny that they even have them.⁴⁵

How, then, might we describe national characteristics: Germans are often viewed as 'serious and humourless', the French and Italians as 'excitable and indulgent', Chinese as 'inscrutable and hardworking', and the Americans – as GB Shaw reminds us, 'two great nations divided by a common language'.

These are dreadful oversimplifications – even if true in part. Yet if we examine their national *musical* attributes we find that the Germans indeed have a penchant for serious/absolute music whilst the French delight in the literary/descriptive operating, it has been said, at a more superficial level than the solid Teutonic tradition. This has been true from Couperin through Berlioz and Debussy to Messiaen. (A quick test: how many large scale French symphonies remain in the repertoire, and how many Austro-German?)

And so how do other nationals describe us? The list is not exhaustive but it might encompass terms such as reserve, reticence, self-effacement, politeness, humour (irony and puns), understatement, stiff-upper-lip, repressed emotions, masked passions, nostalgia – and, of course, modesty! Many of such attributes we might assign to Elgar – who many imagine to be the embodiment of an Edwardian gentleman. Certainly these terms might well be applied to features of his musical style. Kennedy, for example, finds that Elgar

is usually reticent in his emotional expression. The music is impassioned and the man was passionate, but the music is never sensuous,⁴⁶

whilst Elgar's great friend, Rosa Burley, observed that he was 'one of the most repressed people it is possible to imagine.'⁴⁷ Many writers have commented upon the somewhat deliberate and abrupt contrasts of mood that we find in Elgar as opposed, for example, to the assured, almost overweening, confidence of Richard Strauss – 'introspection rather than rhetoric'. Trelawney sums this up:

43 Kennedy, *Elgar Orchestral Music*, ibid. 10.

44 M. Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar*, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1993), 23.

45 K. Kumar, *The Idea of Englishness: English Culture, National Identity and Social Thought*, (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016), Preface.

46 Ibid. 16.

47 Quoted in *Elgar: an Anniversary Portrait*, ibid. ix.

It's often said that the English are rather diffident and don't like to display their emotions too much. Elgar does that in his music: he will compose something exuberant and tremendous, before audibly taking a step backwards; it's as though he has suddenly thought, hang on, I'm an Englishman, before retiring into himself and expressing something private. That clearly appeals very much to English listeners.⁴⁸

Examples of this sudden 'turning away' or 'stepping back' from an anticipated climax are to be found frequently in his orchestral music – the Cello Concerto (iii), for example, has a pattern of tortuous contrasts of mood and tempo. Perhaps we like Elgar because we identify with those characteristics and also, some would argue, why some foreign conductors have a problem with his music – that they simply 'don't get it'.⁴⁹

Similarly, it is possible to see a degree of reticence in Elgar's musical style, or what Gardiner terms "restraint of gesture".⁵⁰ Frequently we are treated to harmonic moves and modulations which, in their 'softer' and less aggressive nature, are gentler and more persuasive than traditional dominant-tonic assertiveness, coupled with his general avoidance of obvious dominant moves. For an example we have only to look at his penchant for modulating to the flattened sub-median – the transition from Var.8 to 9 (Nimrod) in the Enigma Variations, or the change of key in the Organ Sonata (iii) from the anticipated Bb to Gb (actually F#).⁵¹

But there is more: Elgar has an unusually high regard for 3rds and 3rds based melodies and keys, and the same for plagal relationships – such as were termed 'feminine' in times past; these plagal moves might be viewed as being analogous to the non-assertive and understated characteristics of the English people. A brief reference to the 1st Symphony gives us such an example: here the very opening theme starts on the third of the chord and becomes a dissonance by the plagal I – IV progression beneath. Elgar made no secret or defence of this penchant, and with typical self-effacement (or is it?) admits

This is a sort of plagal relationship... of which I appear to be fond (though I didn't know it) .. but that's beside the point ... I feel – not invent.⁵²

However, perhaps the most significant connexion between Elgar's music and a national characteristic lies in the concept of nostalgia; it is at this level that we may find the term 'Englishness' to be most appropriate. At this distance in time and changed culture, it is difficult to appreciate the crushing burden of nostalgia that permeated England in the last half of the nineteenth century. The subject of a host of scholarly articles, theses and books, it is clear that the Victorian age was a period of 'unremitting nostalgia' – often quite morbid and melancholic, it became a national 'mood'. Many

48 P. T. Relawney, 'Petroc Trelawney explores Elgar's 'Englishness''. Accessed at <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zxhfyr>

49 Leonard Bernstein gave a memorable performance – for all the wrong reasons – of 'Nimrod' some years ago. The slow tempo adopted rendered the music virtually unintelligible.

50 Gardiner, ibid., 393

51 Of course, Elgar has no monopoly on this harmonic sleight of hand – witness Beethoven's stupendous use of the device in the climax of the 9th Symphony (iv, bars 329/330). However, it is the frequency with which Elgar uses it which is both noteworthy and characteristic.

52 Edward Elgar to Jaeger. Quoted in J.N. Moore, ed. *Elgar and His Publishers*, Vol.2, (Oxford: OUP, Vol.2 1987), 710.

writers see this phenomenon as contributing to the establishment of ‘Englishness’ in general, and a reaction to both the Industrial Revolution and urbanisation.⁵³

Nostalgia – a Greek neologism and conflation of *nostos* (home) and *algos* (pain) – represents a longing, often bittersweet, for the past and especially for childhood and innocence. With this may go an acute sense of melancholia, regret, loss of objectivity and espousing a markedly emotional response. In this respect, Elgar was without doubt a man of, and reflecting, his time, for his music simply oozes nostalgia.

As the themes of childhood remembrance and chivalry in many of his works testify, his thinking had always been orientated towards nostalgia.⁵⁴

Whether it be the Violin or Cello Concerto, we are instantly and aurally aware of a sense of longing. Analytically, moreover, his music is often characterised by the use of non-functional thematic returns – the recalling of, or ‘longing’ return to, themes which form no structural part of the plan. In addition there are the wistful longings in his texts, letters, programmatic bases, and his obsession with childhood (Nursery Suite, Dream Children, Starlight Express and Wand of Youth Suites).⁵⁵ All of these titles highly persuasive and associated with nostalgia – the Arcadian image so beloved of Housman (a poet so frequently set to music by English composers). Kennedy goes so far as to liken Elgar to the Pre-Raphaelites:

as they escaped from the harshness of the real world into a mock-mediaeval earthly paradise, so he [Elgar] fled to the historical past of Caractacus, the literary past of Falstaff, the chivalry of Froissart... and the world of his childhood, the wand of youth, beckoned irresistibly.⁵⁶

As in other movements attempting to appropriate the term ‘Englishness’ to capture some nebulous and elusive national character, there is in Elgar’s music an underlying theme of regret, longing and wistfulness, or what Gardiner terms a ‘correspondence of rural nostalgia with a vision of lost innocence’.⁵⁷

Language and Music

Is that it? Have I covered it all? For some, I may have done so. However, I return to my perhaps excoriating dismissal of those who describe Elgar’s music in ‘airy-fairy’ language – the musical equivalent of the Emperor’s New Clothes. I now consider that they may have a point; it is entirely possible that they are struggling to articulate that essentially elusive element in his music that sounds so strangely ‘English’; conceivably, they are alluding to what Elgar himself found so natural:

53 For a brief account see ‘Against ‘Englishness’: English Culture and the Limits to Rural Nostalgia, 1850-1940’, Peter Mandler, *Transactions of the Royal Historical Society*, Vol. 7 (1997), 155-175.

54 Gardiner, *ibid.*, 374.

55 For further reading on Elgar’s nostalgia: exhaustively dealt with by Riley (*ibid.*) and M.Allis *British Music and Literary Context Artistic Connections in the Long Nineteenth Century*. (Cambridge University Press, 2013)

56 Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar*, *ibid.* 163.

57 Gardiner, *ibid.*, 392.

My idea is that there is music in the air, music all around us, the world is full of it and you simply take as much as you require.⁵⁸

This has rather led me to the notion that we might consider that a national musical style is, or can be, absorbed through the language of that nation - through the medium of its folk song tradition, though not in Keller’s confused way. Again, I theorise here that words precede any such tune, so that folk melodies reflect the stresses and syllabic contours of the words and language.⁵⁹ Viewed from this perspective, Elgar’s music is simply fashioned, shaped, moulded by the syllabic stresses, the cadential formulae, the phraseology contours and emphases of the English language. Little wonder then that we are comfortable with his music, and that we feel ‘at home’ with his style; there is an immediacy of appeal – that it sounds, well, ‘English’.

Researching the literature into the possible correlation between language and music reveals much fascinating recent scholarship, suggesting that the musical rhythm of a culture may parallel the speech rhythm of that nation’s language.⁶⁰ Recognition of this phenomenon is not new: in 1974 Abraham noted that

nationality has long been recognised as both a formative and a divisive factor in musical tradition ... so far as music is concerned, the only clear cut criterion of nationality is language,⁶¹

and he quotes an earlier observation by Ralph Kirkpatrick that

both Couperin and Rameau, like Faure and Debussy, are thoroughly conditioned by the nuances and inflections of spoken French. On no Western music has the influence of language been stronger.⁶²

I rather suspect, too, that we sense how choral and operatic works translated into English sound uncomfortable when removed from their original language, but ‘sensing’ is not proof: however, evidence of such a correlation between language and music is extraordinarily difficult to prove. Even so, Abraham recognises that language ‘affects the nature of its music not only in obvious and superficial ways, but fundamentally.’⁶³ He continues to explain how the Italian language, being rich in feminine endings – generates both musical phrases with similar endings, but also encourages composers to invent novel ways of treating these.

A more obvious example, one well established in research literature, is that all sentences in Slavic languages start with a heavy accent - which may explain why an anacrusis is virtually unheard of in Slavic music. (Gartias notes that in Hungarian, each word starts with a stressed

58 R. Buckley, in conversation in 1896, quoted in R. J. Buckley *Sir Edward Elgar* (London: Bodley Head, 1905), 32.

59 Evidence of words dictating and altering ‘folk’ tunes, as demonstrated in variants (*not* variations) is explored by George List in *Folklore and Folklife*, (Chicago: Chicago Press, 1972), 364.

60 A.D. Patel & J.R. Daniele, ‘An empirical comparison of rhythm in language and music’, *Cognition*, 87, (2003), B35–B45.

61 G. Abraham, *The Tradition of Western Music*, (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1974), 63.

62 *Ibid.* 83.

63 *Ibid.* 62.

syllable and melodies typically start on a strong beat; equally, anacrusas are virtually unheard of.⁶⁴)

So where has this research led and how has it informed our thinking? Much early research has concentrated on rhythm – understandably, as comparisons and analysis of rhythms are far more quantifiable than use of language. The estimable Nicholas Temperley has conducted research into the ‘Scotch Snap’, for example, concluding that this characteristic rhythm is common in both Scottish and English songs, but virtually non-existent in German and Italian songs.⁶⁵ The work of Huron & Ollen (2003)⁶⁶ and Patel (2008)⁶⁷ offers intriguing evidence for a correlation between musical and linguistic rhythm. Significantly, they have used instrumental melodies for analysis, suggesting that vocal melodies would be too much influenced by the natural rhythm of the text – what Temperley terms the “text-setting factor” (TSF). It was presumed that by obviating vocal lines and eliminating the ‘TSF’, researchers would be better able to identify the general influence of linguistic rhythm present in the music.

I am with Temperley in believing that the ‘TSF’, or in my opinion – simply the effect of language, cannot be divorced from a composer’s instrumental melodic style. Other researchers have delved into the effect of stressed and unstressed syllables and of ‘long’ and ‘short’ vowels, and how these influence melodic lines.⁶⁸

However, the work of Hannon is the most apposite to this discussion.⁶⁹ He aimed to discover whether listeners actually perceive such rhythmic differences in a purely musical context – in instrumental music without words. In his first experiment, listeners successfully classified instrumental renditions of French and English songs having highly contrastive rhythmic differences, whilst the second experiment replicated this result with the same songs containing rhythmic information only. The results of his work indicate that listeners can use rhythmic similarities and differences to classify songs originally composed in two languages having contrasted rhythmic prosody.

There is, I believe, much compelling evidence from this current research to suggest that the elusive character of a nation may well be deeply ingrained in the indigenous language, and that we are on safer ground now to claim that music which ‘sounds’ English really IS sounding English on account of the implied ‘TSF’ – that the composer has been influenced by his or her own native tongue. This gets us a little way further in identifying *one* aspect of ‘Englishness’ in Music, but not at all in pinning this on Elgar – let alone having a monopoly on such. It would be possible to see this effect in the music of English composers as diverse as Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Ireland and especially Finzi – in the author’s opinion, a composer unmatched for his ability to set an English text. Yet we can hardly claim they share a similar style – such as the term ‘Englishness’ might suggest.

64 Discussed by Gartias (1987), ‘Thoughts on the process of language and music acquisition’, F. R. Wilson & F. L. Roehmann (eds.), *The Biology of Music Making*, (St. Louis, Mo.: MMB, 1988), 100-105.

65 N. & D. Temperley, ‘Music-Language Correlations and the “Scotch Snap”’, *Music Perception*, Vol.29, issue 1, (2011), 51-62.

66 D. Huron & J. Ollen, ‘Agogic contrast in French and English themes’, *Music Perception*, Vol. 21, (2003) 267-271.

67 A. Patel, *Music, Language, and the Brain*. (Oxford:OUP, 2008).

68 Inter alia, Baroni, 1991; Halle and Lerdahl, 1993; Harris, 1994; Lass 1984; Palmer & Kelly, 1992.

69 E. Hannon, ‘Perceiving Speech Rhythm in Music’, *Cognition*, Vol. 111(3) (2009), 404-410.

Coda

This article started by promising no easy answers to the question of Elgar’s ‘Englishness’, but only food for thought and ideas to ponder. I have attempted to explore, albeit superficially, several areas where we might consider the ‘Englishness’ label appropriate – and where not. In attempting to sum up, it may help our understanding if we consider the issue as the musical equivalent of a medical syndrome, i.e. a collection of characteristics which can appear independently elsewhere, but taken together create, in this case, a cultural or musical phenomenon which can be labelled.

With great clarity, Clampin reminds us of the axiomatic principle of semiotics – that identity can only begin by establishing difference, and ‘that identity and meaning can only be referential’;⁷⁰ so we might also consider the meaning of ‘Englishness’ as constructed through the assumption of what it is NOT – music which is non-French, non-German, etc. ‘Englishness’ then could be viewed or established, as Clampin suggests, through difference – an essential part of the process of definition. What is regarded as ‘English’ is no more than a synthesis of other’s styles into a new language in precisely the same way that our native tongue has embraced diverse other languages, and synthesised these into the English language we know today.

Ackroyd holds a similar view, that it isn’t our resistance to foreign influences that makes us English, he argues, but our ability to assimilate them:

Englishness is the principle of appropriation. We’re a “mungrell” [sic] nation - hybrid, heterogenous, adaptive, accumulative, eclectic. Forget blood or genes. National traits come with the territory. The common ground we have is the ground itself. Placism, not racism, should be the slogan.⁷¹

More specifically, and with veiled humour typical of Burgess:

Elgar is not manic enough to be Russian, not witty or pointilliste enough to be French, not harmonically simple enough to be Italian and not stodgy enough to be German. We arrive at his [Elgar’s] Englishry by pure elimination.⁷²

It would be correct to think that Elgar sounds English – a mixture, perhaps, of all those factors to which I have drawn attention: those English character attributes, the effect of the English language (TSF), the elements of association, and the ‘what he is not’. But these do not, in themselves, constitute ‘Englishness’ – they simply mark out Elgar’s easily recognisable style, and is not transferable to other composers.

As a nation we are right to be proud of Elgar’s finest achievements and it is entirely understandable that we attempt to identify him with an English style. But to do so without due regard to his deeply ingrained European musical influences – Wagner, Brahms, Schumann – is to deny his internationalism and lay ourselves open to a charge of insularity – to the ‘Fog in Channel: Europe Isolated’ mentality.⁷³ Let there be no doubt, Elgar was ‘a giant of the international music scene’.⁷⁴

70 Ibid, 68.

71 P. Ackroyd, *Albion: the Origins of the English Imagination*, (London: Vintage, 2004), 237.

72 A. Burgess, *Homage to Qwert Yuiop*, (London: Abacus, 1987), 567.

73 Apocryphal newspaper headline from the 1940s.

74 D. Cannadine, *Sir Edward Elgar in The Pleasures of the Past* (London: Collins, 1989), 130.

The last word might be left to Sakari Oramo, the Finnish conductor of the BBC Symphony Orchestra:

The notion of English music as a separate thing I don't think really exists. All the English music I love is very closely bound up with central Europe ... Really he [Elgar] was a universal composer, and to praise him for his Englishness I think diminishes him.⁷⁵

Martin Firth was appointed as the first Director of Music and Senior Lecturer at the University of the West of England, Bristol in 1992, having previously taught music in secondary schools, including Oundle School, and Co-Director of the Oundle International Music Festival & Summer School. He has also taught music for the Open University, and was awarded a Ph.D. for his research into the Organ Reform Movement. In retirement he has researched and lectured throughout the UK on aspects of Elgar's music, including a lecture for the Three Choirs' Festival in 2016.

75 Oramo in conversation with Ivan Hewitt, *The Telegraph*, 1st Nov. 2013.

Elgar Abroad: an improving situation?

Barry Collett

The August edition of *Gramophone* magazine contained a lengthy article by Andrew Farach-Colton on Elgar's position abroad, with discussion by various top international conductors on their love for his music, but some wonderment why it remains a closed book to many beyond these shores. It is a situation that I have pondered too, for the last forty years or so. I have worked with several foreign musicians, mainly French, on performances of the Elgar Concertos, Sonata, Piano Quintet and various smaller works, and without exception they have been enthusiastic about the music and play it as to the manner born. As a member of the Elgar in Performance committee I know that there is a good deal more Elgar performed abroad than many people think. For me one of the most interesting parts of the *Elgar Society News* is the Diary Dates column, listing performances of his works. Over the last few months there have been major Elgar performances all across the USA, Germany and, surprisingly, Spain, as well as concerts in Singapore, Amsterdam, Lucerne, Bergen, Stockholm, Lausanne, Paris, Rotterdam, Hong Kong, Brno, Prague, Budapest, Lisbon, Warsaw, Turin, Istanbul, Lyon and Geneva, with, as I write, two performances of *Gerontius* still to come in Paris. Not bad for someone whose music doesn't travel!

Part of the problem is historical, and it is interesting to remember that it was foreigners who were first alive to Elgar's genius. August Jaeger, the Speyers, and Frank Schuster, all of Germanic stock, were all amongst his earliest supporters, as of course was the great Hungarian conductor Hans Richter, who had known Brahms, Wagner, Dvorak and Tchaikovsky, and surely knew genius when he saw it. Various other great composers were enthusiastic champions: Richard Strauss and Busoni in Germany, Rachmaninoff in Russia, Mahler in New York all conducted his music; Rimsky-Korsakov proclaimed the *Enigma Variations* the greatest set since Beethoven; Paderewski, Gabriel Faure in France championed his cause, and Fritz Kreisler considered him the greatest living composer. The great conductors vied to give his music performances in their own countries. Julius Butts, Fritz Steinbach and Fritz Volbach in Germany, Siloti in Russia, Thodore Thomas and Walter Damrosch in America, and of course Weingartner, Nikisch and Toscanini all had Elgar in their repertoire. One of the earliest gramophone recordings of his music was an extract from *In the South* played by the La Scala Orchestra under Carlo Sabajno, only a year after its composition.

So what went wrong? Mainly, I suspect, the First World War. After it many of Elgar's supporters had either died or were in retirement, and of course it was a different age – the age of Stravinsky, of Schoenberg, of Poulenc and *Les Six*, of flappers and jazz, and the rich, late Romantic palette of Elgar and many other of his contemporaries was very much out of favour. That, and growing indifference to anything Victorian, Edwardian and Imperial set the seal on Elgar's reputation for years to come, in this country as well as abroad. The triumvirate of Boult, Barbirolli and Sargent kept the flame alive, but many great conductors did not perform a note of Elgar – Furtwangler, Karajan, Klemperer, Karl Bohm, Mravinsky amongst them. I suppose it was the late 50s or early

60s that the revival began. The Dutchman Eduard van Beinum made some early LPs of Elgar, and others, Rudolf Kempe, Eugen Jochum, Pierre Monteux, Istvan Kertesz, Constantin Silvestri and Eugene Ormandy, among others, started to programme Elgar's music, if only in limited quantities. The real flood started in the 1970s, when Georg Solti and the young Daniel Barenboim took up his music in a big way, performing it not just in this country but with major international orchestras. Since then Elgar has certainly had his foreign champions. Giuseppe Sinopoli, Edo de Waart, Antal Dorati, Jerzy Maksymiuk, Tadaaki Otaka, the Americans Andrew Litton, David Zinman and Leonard Slatkin, the Russians Gennadi Rozhdestvensky, Evgeny Svetlanov, Yuri Temirkanov, Vassily Sinaisky and Vladimir Ashkenazy, the Pole Jacek Kasprzyk, and many others. Looking through my shelves of CDs I note, for example, recordings of the Violin Concerto from Germany, Poland, Spain, America, Holland, Bavaria, Russia and Kazakhstan and Symphonies from Sweden, Belgium, Italy, Holland and Russia, all played by foreign orchestras with, mainly, non-British conductors.

But we shouldn't be complacent. I'm still surprised that our major British orchestras appoint foreign maestri to their top posts who have seemingly little interest in Elgar or British music in general. Valeri Gergiev, late of the LSO, Vladimir Jurowski at the LPO and Esa-Pekka Salonen at the Philharmonia have hardly distinguished themselves in this field, whatever their other strengths. But can one imagine a Musical Director of a Russian orchestra, for instance, who refused to play Russian music? On the other hand, Sakari Oramo at the BBC SO, Vassili Petrenko at Liverpool and the Spanish conductor Juanjo Mena at the BBC Philharmonic are all great Elgarians, and the arrival of Peter Oundjian at the Scottish National Orchestra augurs well after years of Elgarian drought following the death of Sir Alexander Gibson. And Kiril Karabits at Bournemouth and Mirga Grazinyte-Tyla at the CBSO have started to make inroads into Elgarian territory.

The Elgar in Performance committee has sponsored more performances of *The Dream of Gerontius*, *The Apostles*, *The Kingdom* and *King Olaf* in Germany and Switzerland over the last two or three years than in this country. I have no doubt that a genuine revival of Elgar's music abroad is happening, but even in this country we still need to encourage orchestral conductors and choral directors to explore the rich legacy of music that Elgar has left us, beyond the few obvious popular masterworks that are regularly performed.

Barry Collett is a conductor, pianist and lecturer. He is an honorary life member of the Elgar Society, and was recently awarded the Elgar Medal, the Society's highest award, for his research, performances and recordings of Elgar's lesser-known music, especially the First World War music and the Powick Asylum Music. Last March he conducted the first performance since 1882 of Elgar's first orchestral work, the Air de Ballet.

BOOK REVIEWS

Christopher Morley: *Royal Birmingham Conservatoire: Inspiring Musicians since 1886*

London: Elliott & Thompson Ltd., 2017

The publishers contacted our Vice-Chairman offering this book for review. He in turn contacted me to see if I would oblige, and I was only too willing, for two reasons: firstly, because I have great respect for the work of its author, Christopher Morley; and, secondly, because I am currently researching the work of Elgar, Ernest Newman, and Granville Bantock at the Conservatoire's predecessor, the Birmingham and Midland Institute School of Music, of which Bantock was Principal.

I must admit to being a little nonplussed when it arrived, however, and my mind went back more than forty years to when we were being shown over our present house by its then owner, who proudly declared that not only had she acquired a coffee table (apparently a rare feature in 1970s Garston), but had bought a book especially to put on it.

Wikipedia (where would we be without it?) describes a coffee table book as 'an oversized, usually hard-covered book whose purpose is for display on a table intended for use in an area in which one entertains guests and from which it can serve to inspire conversation. Subject matter is predominantly non-fiction and pictorial. Pages consist mainly of photographs and illustrations, accompanied by captions and small blocks of text, as opposed to long prose. They are aimed at anyone who might pick up the book for a light read'. The present book fits the definition like a glove.

As expected, Christopher Morley's work is admirable. He writes informatively and authoritatively, and with a deft touch which means the reader absorbs a lot of history without the slightest feeling of being lectured at. He covers the history of the Conservatoire from the point of view of its staff and students, and includes a goodly series of recollections from its inhabitants past and present. So the Conservatoire is vividly brought to life as what it is: a collection of fascinating, like-minded people, rather than a collection of buildings and musical instruments. The historical illustrations, too, are fascinating – not only old photographs, but the original ground plans for the School of Music, and a pen-and-ink sketch of Birmingham by Mendelssohn, of all people.

But, and here's the rub, because of its coffee table format the text occupies only a quarter of the pages and, to put it crudely, its centennial predecessor gave us three times the text at one third of the weight. The present volume tips the scales at a hefty 1½ kilos and, because of its landscape format, is not the easiest thing to hold and read. Most of the book is devoted to glossy coloured photographs of students (many) and productions (fewer). They are



224 pp.

ISBN
978-1-78396-319-5

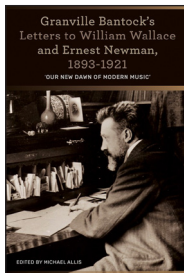
doubtless of interest to doting families, but of marginal interest, especially in such large numbers, to others unconnected with the Conservatoire. In fact, the book's whole appearance is one of a particularly glossy prospectus designed to attract potential students.

Incidentally, the Conservatoire is now headed by our President, Julian Lloyd Webber, and, as the book's blurb says, 'today a studentship at the Conservatoire can put the world at a graduate's feet', or, as Arthur Daley used to say, 'the world's your lobster'.

I fear all these photographs of present-day life at the Conservatoire held little interest for me, and maybe also for the caption writer. Of the four featuring my instrument, the double bass, and its players, two carry the caption 'Rehearsing and performing on the cello'; one features a bass player 'completely immersed ... poised for playing pizzicato' (it may be pedantic of me, but the camera has caught him actually playing pizzicato, rather than about to do so); and the other remains satisfactorily caption-less.

The publishers, with what they call their 'lavishly illustrated history', seem to be trying to cover all possible markets with this book – 'lavishly illustrated' doesn't quite apply to the part of this book devoted to the Conservatoire's history. But maybe I'm being less than fair. The foreword has been written by the Conservatoire's Patron, The Earl of Wessex, who says it 'provides a fascinating chronicle of the Royal Birmingham Conservatoire's history from its earliest beginnings ... however what really sets this book apart are the characters, starting with the Principals who, it seems, had varying degrees of success in the role. Apart from acknowledging Christopher Morley's excellent research, what I think he should be congratulated on is making this book feel that it is more about the future'. I couldn't (and haven't) put it better myself.

Martin Bird



253 pp + xvii
ISBN
978-1-78327-190-0

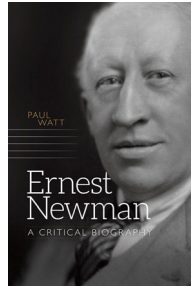
Paul Watt: *Ernest Newman, a Critical Biography*
Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017

Michael Allis (editor): *Granville Bantock's Letters to William Wallace and Ernest Newman, 1893-1921*
Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2017

Ernest Newman, that most prodigious of writers over a period of nearly seventy years, has not himself been blessed by much in the way of biography: the unpublished *Ernest Newman as I saw Him*, by Henry Farmer, disliked by Newman's second wife, Vera; and *Ernest Newman, a memoir*, by Vera herself, which was disliked even by her American publisher, whose editor described it as 'really pretty bad. Nothing in it is really good except the quotations from Ernest ... and Vera hardly ever tells you enough about a person or an event to make the story interesting'.

That was the situation last autumn when I commenced background research for a future volume in the *Edward Elgar: Collected Correspondence* series on the extensive correspondence between Newman and Elgar, and on Newman's writings about Elgar.

So you can imagine my delight when, shortly after commencing work, Boydell published Paul Watt's *Critical Biography*, followed at the end of the year by Michael Allis's *Granville Bantock's Letters to ... Ernest Newman*.



298 pp + x
ISBN
978-1-78327-233-4

Paul Watt has set himself the greater challenge: indeed, the first 16 pages are devoted to 'Ernest Newman and the Challenge of Critical Biography'. Elgarians are well-used to reading critical biographies, which the online *Encyclopaedia Britannica* defines as 'evaluating the works as well as unfolding the life of its subject, either by interweaving the life in its consideration of the works or else by devoting separate chapters to the works': Jerrold Northrop Moore's *A Creative Life* is a supreme example of the former; and Robert Anderson's *Elgar* in the 'Master Musicians' series a supreme example of the latter. But both allow themselves vastly more space in which to write about their subject: *A Creative Life*, for example, is four times that length of the present volume. Moreover, Elgar's 'creative life' occupied roughly half the span of Newman's, whose writing commenced when he was a young clerk with the Bank of Liverpool, and continued into his ninetieth year. He wrote and lectured not only on music, but on literature, religion, and philosophy, and was president of his local branch of the National Secular Society. While still a bank employee he wrote books as varied as *Gluck and the Opera* and *Pseudo-Philosophy at the end of the Nineteenth Century*.

So while, in one way, Paul Watt's biography is comprehensive, in another it can be no more than a brief summary of an exhausting working life. Elgarians may regret that his relationship with, and writing on, the composer form but an insignificant proportion of the whole, but it could scarcely be otherwise, given the scope of the task the writer has set himself. The book is well structured and well written, although perhaps a lighter, less earnest, touch would not have gone amiss. It is illustrated with photographs from the personal collection of Mary Parkin, Vera Newman's niece and executor, and is beautifully laid out and presented by Boydell.

Michael Allis's book contains Granville Bantock's letters not only to Newman, but to the Scottish composer William Wallace, at one time Professor of Harmony and Composition at the Royal Academy of Music. There is no overwhelming reason why these two sets of letters should be presented under one cover, save that of convenience – those to Wallace covering a period where surviving letters to Newman are sparse, and vice versa. The Wallace letters are preserved in the National Library of Scotland, and those to Newman in the University of Birmingham.

Copies of many of the Newman letters were discovered by your reviewer in two boxes of miscellaneous papers bequeathed by Wulstan Atkins to the Elgar Birthplace, interspersed with, I kid you not, miscellaneous gas bills and leaflets from the *Reader's Digest*. I was delighted to discover that they contained many references to Elgar, as well as other mutual friends from the north-west, such as Alfred Rodewald, and even more delighted to discover that these references were rather more candid than might have been the case had Elgar been the recipient. My delight is all the greater now that I have seen the complete collection.

Michael Allis has edited the letters with a light touch – in fact, rather too light a touch, for one is not always sure exactly what the writer is referring to, especially since, with very few exceptions, Newman's and Wallace's sides of the correspondence have not survived. One-sided correspondence does not always need explanation or clarification: I happened to be reading a volume of Virginia Woolf's letters when the Bantock letters arrived, and the ability of a writer such as Woolf to capture the sights, sounds, and smells of a scene, even in an 'ordinary' letter to a friend, render the other side of the correspondence almost superfluous. That is not usually the case with Bantock, for while Newman and Wallace knew the situations he was discussing, we do not; and when much of the subject matter is of a prosaic nature, and not always interesting in itself, we the readers need rather more scene-setting than is provided by the editor. Nevertheless, letters – even business ones – can be written from a person's 'insidest inside' (as Elgar told Jaeger), and so much of the content of this book is not only fascinating, but reveals details of the character of the protagonists hitherto unsuspected by me.

Neither book is cheap, and with a recommended retail price of £75, the 'Letters' is, by some distance, the most expensive book I have ever purchased. While I appreciate that books of this nature will never be best-sellers, I do expect that for the money the publisher will have taken care over the presentation of the text. Sadly, much of the book has the appearance of a text file that has been dumped into a publishing programme, and printed where it landed. There are many instances in which the first two lines of an address appear at the bottom of one page, with the second two lines and the text of the letter on the next. In the worst instances, a lengthy footnote follows those first two lines of address, tricking the eye into mistaking it for the text of the letter. And only the first paragraph of a letter is indented, so that the only way the eye can differentiate between paragraphs is by noticing that the last line of a paragraph is not right-justified. This is just plain shoddy at any price, never mind at 25p a page!

Nevertheless I am grateful to Boydell for giving us these books, and with them the opportunity of learning more about important characters in British musical life. Search online and you will find both at substantial discounts, or pester your local library into getting them for you. They are well worth investigating.

Martin Bird

Florian Csizmadia: *Leitmotivik und verwandte Techniken in den Chorwerken von Edward Elgar. Analysen und Kontexte*
Berlin: Verlag Dr. Köster, 2017

When the editor asked me to review this book it was both a surprise and a pleasure to me: somewhat surprisingly in that it is a book on Elgar in German which therefore, at least at first glance, might seem to be less interesting for the majority of the readers of this Journal. And a pleasure, too: first of course, as will be seen, because of the high quality of this volume, but also as it is the author's doctoral thesis, written at the Institute of Musicology of the University of Hamburg where I studied and received my own PhD twenty years ago.

Besides his musicological research, Florian Csizmadia is a conductor in North-East Germany, thus also championing Elgar's music with this other part of his activities. With his Philharmonisches Orchester Vorpommern he performed, for example, in 2017 the First Symphony and the *Enigma* Variations, and next on the agenda is the Second Symphony in June 2018.

To take up the issue of language, it should be stated that the book is written in a very clear and pleasant style, fortunately refraining from using a deliberately intricate idiom as is occasionally to be found in German musicology. Hence, with 'usual' knowledge of German there should be no difficulties to follow Csizmadia's reflections, especially as all quotations from English sources are given in the original language.

The topic of the book is a highly interesting but at the same time a quite complex one: the use of leitmotifs and related techniques in Elgar's choral and orchestral works. The large-sized volume (30x21 cm) comprises 533 pages. On 300-odd of them the author approaches altogether thirteen compositions in chronological order – from *The Black Knight* to *The Spirit of England*. Before that he elaborates on the background in six chapters, as described below.

Following an introduction which outlines the current state of research, in Chapter 2 is given a detailed overview on the theory and history of the leitmotif. It starts with a definition from the 1898 edition of *Stainer and Barrett's Dictionary of Musical Terms*: 'A guiding theme associated with a special person, act, or sentiment in an extended composition'. Then the history of the concept is examined. The earliest mention of the term 'Leitmotiv' can be ascribed to the Austrian historian of music August Wilhelm Ambros who in 1860 applied it, interestingly enough, equally to the hitherto completed operas of Richard Wagner and to compositions by Franz Liszt: notably *Lohengrin* and Liszt's Symphonic Poems *Tasso*, *Trionfo e Lamento* and *Die Ideale* as well as, remarkably, his *Missa Solennis* from 1856. Subsequently, Csizmadia depicts the use and further development of the leitmotif technique by Wagner with whose name the term famously is connected. An important issue – not least with regard to the application of leitmotifs by later composers like Elgar – is the question how a musical motif can be provided with an extramusical content. A little unexpectedly, Csizmadia here doesn't take up Wagner's own remarks, who in his book *Oper und Drama* dealt in detail with this problem. He distinguished between three moments: 'Vergegenwärtigung' (realisation:



when a motif is sung for the first time to words which in this way furnish a particular meaning to it), 'Erinnerung' (remembrance: when at a later point in the drama the motif appears again in the orchestra, and the listener thus recollects its meaning) and, finally, 'Ahnung' (presentiment: when the orchestra plays a motif before it appears for the first time together with words and thus anticipates its meaning, awaiting the listener later to remember this moment). Csizmadia also goes into detail about the 'Leitfäden' (guidelines) by Hans von Wolzogen and others which tried to illuminate Wagner's dramatic works, and he relates them very convincingly to the 'Analytical Notes' produced for Elgar's choral and orchestral compositions. Finally, techniques bearing analogy to the use of leitmotifs are explained by taking examples of a couple of Verdi's operas and Bizet's *Carmen*.

The next three chapters present depictions of the so-called English Musical Renaissance (Chapter 3), including fine insights into the adoption in England of Wagner's music and especially of his leitmotif technique; of the English choral music scene (Chapter 4); and of choral and orchestral works in the Victorian era (Chapter 5), which Csizmadia differentiates into several categories: Oratorio and Sacred Cantata, Dramatic Cantata on a secular topic, Choral Ballad and non-dramatic secular Cantata, Ethical Oratorio/Cantata, Ode. The last chapter of the book's first part tries to describe Elgar's position in the history of English music and in the English Musical Renaissance, dealing with his musical education, his knowledge of German, Italian, French and English music, possible influences on his musical style, his genuineness, his method of composing and others.

In all these chapters as well as in the following ones it is to be appreciated that Csizmadia presents his ideas and statements in a well-rounded way: distinctly, but considering adverse opinions and judging them objectively; clearly cherishing Elgar's music, but not worshipping it.

Full of interesting results, too, is the second part. Here Elgar's choral and orchestral works are studied in detail, with an emphasis, obviously, on the composer's use of leitmotif and similar techniques, yet also giving a wealth of additional information. Each chapter displays a lucid structure with a lot of revealing tables, clearly printed musical examples etc. Of course, the largest chapters are assigned to *The Dream of Gerontius*, *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* but about twenty pages are allocated for *Lux Christi (The Light of Life)*, *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* and *Caractacus*, too. Somewhat surprisingly, *Te Deum and Benedictus* op. 34 is included. I am not quite convinced that it should be a part of this study. In any case, its designation as 'Elgar's only bigger liturgical work' is not quite correct, as *O Hearken Thou* op. 64, *Great is the Lord* op. 67 and *Give unto the Lord* op. 74 are not much smaller compositions.

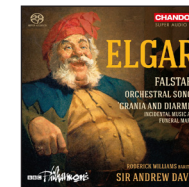
Florian Csizmadia finishes his last chapter – a four-page summary – with the assessment that Elgar's distinct and quite independent use of leitmotif techniques is based on the composer's aspiration after artistic authenticity, and nicely adds that here, too, the words apply which Elgar himself employed to characterize the slow movement of his String Quartet: 'there is something in it that has never been done before'.

Alexander Odefey

CD REVIEWS

Falstaff; Incidental music to Grania and Diarmid; Songs, Op.59 and 60; The Wind at Dawn; The Pipes of Pan; Pleading; The King's Way; Kindly Do Not Smoke

Roderick Williams, baritone
BBC Philharmonic Orchestra
Sir Andrew Davis



This is a CD that seems to contain something for everyone: Elgar's last major purely orchestral work, a short work of a satirical nature, one of his greatest marches (*Grania and Diarmid*) and some of his finest orchestral songs. *The King's Way* is poor company for these but I admit it is good to hear it sung so well in this performance. It seems a long time since a new recording of *Falstaff* appeared and in a performance and recording of this quality it is all the more welcome. Added to this are some gloriously idiomatic performances by Roderick Williams. In a recent article for the *Daily Telegraph* that wise commentator Simon Heffer called Williams 'our finest living baritone' which, bearing in mind Gerald Finley is Canadian, is a statement with which I am not going to disagree. Heffer goes on to state that Williams is 'this most sensitive and accomplished of singers'. Again, that statement is inarguable for Williams has the ability to get to the heart of serious music (just listen to his new interpretation of Butterworth's *A Shropshire Lad* on the SOMM label). On the other hand, he joyfully invests *Kindly do not SMOKE* with the right level of mock seriousness it requires.

To be labelled a 'National Treasure' (as Williams was in December during a BBC broadcast) when only in your fifties is something; but I would go along with that too! Talking of 'National Treasures', Sir Andrew Davis is, I suppose, now our senior Elgarian (he pips Sir Mark at that post by a couple of years). I looked out an old LP from 1972 which I believe was Sir Andrew's first recording as a conductor. How things change! W D & H O Wills 'makers of Embassy cigarettes' and then sponsors of the London Philharmonic Orchestra financed a series of recordings for Classics for Pleasure including this collection of patriotic works recorded in the Royal Albert Hall, in which a choral version of *P & C* No 1 nestled alongside *Zadok the Priest*, *Rule Britannia* and the *Old 100th*. Sir Andrew's conducting style has certainly changed for his photograph on the back of the disc suggests an uncharacteristic flamboyance! Three years later Lyrita issued Davis's first recorded thoughts on *Falstaff* and more than twenty years after that he recorded the work (coupled with the *Grania and Diarmid* music) with the BBC Symphony Orchestra for Telefunken. I have to confess that I have neither of these works in my collection but at least I can come to this performance fresh without the need to make comparisons.

Chandos
CHSA 5188

This is, first and foremost, a brilliant recording. It is Chandos at its best: warm but detailed, clear but smooth with a wide but comfortable dynamic range. The recording was made in MediaCity, Salford and exposes the BBC Philharmonic to severe scrutiny which, by and large, they pass with flying colours which are obvious from the outset as Falstaff begins. The lushness of the sound with which the quick portraits of Falstaff and Prince Hal are invested is very seductive. There is no delay as we are thrown into Falstaff's world, the clarity of the recording assisting us on our journey. This is obvious, say, between cues 11 and 12. Falstaff's is at times blundering and at others he attempts at creeping about. All this is managed beautifully as the music starts and stops. The chattering bassoons are clarity itself, the players in tune with the music as is the clarinettist at bar 317 and the bars that follow. I loved the way Falstaff and his party lumber off to London at cue 110 and the dismissal (cue 129) by Hal (now very much the king: 'Grandioso') is heart-breaking and the music remains so to the end: 'The King hath killed his heart' indeed.

This one of the finest *Falstaff* recordings I have heard for years. It is beautifully played and recorded and Sir Andrew judges the mercurial changes in tempi and Elgar's sound to perfection.

I need add little to the comments above about Roderick Williams. His diction is immaculate and the way he shades his voice to cover the various and very different songs is magical. These are some of the finest performances of opus 59 and 60 I have heard and, in these capable hands (Williams, Davis and the BBC PO), Elgar emerges as a great songwriter. Thank you Chandos; this is a superb recording!

Andrew Neill

I saw this CD advertised and, I fear, thought 'another *Falstaff*, I can skip that'. But when visiting Andrew Neill I spotted his copy, took a closer look, and thought 'the orchestral songs and *Grania and Diarmid*, I must buy that', and I must say I'm delighted that I did.

Armed with my copy of Vol.11 of the Complete Edition, 'Solo Songs with Orchestra', I sat down to a session of pure enjoyment. Some of the songs, notably those from Op.59, written for Muriel Foster, are more usually sung by a soprano or contralto, but I fell completely under the spell of Roderick Williams' singing. And somehow the Chandos engineers have managed to make his intimate and sensitive singing appear naturally balanced against a full symphony orchestra: there is absolutely no sense of a spotlight soloist here.

Chandos are to be congratulated, too, on the wondrous orchestral sound and balance that they have captured: not forgetting, of course, the BBC Philharmonic and Andrew Davis, who have had more than a little to do with the success of this disk. I have said before that Davis's Elgar performances over the last five years or so have become absolutely top-notch – everything just sounds completely right and unforced, and Chandos are providing a 21st

century take on the 20th century Elgar sound we used to get from EMI – as near perfection as one could wish for. Listen to the *Grania* extracts to hear what I mean.

Which just leaves *Falstaff*. It has always been my Achilles heel where Elgar's music is concerned – I find it hard to get to grips with and, for me, this performance never takes wing. It all sounds a little too calculated, and perhaps that's because Davis is ten per cent slower than most other conductors. Looking through my *Falstaff* CDs, I only found one as slow as Davis, and that turned out to be by Davis and the BBC Symphony Orchestra! It just doesn't match Elgar's idea of the multi-faceted character of Sir John Falstaff as described to Basil Maine: 'You see, there isn't a word to be said for the buffoon idea. A knight, a gentleman and a soldier. That's it.' Oh for a bit of get up and go!

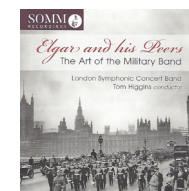
But I keep returning to the remaining 40 minutes on the CD and, after all, that's as much as you got on most LPs.

Martin Bird

Elgar and his Peers The Art of the Military Band

Elgar/Evans - Pomp & Circumstance March No 2
Elgar/Higgins - Pomp & Circumstance March No 5
Elgar/Winterbottom – With Proud Thanksgiving
Elgar/Geehl – Severn Suite
Bach/Elgar – The Tower Chorales
Beecham – March
O'Donnell – Three Humoresques
Vaughan Williams – Sea Songs
Vaughan Williams – Toccata Marziale

The Joyful Company of Singers
London Symphonic Concert Band
Tom Higgins



SOMMCD 0170

This disc contains two 'what ifs' and is a happy memorial to Andrew Lyle who died last year. Andrew edited the arrangement of *With Proud Thanksgiving* for the performance and was able to hear the end result (which he approved) before he died. The performance is a 'what if' because it is the nearest we are likely to get to the sound Elgar and his arranger Winterbottom might have imagined when the arrangement was commissioned at the end of 1919. *With Proud Thanksgiving*, a shortened and amended version of *For the Fallen* was arranged by Elgar for the planned unveiling of the cenotaph on 11 November 1920. This event, although important, became somewhat overshadowed by the ceremony for the burial of the Unknown Warrior in the Nave of Westminster Abbey which was planned to follow the ceremony at the cenotaph. The Elgar piece was dropped and, except for recordings and

the occasional performance of Elgar's own orchestral version, *With Proud Thanksgiving* dropped from view.

Not being familiar with military band orchestration Elgar asked Frank Winterbottom a Professor at Kneller Hall to make the arrangement and it is this we hear on the CD. Recorded in the warm acoustic of St John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood, the London Symphonic Concert Band and choir (the excellent Joyful Company of Singers) blend well together in a performance which I find deeply moving. Had the work been performed as intended the nearby members of what was then the largest crowd to have assembled in London (patiently waiting to file past the grave in the Abbey) would have heard a worthy tribute to those who had died in the Great War. The combination of military band and choir is unusual and no doubt predicates against future performances. So, this excellently balanced performance which builds inexorably to its powerful climax is a must for all Elgarians. Although recorded 'inside' I believe we can now obtain an idea of what Elgar had in mind for the first time. *With Proud Thanksgiving* is not just a crude shortening of *For the Fallen*. With the tympani, brass and woodwind now dominant I think we can hear how effective the work would have been 'outside' as the music carried up and down Whitehall.

So Many True Princesses Who Have Gone (The Queen Alexandra Memorial Ode) is another 'what if'. Originally given its first performance with choir and Military Band as the memorial to the late Queen, the unveiling by King George V took place on 8 June 1932. Elgar's setting of words by the newly appointed Poet Laureate, John Masefield, had been arranged by Major Andrew Harris the Senior Director of Music of the Brigade of Guards. Alas, despite endless searches, Harris's score has been lost and like Anthony Payne, who created an orchestral score of the work in 2002, Tom Higgins has made his own version for military band that, to my ear, sounds just right - the heaviness of the forces mitigated by some skilful orchestration that allows the choir to be heard in what are at times difficult words. Elgar's mastery of word setting is more than apparent here as he overcomes some of Masefield's less inspired verses.

Higgins has also edited the scores of Elgar's Bach arrangements: an opportunity to hear the music Elgar made to be played atop the tower of Worcester Cathedral in 1911 a tradition carried forward on by many subsequent Three Choirs Festivals. The other Elgar arrangements are the second and fifth *Pomp & Circumstance Marches* arranged by C. Evans and Higgins respectively and the military band version of the *Severn Suite*. This is the one by Henry Geehl who, despite his claims to the contrary, did not make the brass band arrangement. To me, the warmer sound of the military band with woodwind to the fore, makes this the more desirable version notwithstanding Elgar's own scoring of the brass band version. I suggest the listener samples track 12 'Tournament' where the chattering woodwind offer a different timbre to other versions. Allow the music to segue into 'The Cathedral' and this 'sound world' becomes very obvious. I cannot praise the recording engineer, Ben Connellan highly enough for beautiful balance he

achieves in these works as is obvious from these two tracks alone.

The CD also contains some original music and two miniatures by Vaughan Williams. His *Sea Songs* is well known 'Portsmouth' preceded by 'Admiral Benbow' and followed by 'Princess Royal'. However, Vaughan Williams's *Toccata* is something else; a complex, driven piece which grabs the listener's attention from the start and keeps the attention to the end. Bertram Walton O'Donnell was unknown to me before the recording came to be made. He was one of those musicians from a bygone age: one of three brothers all of whom became bandmasters. His delightful *Humoresques* refer to the novels of Jane Austen as the titles of each piece make clear: 'Pride and Prejudice', 'Prevarication' and 'Petulance and Persuasion'. Finally, there is Sir Thomas Beecham's *March* 'for large wind band' from 1947. This is a true find: tuneful, gay (in the old-fashioned use of the word) with a great sense of propulsion. This is another reason to buy this valuable and endlessly fascinating disc.

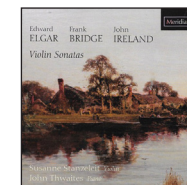
Before proceeding I should declare an interest in the production of this CD. I attended some of the recording sessions and wrote the notes for the accompanying booklet. My proof reading is also deficient for which I apologise. I note that the booklet prints Track 11 as marked as 'Worcester Cathedral' and not 'Worcester Castle' which is how the movement should be named.

Andrew Neill

Elgar, Bridge and Ireland: Violin Sonatas

Susanne Stanzeleit, Violin

John Thwaites, Piano



Meridian

CDE84648

I have always felt that the three major chamber works that Elgar wrote at around the time of the Great War present particular difficulties to performers both in the concert hall and the recording studio. Although by this time he was an acknowledged master of music for large forces, Elgar's track record as a composer of music for small groups was, to say the least, limited. The Sonata for Violin that he produced towards the end of the war, may not be absolutely top drawer Elgar, but does, however, contain much of interest and, as with much of Elgar's music, wears its heart on its sleeve. This new recording from Meridian presents the Sonata together with Frank Bridge's Sonata of 1922 and John Ireland's Sonata No.2 of 1917.

In his opening movement Elgar chooses to omit any form of thematic development, preferring to exploit material deriving from the opening bars in other ways. Ms Stanzeleit treats the opening of the movement rather delicately at the expense of a more forthright approach. As a result the effect is somewhat pale in comparison to some other performances available on record, where a more fulsome tone might perhaps prove more engaging.

The central section of this three movement work is entitled *Romance*. It is the music that Alice Elgar imagined as 'Wood Magic'. If it is, as some have suggested, Elgar's representation of tiptoeing through the woods, then

the playfulness suggested should be more in evidence. Further on in the movement the themes derived from the opening are presented in a much broader way and come across far more fluently.

Allegro, ma non troppo is how Elgar directs his players in the final movement of the Sonata and ‘fast, but not too much’, is exactly what you get from Stanzeleit and Thwaites. The playing here moves along with purpose whilst never sounding rushed. As a result many details in both the melodic line and the accompaniment are evident and the performance is brought to a very satisfying conclusion via Elgar’s heartfelt tribute to his friend, Maria Joshua, the dedicatee of the Sonata, of whose death he had just learned.

Elgar’s piano writing can easily overpower the violin line, requiring intelligent and thoughtful pianism as displayed here, as essential to the success of any performance of this work.

Throughout, John Thwaites proves himself to be a sympathetic accompanist, able to tailor his playing to the best effect.

Stuart Freed



Elgar: The New England Connection
Elgar: Enigma Variations
George Chadwick: Symphonic Sketches
 BBC National Orchestra of Wales
 Andrew Constantine

Orchid Classics
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Do we really need another recording of the *Enigma Variations*? Well, when it’s played so well, and with such loving devotion to detail, the answer must be yes. At first hearing I thought it a very spacious performance, and I went to check against other CDs on my shelves. Toscanini (NBC SO) clocks in at just under 26 minutes; Elder (Halle) at 28; Gardiner (Vienna PO) 30.34; Thomson (LPO) 31.24; Weldon (Philharmonia) 31.48; Brabbins (BBC PO) 33.15; Eduardo Mata (LSO) 34.05 and Skrowaczewski (Saarbrücken Radio SO) at 35.33. So this new recording at just over 31 minutes is about average length. Not that speed is the answer, but this recording has an unhurried approach that allows the myriad details of Elgar’s wonderful scoring to come through. The ‘Friends Pictured Within’ are affectionately drawn and the BBC NOW, who must have this music in their blood, play with warmth, passion and virtuosity. Listen to the graceful movement of Variation 8 (WN) or the hush of the strings at the start of *Nimrod*. The only one I thought could have benefitted with more movement was Variation 6 (*Ysobel*), the tempo making her sound rather lugubrious here.

The recording is excellent, as we would expect with Andrew Keener in charge. Woodwind detail, the inner strings, the brass sonorities at whatever dynamic, are all faithfully captured. My one gripe is that although the timpani are well focused, other percussion are too recessed for my taste, a common problem these days, so I would like to hear more bass drum and cymbals

in *Troyte* and the Finale, more triangle in GRS and the Finale, and more of the ‘ship’s engines’ timpani roll in the Variation 13 *Romanza*. Fortunately the organ makes its welcome appearance at the end – what a pity he is not credited in the orchestral list in the booklet.

A real boon, though, is the companion work. George Chadwick was an exact contemporary of Elgar, and the conductor’s excellent booklet notes tells of the American’s attempts to make friendly contact with Elgar, usually to be politely rebuffed by the ever aloof and reserved Elgar. They eventually did meet, and Chadwick must have been very aware, and very envious, of Elgar’s growing fame and reputation, a situation that he never achieved himself. He studied in Europe, and like Edward Macdowell became one of those American based composers sounding far more European than American. I’d never heard a note of his music, and his *Symphonic Sketches* proved to be a real delight. It is in four movements, and the opening *Jubilee* explodes into life with exhilarating rhythmic vigour and colourful orchestration. But there are some raptly lyrical passages too. It reminded me of Dvorak, or perhaps more surprisingly Coleridge Taylor. The second movement *Noel* is a lyrical depiction of a wintry Christmas night, with cor anglais prominent, while the third is entitled *Hobgoblin*. I must say these sound rather jolly hobgoblins, having a good time. There is nothing of Liszt’s, or Saint-Saëns’s *diablerie* in their merriment. The last movement *A Vagabond Ballad* depicts the adventures of vagrants living in the woods in rural America. It sounds to me rather bitty, and despite some interesting and weird and wonderful orchestral effects – the bass clarinet in particular given a good run for its money – it lacks a coherent narrative to bind the music together. Again the BBC NOW play wonderfully well for Constantine, who shapes what must have been an unfamiliar score with affection and commitment.

Anyone looking for a well played and well recorded *Enigma*, coupled with an attractive and colourful work by an American contemporary, will not be disappointed with this disc.

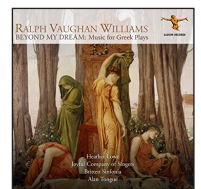
Barry Collett

Vaughan Williams: Music for Greek Plays – *The Bacchae, Electra, Iphigenia in Tauris*

Heather Lowe (mezzo-soprano); Joyful Company of Singers; Britten Sinfonia conducted by Alan Tongue

Yet again the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society has put us entirely in their debt by issuing a CD of complete unknown Vaughan Williams’ music. When I think of VW and Greek plays, I think of *The Wasps*, written for the University of Cambridge production of 1909. In fact, when I think of Greek plays (which I confess is rarely), I think of the University of Cambridge, as my father-in-law produced a number of them.

But these are rather different affairs, the music written in 1911 and 1912 at the behest of Gilbert Murray, Regius Professor of Greek at Oxford, for



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productions that never came to fruition. But much of the music did, more than an hour to be precise, and some at least was performed at the Royal Court Theatre in London in May 1912.

The music, for soprano solo, women's voices, and small orchestra, as lain dormant in the British Library for many years. It has been transcribed and prepared for performance by Alan Tongue – not a simple job given the legibility of the manuscript and the fact that only a short-score with indications of instrumentation survives for *Iphigenia*. Alan has done a stunning job (though he confesses that the less than convincing cymbal crash at the climax of *Iphigenia* is down to him rather than VW) as transcriber, orchestrator, and conductor; and the recording quality, too, is all that one could wish.

And what of the music? Well, discover for yourself – a mixture of 'typical' VW, familiar VW (there seems to be a snatch of *Lark Ascending* in there somewhere), and some which seems quite 'new' VW to me: in Gilbert Murray's words, 'he sacrifices the music proper to the rhythm of the verse, so that the poetry and rhythm completely predominate, which is what the verse-writer naturally likes ... He can feel the rhythm of the English verse'.

Martin Bird

LETTERS

Elgar and Parry

From Kevin Allen

I have read many books about Elgar, and the English Musical Renaissance in general, that quote from the Diary that Sir Hubert Parry kept between his years at Eton in 1864 and his death in 1918. This document, as well as constituting the spiritual autobiography of a remarkable 'Renaissance man', is a major source of social, cultural and musical background for its period, and is long overdue for publication, saving wear and tear on the originals, and enabling further scholarly investigation. I have been transcribing it for some time, but the task is one which a more collective effort would expedite. With the kind permission the Editor, and of Parry's descendants, I would like to make an appeal for volunteers who would be prepared to help with the transcription, being responsible for copying a portion of the Diary as a Word Document, working from photocopies of the original. Volunteers would be free to choose the amount of transcription they might wish to undertake, in their own timeframe.

Further information from me at allenkevc@aol.com.

ELGAR VIEWED FROM AFAR

The name of Edward Elgar is mentioned several times in Part 1, volume 3, of Albert Lavignac and Lionel de la Laurencie's mammoth *Encyclopédie de la musique et dictionnaire du conservatoire* (Paris: Delagrave, 1921-1931; see page 72). Devoted to historical matters, Part 1 is split into 5 volumes, the third of which solely focuses on French, Belgian and English music.

Elgar appears in five entries of the 50-page chapter devoted to music in the British Isles. In the section on oratorio (p.1897), *The Dream of Gerontius*, *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* are presented, along with Granville Bantock's *Christ in the Wilderness* and *Gethsemane*, as the first formal rebels against the allegedly unobtrusive Handel-Mendelssohn "model". Seen as "religious, mystical rhapsodies", Elgar's works are said to illustrate their author's departure from the extensive use of the massive, solid, diatonic and therefore typically English, chorus. With his subtle instrumentation and his strong emotional power, Elgar is credited with having less hold on the "genuine" oratorio public than Parry.

If, in the entry on ballet, Elgar is merely mentioned as the author of *Crown of India* (p.1901), he features more prominently (see p.1905) in the section on "orchestral music". He is there praised for the know-how displayed in his orchestration, for which he is seen as being both traditional and modern. He is also said to have no successor, in 1931, in the art of instrumentation.

On p.1909, Elgar's name appears in the list of British composers to have been recently knighted, a fact already mentioned on p.1877 in an introductory passage intent on demonstrating, somewhat laboriously, that there is such a thing as English music in the nineteenth century...

Pierre Degott

sonnelle, mais chacun cependant avec son mérite propre et caractérisé, il faut citer encore : Charles Hubert Hastings Parry (1848-), avec *Judith* (1888), *Job* (1892), *King Saul* (1894), etc.; Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-), *Resurrection* (1875), *Holy Children* (1885), *Eden* (1891); Frederick Hymen Cowen (1852-), *Deluge* (1878), *Ruth* (1887). Parmi ceux-ci, l'ouvrage de Parry, quoique un peu entaché d'anachronisme par son manque de modernité, est d'une puissance brutale et a reçu l'accueil le plus populaire.

Edward Elgar (1857-) représente la première révolte formelle contre la technique Haendel-Mendelssohn. Ses oratorios ont été *Gerontius* (1900), *The Apostles* (1903), *The Kingdom* (1906). En réalité ceux-ci sont des rhapsodies mystiques religieuses, dans sa manière spéciale. Granville Bantock (1868-) représente aussi l'orientation nouvelle, avec *Christ in the Wilderness* (1907), *Gethsemane* (1910).

Depuis le jour où Haendel trouva qu'en Angleterre l'opéra est un placement ruineux, et l'oratorio (tel qu'il l'a inventé) un placement de tout repos, tous les livres donnent pour raison de ce fait le sérieux de l'esprit anglais. Il est probable que ce trait de caractère national joue son rôle. Mais c'est le chœur qui donne la clef de la situation. La passion des Anglais pour l'action individuelle leur fait préférer un divertissement auquel ils participent à un divertissement dont ils ne sont que les spectateurs. Depuis l'aube de l'histoire, les Anglais se sont adonnés au chant choral, un fait qui est en rapport direct avec la question de l'origine de la polyphonie. Les chœurs simples diatoniques et à grand effet de Haendel ont cet avantage qu'ils donnent à un individu ayant peu de science technique de la musique, le moyen de prendre part à une fonction publique importante. Il en est de même pour les compositeurs suivants. Les sociétés chorales d'oratorio anglais sont devenues des clubs de chant, et chacun de ces clubs entraîne une partie notable du grand public à assister aux concerts. Telles sont les raisons qui font la popularité de ce mode musical. Elgar, par exemple, est un compositeur qui possède une grande facilité d'émotion, avec une science spéciale de l'orchestre, mais qui use peu du chœur dans l'ensemble de ses ouvrages : il n'a, pour cette raison, moins de prise sur le véritable public d'oratorio que n'en a Parry.

Il y a eu des marques évidentes dans les quinze dernières années, qui montrent que l'oratorio de Haendel et de Mendelssohn est mort comme forme d'art. Le développement des rapports de l'art anglais avec la musique étrangère, la connaissance plus approfondie de la musique profane et l'accroissement de l'habileté technique des chanteurs se sont unies pour achever ce résultat. Des œuvres plus brèves, plus continues et plus profanes sont en train de remplacer l'oratorio. Cependant, pour que de telles œuvres deviennent populaires, la façon de traiter le chœur compte beaucoup.

Musique d'église. — Aucun domaine ne présente moins de faits simples traduits en un langage clair et intelligible pour le lecteur non préparé que celui de la musique des offices des églises anglaises. La terminologie technique de la liturgie catholique, répartie entre le latin et la langue vulgaire, est très diverse et incompréhensible pour les non-catholiques

en elle toutes les variétés de croyances et de pratiques. Puis, en dehors de l'Eglise anglicane, il existe d'autres dénominations non catholiques innombrables. Les termes musicaux qui se rattachent aux offices des églises sont également divers, souvent ambigus, et dans certains cas foncièrement obscurs. Toute une philosophie pratique, par exemple, réside dans les mots anglais *Chant, Plain-chant, Tone, Mode*, mais combien de musiciens pourraient en donner aujourd'hui une explication philosophique? En présence d'un sujet aussi complexe, il faut ici se borner à donner une esquisse légère.

Le premier office chrétien a été la célébration de l'Eucharistie, que l'on solennisa par le moyen de cérémonies et d'oraisons plus ou moins improvisées, en y entremêlant des psaumes de David ou des hymnes. La musique dont on se servait pour la prière, le psaume ou l'hymne se composait de formules courtes de chant à l'unisson, hébraïque ou grec. La célébration de l'Eucharistie s'est développée en des formes fixes, qui ont été publiées plus tard dans la liturgie romaine par le livre du Missel; l'autorité ecclésiastique centrale les a finalement réglementées trois fois en 1370, 1604 et 1634. Le mot *Messe* est le dernier mot de la célébration, la phrase de renvoi, *Ite, Missa est*. L'*Ordinaire* de la Messe est cette partie qui ne varie jamais. Le *Propre* de la Messe est la partie qui varie selon le jour, la saison, etc. *Pari passu*, simultanément et parallèlement avec la consolidation des formes liturgiques pour la célébration de l'Eucharistie, les formules musicales à l'unisson qui s'y rattachaient étaient consolidées par itération, prolongement, variation, combinaison, etc.; de sorte que le Missel final a été un texte dans lequel chaque mot avait une note musicale prescrite et à lui personnelle. La musique du *Propre* de la Messe fut réglée la première. Voilà ce qui est le plain-chant. De la matière fournie par la prière, le psaume, etc., distincte de la célébration de l'Eucharistie, ont été formées les 7 *Horn Canonica* ou offices monastiques pour les 7 heures spéciales du jour; et celles-ci, après compilation, ont donné le *Breviaire*. Le plain-chant a été adapté de la même façon au *Breviaire*, par autorité ecclésiastique, mais avec moins de rigueur. De la vaste masse de mélodie du plain-chant à l'unisson ainsi construite, 8 formules courtes sont demeurées plus ou moins familières jusqu'à nos jours, c'est-à-dire les 8 *Psalms-tones* avec terminaisons variables, attachés aux psaumes de David et aux demi-psaumes qui se nomment *Canticles*. On appelle ces « *Psalm-tones* » en Angleterre les « *Gregorian Tones* », sans raison bien précise.

L'Eglise réformée anglaise a compilé des parties du Missel et du Breviaire, surtout celui-ci; elle a traduit cette matière du latin en anglais; et a fait ainsi le « *Book of Common Prayer* » de 1549. Il y eut à cette époque au moins 5 Breviaires différents en Angleterre, à Salisbury (Sarum), York, Lincoln, Bangor et Hereford; on a adopté celui de Salisbury comme étant le meilleur. Le *Communion Service* est venu de la célébration de l'Eucharistie; *Morning Prayer*, des Matines, *Lauds* et *Primo*; *Evening Prayer*, des Vêpres et du Compline. Déjà avant la Réforme les *Hours* monastiques s'étaient condensées en Angleterre en trois divisions analogues nom-

100 YEARS AGO ...

1918 opened with Alice wondering: 'What will this year bring forth – A momentous time. We pray & trust for complete victory – the triumph of right & humanity over fiendish barbarity'. Elgar was still unwell, and went with Alice to see Sir Maurice Abbot-Anderson 'who tried testing mouf, nose, &c. found all very well'. A week later 'Sir Maurice decided to try Xrays', which revealed 'mercifully no sign of disease D.G. Tummy what they call dropped'. Later Carice wrote: 'For the next few weeks he seems to have been very much up and down, after which he began to go for long walks; to the Cemetery at Highgate for instance'. But there was no improvement, and at the end of the month he went again 'to Sir Maurice – who promised he shd. be better soon'.

He muddled on through February, going on the 12th 'to Athenaeum – first time for months', and three days later going with Lalla Vandervelde 'to lunch with the Bernard Shaws ... Much interesting conversation'. Carice recalled that 'they took to each other at once, and Shaw was both surprised and flattered that Elgar still remembered the articles on music which Corno di Bassetti had written for the Star as long ago as 1888'.

The war continued to cast a shadow over proceedings, and on the 16th there was a 'Raid in evening. Only 1 Gotha got through but it dropped bomb on house by Chelsea Hospital & buried the poor people in it – horrible', and the following day 'Lalla & Mr. Boulton to tea. Quite a nice quiet man. E. went through 'In the South' with him – he seemed to really understand'. It was their first meeting.

On 6 March Elgar went with Sir Maurice to Herbert Tilley, the leading throat surgeon of the day: 'Tonsils condemned' was Elgar's summary of the consultation. Next day Alice was 'busy preparing for Sunday afternoon when Mr. Reed is to bring his Quartet'. There were 20 guests at Severn House that afternoon, when the quartet 'played beautifully & sd. it was such a pleasure to come & to play in this room – everyone loved it'.

Elgar's tonsillectomy took place on the 15th. 'A. spent an anxious horrible 40 mins. then Sir M. & Tilley came & told her all was well. Sir M. showed her the worst tonsil all over abscess matter & a black stone, pea size, in it'. He returned home on the 22nd, where he immediately sketched a sinuous 9/8 theme, which in one of its incarnations was to be 'very full, sweet and sonorous'. It was the first subject of the Cello Concerto.

On 25 March he 'began a delightful Quartett. A remote lovely 1st subject – Wrote all day', but he was much in need of a period of convalescence away from London, and on 12 April 'Sir Maurice motored me & luggage to Hut. Alice ardd. by train'. He stayed with Frank Schuster until the 25th.

Meanwhile Alice had been arranging to take Brinkwells for a further period, and she spent the rest of the month packing and preparing: Carice noted ruefully that 'Father's only contribution to all this was choosing tools which he would need for the woodwork he did'.

Martin Bird

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