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28 Nottingham Road Bingham Nottinghamshire NG13 8AT
Email: journal@elgar.org

December 2017 Vol. 20, No. 3

Editorial	3
From Beethoven to Elgar: the representation of Christ on the English oratorio scene <i>Pierre Degott</i>	4
Edward Elgar and Gustav Mahler: 'the only man living who could do it' (part three) <i>Alexander Odefey</i>	25
Tales from the Complete Edition–10: There but for the King's appendix ... <i>John Norris</i>	52
Music review <i>Martin Bird</i>	65
Book review <i>Sarah-Lisa Beier</i>	67
CD reviews <i>Andrew Neill, Martin Bird, Stuart Freed, Steven Halls</i>	70
Letters <i>Christopher Morley</i>	81
Elgar viewed from afar <i>Pierre Degott</i>	82
Recording Notes <i>Michael Plant</i>	84
100 Years Ago <i>Martin Bird</i>	85

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Front Cover: Ludwig van Beethoven (1770-1827) and Edward Elgar (1857-1934), images from the editor's archive and Arthur Reynold's Archive.

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

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

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

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

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

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

References: Please position footnote markers *after* punctuation – wherever possible at the end of a sentence.

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

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

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

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

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

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Editorial

Dear readers,

Usually I think writing an 'editorial' is not absolutely necessary because the essays can speak for themselves. However, as we had various contributions this year about Elgar's connections to the Continent, I just would like to draw your attention briefly to the aspect that over the years Elgar's works increasingly appeal in various guises to audiences which did not grow up with them.

Just the other day there were the regular broadcasts of the 'Last Night' on German TV and radio but popularizing Elgar's famous march is just scratching the surface. For me, great music should not just add some flavour to an event but the focus must be on the essence of the music and the composer. In Germany earlier this year there were performances of *The Dream of Gerontius* as a part of 'Britannia in Bamberg', the violin concerto in Berlin, the cello concerto plus the *Enigma Variations* in Ludwigshafen, *The Banner of Saint George* in Hanover and many more in other cities. One of the most challenging efforts was a performance of *The Kingdom* in Cologne with a demanding accompanying programme with school projects, lectures and other concerts. Some of these are not just single events but artists add the works they newly learned to their standard repertoire and perform them at other occasions like, for example, the Bamberg String Quartet.

Compared to Elgar's time contemporary concert life has changed dramatically. Among many things is that, nowadays, productions in the original language are the rule (even when in some cases many singers just roughly know how to pronounce the words in, say, Russian and Czech opera, which can hardly be for the benefit of the poor native speakers who listen to it). Elgar's world was different. During his time, translations were common and one of the most popular and influential oratorios in the 19th century – Beethoven's *Christus am Ölberge* – was translated several times. Elgar was rooted in these 19th century traditions but also contributed to modern times as J. P. E. Harper-Scott has revealed in his book *Edward Elgar, Modernist* and his essay 'Facetten der Moderne in Elgars Musik' written for the Elgar volume in the German musicological series 'Musik-Konzepte' four years ago (the English version can be found online).

In today's concert life Elgar often gets his share next to his 19th century colleagues. I suppose that the discovery of Elgar's music abroad will bring a breath of fresh air for modern concert life and that one day Elgar will feature prominently even next to Mahler in the programmes. In the meantime, enjoy exploring the essays about Elgar's world from Beethoven to Mahler!

Meinhard Sarembo

Lit. 32 to 20th September 1930
 TEL. 938. Sh.
THE MALVERN HOTEL,
MALVERN. (55)

My dear Ludwig
 We are, as you see, unluckily out of London. On Friday next I have to come up for a lunch at the Prime Minister's to say farewell to Stamer, the retiring German ambassador. On Saturday I have to go with Elgar (our English Beethoven) to the Crystal Palace to hear a musical competition at which I know what hour.

Will you be still in London on Friday? I shall be at 4 Whitehall Court all the morning, and from 5 to 6.30 in the afternoon.

Do I have Ludwig with you?
 We must meet if possible.

Yours faithfully,
 G. Bernard Shaw

George Bernard Shaw's letter of 20th September 1930 from Malvern to the Polish-born historian and journalist Emil Ludwig with the telling line: 'Elgar (our English Beethoven)'. Apart from the concertos and the symphonies Elgar was well-acquainted with a work which is hardly known today: Beethoven's oratorio *Christus am Ölberge* (*The Mount of Olives*) which was one of the most influential oratorios of the 19th century. It was popular in Britain in various guises which throws a revealing light on the concert-life in Britain before Elgar's oratorios. (Arthur Reynold's Archive)

From Beethoven to Elgar: the representation of Christ on the English oratorio scene¹

Pierre Degott

Music-lovers familiar with Bach's Passions or Elgar's oratorios, particularly *The Light of Life* (1896) and *The Apostles* (1903), have long been used to having the figure of Jesus Christ treated as a dramatic character, and some would no doubt find it surprising that the representation of Christ was once a tricky issue in English-speaking countries. As a matter of fact, few people now remember the paradoxical tensions that once characterized the relations between the Church of England and the genre of the English oratorio, at least when it came out with Handel in the early 1730s. Even though most of the oratorio texts set to music had no other purpose than to praise the Lord and advocate a pious and virtuous life, the ecclesiastical authorities of the time – and also for many decades to come – were very much prone to seeing oratorio as a mere substitute for opera, as a musical form written with the sole purpose of satisfying the needs of pleasure-seeking audiences. One of the arguments was that, religious as it may have been in terms of subject matter, the Handelian oratorio of the 1730s and 1740s was still aesthetically dependent on forms and styles very much associated to the operatic world and hence to the secular stage. One can thus bear in mind how, at the time of the first performances of Handel's *Esther* (1732), the well-nigh accidental birth of the genre of the English oratorio actually resulted from the bishop of London's ban to stage a musical action showing biblical figures from the Old Testament. This is how Charles Burney, in his 'Sketch of the Life of Handel', evoked the circumstances that had deprived of its visual and theatrical dimension a performance requested by a member of the Royal family:

[...] the Princess Royal, [Handel's] illustrious scholar, her Royal Highness was pleased to express a desire to see [*Esther*] exhibited in action at the Opera-house in the Hay-Market, by the same young performers; but Dr. Gibson, then bishop of London, would not grant permission for its being represented on that stage, even with books in the children's hands. Mr. HANDEL, however, the next year, had it performed at that theatre, with additions to the Drama, by Humphreys; but in *still life*: that is, without action, in the same manner as Oratorios have been since constantly performed.²

- 1 The present text is a reworking of the same author's article "'Profanity out-profaned'? Enjeux éthiques et esthétiques des traductions anglaises de *Christus am Ölberge*", *La Revue Musicorum* 16 (2015), 65-78. I would like to thank Laurine Quetin for allowing me to reproduce the parts of the text that have already been published.
- 2 Charles Burney, 'A Sketch of the Life of Handel', *An Account of the Musical Performances in Westminster-Abbey, and the Pantheon, May 26th, 27th, 29th; and June the 3rd; and 5th, 1784. In Commemoration of Handel* (London: Payne and Robinson, 1785), 100-01.

A decade later it was the issue of hearing a scriptural text within the supposedly unsuitable place of the theatre that had been found problematic in Protestant England. If the first performances of *Messiah* had met with no significant opposition in Dublin in 1742, such was definitely not the case in London the year after, when several voices denounced the inadequacy of the play-house as a decent place for hearing biblical words. This is how, on 19 March 1743, an anonymous chronicler voiced his point of view in an open letter published in *The Universal Spectator*:

Sir,

[...] My [...] Purpose [...] is to consider, and, if possible, induce others to consider, the Impropriety of *Oratorios*, as they are now perform'd.

[...] An *Oratorio* either is an *Act of Religion*, or it is not; if it is, I ask if the *Playhouse* is a fit *Temple* to perform it in, or a Company of *Players* fit *Ministers of God's Word*, for in that Case such they are made.

[...] if [God's service] is not perform'd as an *Act of Religion*, but for *Diversion and Amusement* only (and indeed I believe few or none go to an *Oratorio* out of *Devotion*), what a *Prophanation* of God's Name and Word is this, to make so light Use of them? I wish every one would consider, whether, at the same Time they are *diverting* themselves, they are not accessory to the breaking of the *Third Commandment*. [...]

But it seems the *Old Testament* is not to be prophan'd alone, nor *God* by the *Name of Jehovah* only, but the *New* must be join'd with it, and *God* by the most *sacred* the *most merciful Name of Messiah*; for I'm inform'd that an *Oratorio* call'd by that Name has already been perform'd in *Ireland*, and is soon to be perform'd *here*. [...]

How will this appear to After-Ages, when it shall be read in History, that in such an Age the People of England were arriv'd to such a Height of *Impiety* and *Prophaness*, that most *sacred Things* were suffer'd to be us'd as *publick Diversions*, and that in a *Place*, and by *Persons* appropriated to the Performance not only of *light* and *vain*, but too often *prophane* and *dissolute Pieces*?³

Probably because no quotations from the New Testament were included in the libretto, the hearing of *Israel in Egypt* in April 1739 had raised no similar controversy, even though the association between the profaneness of the theatre and the sacredness of the biblical text had also been duly mentioned:

The Theatre, on this occasion, ought to be enter'd with more Solemnity than a Church; inasmuch, as the Entertainment you go to is really in itself the noblest Adoration and Homage paid do the Deity that ever was in one. So sublime an Act of Devotion as this *Representation* carries in it, to a Heart and Ear duly tuned for it, would consecrate even Hell itself. – It is the Action that is done in it, that hallowes the Place, and not the Place the Action.⁴

In later years, as has been shown by Barbara Mohn, it was essentially the representation of the figure of Jesus Christ that was to be found problematic in Anglo-Saxon countries, where both librettists and composers deliberately avoided to feature in an open and explicit way a figure to which other cultural traditions – whether it be in Germany, France or Italy – did not hesitate to give a dramatic treatment.⁵ It is bearing such an issue in mind that I would like to examine the various

3 Philatethes, *The Universal Spectator*, 19 March 1743.

4 *The London Daily Post*, 18 April 1739.

5 See Barbara Mohn, “Personifying the Saviour”: English Oratorio and the Representation of the Words of Christ’, *Nineteenth Century British Music Studies. Volume 1*, ed. Bennett Zon (Aldershot: Ashgate, 1999), 227-41.

English translations of Beethoven's only genuine oratorio, *Christus am Ölberge* (1803), a work that remained extremely popular in nineteenth-century Britain. As one can remember, the libretto by Franz-Xaver Huber (1755-1814) prominently displays the figure of Christ, shown as a truly human character with his own doubts and weaknesses. Such a feature, deemed to be on the verge of profanity in Britain, was also openly criticized in Germany in 1836 by the critic, scholar and poet Anton Wilhelm Florentin von Zuccamaglio.⁶

The translation history of this work, one of the few foreign oratorios to have had a real, long-lasting performing tradition in England, does indeed display a wide spectrum of textual means and strategies by which the issue of Christ's representation, a question imbued with both ethical and aesthetic connotations, was either eluded or circumvented. It is therefore the aim of the present paper to highlight the different treatments undergone by the initial text and to examine and analyze the methods the various translators had to resort to in order to make acceptable to public taste a libretto obviously found too ‘operatic’⁷ and too ‘stagey’⁸ for the English oratorio scene. It is also the contention of this article that the evolution of the reception of Beethoven's text may well have paved the way for future musicians like Elgar and a few others who had no qualms about treating the figure of Christ as a truly dramatic character allowed to voice his own words and speech.

Samuel James Arnold (1814)

Published by Beethoven in October 1811, *Christus am Ölberge* was first given in London on 25 February 1814 in a version musically adapted by the composer and conductor George Smart (1776-1867). The English text of the adaptation, attributed to Samuel James Arnold (1774-1852),⁹ stands out for the almost total deletion of the figure of Christ. Indeed, the Saviour's words are given to an anonymous narrator acting as an outside spectator endowed with the task of paraphrasing Christ's words in reported speech. This option is duly accounted for in the preface to the published text, in which Smart establishes a direct link between the ethical issue of “religious propriety” and, on the aesthetic plane, the “national” sensibility of the targeted listeners of Beethoven's work:

Those acquainted with the German text will immediately perceive, that this work is not a mere translation; and the Author has thought it proper to alter the *Persons*, in conformity to the national feeling of religious propriety, which would be justly outraged by introducing the Saviour of the World as a character of the Drama.¹⁰

6 See Anton Wilhelm Florentin von Zuccamaglio, ‘Ueber Oratorium’, *Neue Zeitschrift für Musik* 4 (1836), 161-162; see also Howard Smither, *A History of the Oratorio*, 4 vols. (Chapel Hill: The U of North Carolina P, 1977-2000), 4: 82-83.


7 See *The Musical Times* 40.677 (1899), 479. See also Alan Tyson, ‘The 1803 Version of Beethoven's *Christus am Ölberge*’, *The Musical Quarterly*, 56 (1970), 551-84 (‘The operatic style of the oratorio has often proved something of an embarrassment to future generations’ [582]).

8 *The Musical World* 42.41 (1864), 652.

9 See Mohn, “Personifying the Saviour”: English Oratorio and the Representation of the Words of Christ’, 229 (n.7).

10 Ludwig van Beethoven, *The Mount of Olives, a Sacred Oratorio. The Vocal Parts in the Score Adapted to English Words, and the Instrumental Parts Arranged for the Piano Forte, by Sir George Smart* (London: Chapell and Co., 1814), preface.

Edgar Allan Poe

PROGRAMME
AND
GENERAL ARRANGEMENTS
OF THE

WORCESTER Musical Festival,
(Being the One Hundred and Fifty-ninth Meeting of the Three Choirs of Worcester, and the Anniversary of the Coronation of Queen Victoria, and the Opening of the Theatre of the Three Choirs.)

TO BE HELD IN THE
CATHEDRAL & COLLEGE HALL,
ON
SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 4th, THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 8th,
TUESDAY, " 6th, FRIDAY, " 9th,
WEDNESDAY, " 7th, " "

1881,
Under the Especial Patronage of
HER MOST GRACIOUS MAJESTY THE QUEEN,
AND THEIR ROYAL HIGHNESSES
THE PRINCE AND PRINCESS OF WALES.
President:
THE RIGHT REV. THE LORD BISHOP OF WORCESTER.
All Communications are requested to be addressed to the Honorary Secretaries, 4th Foregate Street, Worcester.

For General Regulations and Railway Arrangements, see Pages 22 & 23.

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Programme of the Worcester Festival 1881 (Elgar Birthplace)

Respawn X Alton

13
WEDNESDAY EVENING, SEPT. 7th, AT 7.30 O'CLOCK.
It is particularly requested that *morning dress* will be worn in the Cathedral.

PART I.
"ENGEDI." (Mount of Olives.)—Beethoven.
(The English Version by Henry Hudson, M.D.)

INTRODUCTION.
RECI- Mr. E. LLOYD (Jehovah) I bear
AIR } My heart is sore
RECI- Miss ALBANI What sorrow
AIR } Praise ye Jehovah's goodness
SOLO—Miss ALBANI, and CHORUS Oh! praise Him all ye nations
RECI—Mr. E. LLOYD Prophetic voices
DUETT—Miss ALBANI and Mr. E. LLOYD. I love the Lord
RECI—Mr. E. LLOYD Then welcome death
CHORUS—(Soldiers of Soud.) We surely here shall find him
RECI—Mr. E. LLOYD My deadly enemies
CHORUS (Soldiers of Soud) Where is He? come
RECI—Mr. KING These soldiers come
RECI—Mr. KING Vengeance is ours
RECI—Mr. E. LLOYD Oh let thy sword
TRIO—Miss ALBANI, Mr. E. LLOYD, and } The hour of vengeance cometh
MR. KING Hasten! arise
CHORUS AND SOLO—Mr. E. LLOYD Hallelujah to the Father
CHORUS Hallelujah to the Father

AN INTERVAL OF FIFTEEN MINUTES STRICTLY.

PART II.
"CREATION." (Parts I. & II.)—Haydn.

INTRODUCTION Representation of Chaos
RECI—Mr. HENSCHEL In the beginning
CHORUS And the Spirit of God
RECI—Mr. MAAS And God saw the light
SOLO—Mr. MAAS Now vanish before the holy beams
CHORUS Despairing, cursing, rage
RECI—Mr. HENSCHEL And God made the firmament
AIR—Miss ALBANI The marvellous work
CHORUS And to th' ethereal vaults resound
RECI—Mr. HENSCHEL And God said, let the waters
AIR—Mr. HENSCHEL Rolling in foaming billows
RECI—Miss ALBANI And God said, let the earth
AIR—Miss ALBANI With verdure clad
RECI—Mr. MAAS And the Heavenly Host
CHORUS Awake the harp

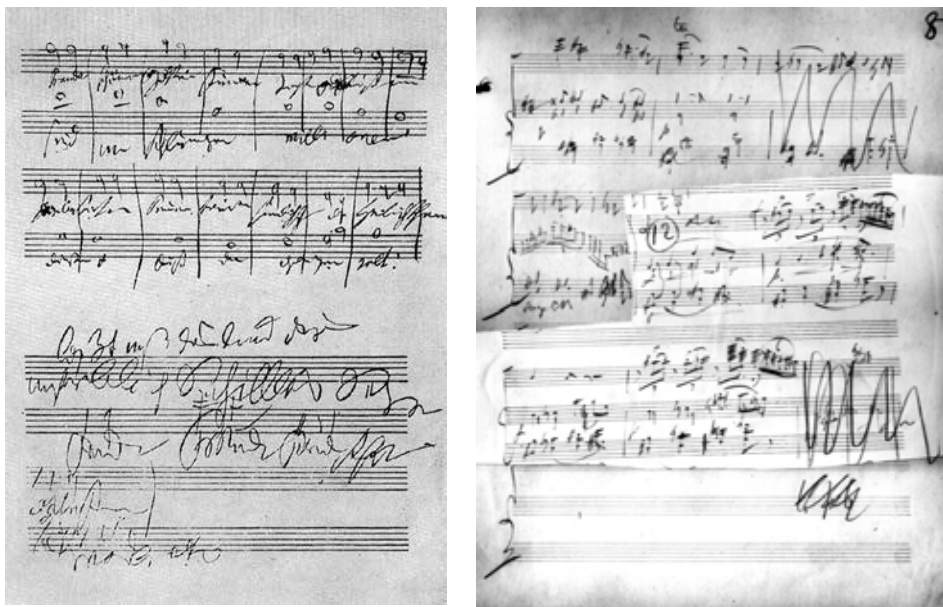
Christ's recitative and opening aria, both supposed to express the protagonist's anguish and suffering before the final agony, ideally illustrate such changes:

<p>Franz-Xaver Huber (1803) <i>Recitativo / Aria (Jesus)</i></p> <p>Jehovah, du mein Vater, o sende Trost und Kraft und Stärke mir! Sie nahet nun, die Stunde meiner Leiden, von mir erkoren schon, noch eh' die welt auf dein Geheiss dem Chaos sich entwand. Ich höre deines Seraphs Donnerstimme. Sie fordert auf, wer statt der Menschen sich vor dein Gericht jetzt stellen will. O Vater! Ich erschein' auf deiner Ruf. Vermittler will ich sein, ich büsse, ich allein, der Menschen Schuld. Wie könnte dies Geschlecht, aus Staub gebildet, ein Gericht ertragen, das mich deinen Sohn, zu Boden drückt? Ach sieh', wie Bangigkeit, wie Todesangst mein Herz mit Macht ergreift! Ich leide sehr, mein Vater! o sieh', erbarm' dich mein!</p> <p>Meine Seele ist erschüttert von den Qualen die mir dräun; Schrecken fasst mich, und es zittert grässlich schauernd mein Gebein. Wie ein Fieberfrost ergreift mich die Angst beim nahen Grab, und von meinem Antlitz träufet, statt des Schweißes, Blut herab. Vater! Tief gebeugt und kläglich leht dein Sohn hinauf zu dir! Deiner Macht ist Alles möglich; nimm den Leidenskelch von mir!</p>	<p>Samuel J. Arnold (1810) <i>Recitativo / Air (tenor)</i></p> <p>"JEHOVAH! Thou O Father!" said the Lord our Saviour, when with his Disciples upon the Mount of Olives, – "<u>Now 'tis the hour of suffering which approaches!</u> – Before the World was made, at thy behest, <u>I offered up myself a willing sacrifice.</u>" [<u>underlining mine</u>] – The Seraph's thundering voice He hears around Him! It calls on Him, --- Him, who for guilty Man will cast Himself before thy Throne: – O Father, He obeys Thy heavenly call: the Mediator! He will suffer – He alone dies for Mankind; How would this generation, from dust created, stand before thy judgement; while He, Thy Son, bends down before Thee! Ah, See! How agony and pangs his soul invade! O Father, He suffers much: have mercy on Him.</p> <p>See, His soul is torn by the torments He endures; Horror strikes Him, and with holy terror trembles His weak frame; whilst the anguish of His soul, like death's approach, appals; – From His face, see drops fast falling, instead of Sweat, Lo! Blood descends!</p> <p>Father! Lowly bent before Thee, Mournful prays Thine only Son; End his pangs, we meek implore Thee! Still, O Lord, Thy will be done. ¹¹</p>
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Entirely couched in the third person (with the exception of the few words I have underlined), Arnold's version marks the well-nigh complete effacement of Christ as a speaker and character directly involved in the action, thus depriving the figure of the human dimension intended by Beethoven and Huber. In doing so, the English librettist yet manages to accord with the meaning and structural logic of the original libretto by following the sequential order of the initial words. One can note in passing the toning down of the initial text, as appears with the rendition of the sentence in which Christ poignantly asks that the cup of suffering be withdrawn from him (Matthew 26: 39; Luke 22: 42; Mark 10: 38; Jean 18: 11), a segment somewhat blandly translated as "Thy will be done".

11 *Ibid.* 1-2.

By several accounts, Arnold's version was still regularly heard in the late 1830s,¹² a fact that did not prevent Beethoven's work from being performed in Italian at the King's Theatre in 1832, under the title *Cristo sull'oliveto*. The distancing effect created by the use of a language other than the vernacular or the original can be seen as another strategy aiming at rendering the physical presence of Christ less conspicuous and therefore more acceptable to the English Protestant public. The Italian version, as well as three contemporary French translations, uninhibitedly shows Christ speaking in the first person, the scenic dramatization of the figure being obviously deemed less problematic in Roman Catholic cultures than in Great Britain.¹³ In the 1840s, Samuel Arnold's text was to be supplanted by a certain number of translations which were all to adopt different aesthetic options and approaches.



Developing ideas: sketches for Beethoven's 9th symphony and Elgar's violin concerto (editor's archive and Arthur Reynold's Archive)

Thomas Oliphant (1840)

In 1840 the version proposed by Thomas Oliphant was thus characterized by the translator's decision to entrust the words of Christ to the figure of Saint John the Apostle. Thanks to this

12 See for instance *The Musical World* 6.71 (1837), 91-93.

13 See Beethoven, *Cristo sull'Oliveto, Oratorio. Prime versione italiana da Francesco Sal. Kandler* (Milano: Ricordi, [1828]); *Le Christ au jardin des olives, oratorio en vers français par M. Prosper Yvaren. Arrangée pour le piano* (Avignon: Seguin, [1840]); *Le Christ au Mont des Olivets. Oratorio. Paroles italiennes de F. S. Kandler. Traduction française de C. de Charlemagne. Accompagnement de Piano ou Orgue par Mr. T. Adolini, etc.* (Paris: Mme. Ve. Launer, [1845]). The third French version referred to is that of M. de Monferrier.

new compromise, again meant to alleviate what would have then been perceived as the so-called profanity of the libretto, the text maintains the dramatic mode of the original version while avoiding the pitfall of showing Christ in theatrical, and therefore non-respectable, garb:

Recitativo / Air (John)

Jehovah! God of mercy;
Send help and comfort to thine only Son,
Now when his hour of suff'ring fast approacheth—
That hour – ordain'd by thee before the world
From chaos dark arose at thy command.

In thunder,

An angel voice I hear, our Master calling
To offer up his life upon the cross
For guilty man. O, Father! He obeys
Thy sov'reign will; the Mediator comes
To suffer – He alone – for all mankind.
How else could Adam's race, sprung from the dust,
Those pangs endure, which He the Son of God
Can scarcely bear? Behold! With agony
His inmost soul is torn – O soothe his anguish!
In pity spare thy only Son.

See! What strange unwonted terror
His affrighted bosom fills;
While 'gainst Nature's law rebelling
From his forehead blood distils.
Father! Deign to soothe his anguish;
Thou alone canst send relief:
From his lips (if such thy pleasure)
Take this bitter cup of grief.¹⁴

It is to be noted that having the words of Christ entrusted to one of the apostles is also the method used by Elgar in *The Kingdom*, where the words uttered by Christ in the Bible – “Where two or three are gathered in my name”, “I have prayed for thee”, etc. – are reported by either Peter or John, the figure of Christ being absent from the list of *dramatis personae*.

William Bartholomew (1844, 1855)

The option of resorting to the figure of Saint John was also partially taken by William Bartholomew a few years later; this is at least what occurs in the recitative and trio of No.6. In the introductory recitative and aria of No.1, however, the translator resorts to the narrative mode by the use of the three initial words ‘The Saviour pray'd’, then giving back to Christ, in free direct speech, the entirety of the words contained in the original libretto. While maintaining the artifice of resorting to reported speech, the text can give the impression that the tenor voice is actually impersonating the figure of Christ:

14 Beethoven, *Beethoven's Mount of Olives. The English Version by Thos. Oliphant, with an Accompaniment for the Piano Forte by J. Moscheles* (London: Cramer, Addison and Beale, [1840]).

Recitative / Aria

The Saviour pray'd: "My Father,
O, by thy power, sustain and comfort me!
My heavy hour of sorrow now approacheth;

Thou knowest, ere the world at thy command
Created rose from chaos, 'twas ordain'd.
I hear Thee in thy Seraphs' thunder-voices,
Commanding him who dies for man, alone
To stand before thy awful throne!
O Father! I, at thy dread will, appear,
To intercede with Thee, to suffer, to atone
For guilty man!

How can this feeble race, this dust compacted,
Ever bear the anger which lays thy mighty Son
Thus low to earth?

Ah, see! What agony, – what deadly fear, –
My father, O see what griefs I bear! –
In mercy hear!"

See what gloomy fears assemble,
See what sorrows o'er me roll!
O behold me, see me tremble,
See the pangs that rack my soul!

See the pains my heart assailing!

O the grave afflicts me sore,

If my prayer be unavailing,

See my forehead stain'd with gore!

Father! All thy will fulfilling,

Bow'd to earth, thy Son now see!

Thine the power, if thou art willing,

Take this cup of grief from me!"¹⁵

Maybe it is such a device that accounts for the fact that Bartholomew's version was to outlive Thomas Oliphant's by a considerable number of years. And perhaps it is the reason why, when it came out in 1844, the new text was praised for what was then perceived as its unusual – albeit relative – fidelity to the original:

The translation of the text, by Mr. Bartholomew, is true to the original, and admirably fitted to the music. It has the advantage of being entirely devoid of the nonsense so often found in the English editions of musical oratorios, operas and songs.¹⁶

Nevertheless, it turns out that the version that proved to be genuinely enduring was another adaptation by Bartholomew, the one published by Novello in 1855. Quite significantly, the revised version amplifies the amount of text given to Saint John in his delivery of Christ's words for No.1, again minimizing the dramatic role given to Christ and giving further evidence of the Victorians' reluctance to be faced with a dramatized representation of Jesus:

15 Beethoven, *The Mount of Olives, an Oratorio, the Words Written by W. Bartholomew, Edited by Sir H. R. Bishop* (London, [1844]).

16 *The Musical World* 19.37 (1844), 302.

Recitative / Aria (A Disciple (John))

The Saviour prayed His father would, in His Mercy, aid and comfort him; Knowing his hour of sorrow was approaching (For ere the world was made, He knew that man would sin and die, and live again through Him).

Behold him in the fullness of His glory; Angelic hosts surround His radiant throne: His will on earth, – in heaven is done.

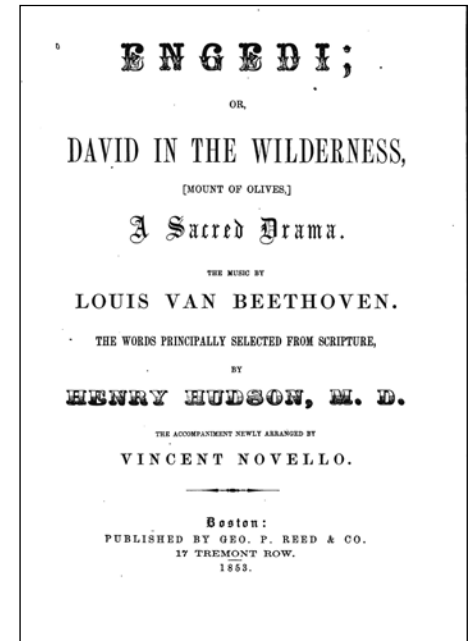
Behold him prostrate upon the earth; In prayer imploring strength to suffer atone for Adam's race, etc.¹⁷

In 1842, the embarrassment at having Christ staged as a fully theatrical character had actually led to a far more radical alteration.

Henry Hudson (1842)

Indeed, it was in a version entirely recontextualized, bearing the title *Engedi; Or, David in the Wilderness*, that Beethoven's masterpiece was to become popularized for the English-speaking public. This most amazing rewriting should thus be seen as another way of remedying what its writer Henry Hudson superciliously referred to, in his preface, as "the objectionable nature of the German libretto".¹⁸ If Hudson's argument was to allow Beethoven's music to be heard in conditions that were "ethically acceptable" – in the sense that there was no representation of the figure of the Saviour, and therefore no profanity at stake – and if some people have been able to see parallels between the story of David and that of Christ on the Mount of Olives,¹⁹ many voices denounced what was soon regarded as a betrayal of authorial intentions. As soon as 1842, after a concert by the Sacred Harmonic Society at the London Exeter Hall, *The Musical Examiner* thus deplored both the lack of fidelity to the German composer and the complete incongruity of the rewriting:

[...] the whole [programme] concluded with Beethoven's *Mount of Olives*, with the absurd new version of the words, entitled *Engedi*, which has as much to do with the music of Beethoven, as the



17 Beethoven, *Mount of Olives* (London: Novello, Ewer and Co., 1855).

18 Beethoven, *Engedi, or David in the wilderness. A Sacred Drama. The words Principally Selected from the Scripture by Henry Hudson. The Accompaniment Newly Arranged by V. Novello* (London: Novello, 1842), preface.

19 See Mohn, "Personifying the Saviour": English Oratorio and the Representation of the Words of Christ', 230.

The Band.

The Band.

Instrument	Name	Number
FIRST VIOLINS		
Messa. Sainon.	1	14
Messa. Blagrove, R.	1	24
Messa. Blagrove, R.	Principal	24
Bowie, W. R.	5	26
Bartholomew.	14	33
Easton, W. A.	6	35
Elgar, jun.	13	30
Halfpenny.	9	32
Wand, jun.	4	34
Wand, sen.	3	31
Webb, S. B.	3	31
VIOLONCELLOS.		
Messa. Howell, E.	37	61
Messa. Howell, E.	Principal	37
Boatwright.	4	40
Chipp, H.	5	38
Gud.	4	44
Poncrov.	3	39
Reed, W. F.	3	43
Wait.	3	43
Whitehouse.	6	42
DOUBLE BASSES		
Messa. White, A. C.	44	67
Messa. White, A. C.	Principal	44
Castell, W.	3	47
Harper, C. jun.	4	48
Maney.	7	51
Pinn.	8	52
Severn, C.	2	46
Straguel, W.	2	50
Wand.	5	49
FLUTES.		
Messa. Radcliff.	53	71
Messa. Radcliff.	Principal	53
Barrett.	1	64
SECOND VIOLINS		
Messa. Burnett, A.	2	2
Messa. Burnett, A.	Principal	2
Brooke.	13	24
Colester.	10	18
Earnshaw, J.	4	25
Elgar, sen.	11	26
Goodwin.	12	21
Hann.	7	20
Kelly, J.	6	16
Kelly, J.	2	16
Payton, R.	8	22
Reed, J. H.	3	17
Reynolds, A.	3	14
Szczepanowski.	15	28
Wadeby.	14	28
Woodward.	1	23
Woodward.	1	23

The CHORUS is supplied by Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester, and the Leeds Festival Chorus.
 Chorus Master - Mr. QUATERMAN Superintendent - Mr. H. W. LITTLE.
 Librarians - Messrs. GOODWIN and TARR.

AN ORGAN WILL BE ERECTED BY MESSRS. NICHOLSON & CO., WORCESTER.

Elgar jun. and sen. in the orchestra of the Worcester Festival in 1881 (Elgar Birthplace)

7

The Band.

FIRST VIOLINS.	VIOLONCELLOS.	BASSOONS.
Messrs. CARRODUS, J. T. (Principal.)	Messrs. HOWELL, E. (Principal.)	Messrs. WOTTON, W. B. ,, WOTTON, JUN.
,, ARNOLD, F.	,, OULD, C. (Principal 2nd.)	CONTRA FAGOTTO.
,, BREWER, B.	,, BOATWRIGHT, J.	Mr. KNIGHT.
,, BURNETT, A.	,, BURNETT.	HORNS.
,, CARRODUS, B.	,, CARRODUS, J.	Messrs. MANN, T. E. (Principal.)
,, CLAUGHTON, Rev. Canon	,, HANN, W. C.	,, KEEVIL, J. W.
,, EASTON, W. A.	,, OWEN, J.	,, STANDEN.
,, ELGAR, E. W.	,, WHITEHOUSE.	,, WILLIAMS, J.
,, HALFPENNY, E.	DOUBLE BASSES.	TRUMPETS.
,, MORLEY, H.	Messrs. WHITE, A. C. (Principal.)	Messrs. McGRATH, F. ,, SCOTTS, J. C.
,, OULD, E. P.	,, HARPER, C. (Principal 2nd.)	TROMBONES.
,, PALMER, W. F.	,, BOX, W.	Messrs. HADFIELD, C. ,, GEARD.
,, RENDLE, J.	,, BISHOP, J.	,, MATT.
,, ROBERTS, E.	,, CARRODUS, E. A.	BASS TUBA.
,, VILLIN, A.	,, MANEY, E. F.	Mr. BOURNE, C.
,, WHEELER, A. B.	,, OULD, E.	HARP.
SECOND VIOLINS.	,, WAUD, J. P.	Mr. LOCKWOOD.
Messrs. EAYRES, J. (Principal.)	FLUTES:	Mr. CHAINE.
,, BLAGROVE, S.	Messrs. RADCLIFFE (Principal.)	DOUBLE DRUMS.
,, DYSON, H.	,, CARRODUS, W. O.	Mr. SCHROEDER.
,, EARNSHAW, J.	OBOES.	BASS DRUM & CYMBALS.
,, ELGAR, W. H.	Messrs. HORTON, G. (Principal.)	Mr. SOMERTON.
,, FREWIN, E. C.	,, SMITH, H.	
,, GIBSON, H.	CLARINETS.	
,, GUNNIS, J. W.	Messrs. EGERTON, J. (Principal.)	
,, HANN, C. H.	,, MAYCOCK.	
,, NEWTON, C.	BASS CLARINET.	
,, REYNOLDS, A.	Mr. MAYCOCK.	
,, SZCZEPANOWSKI, L.		
,, WILSON, W. S.		
,, WADELEY, W.		
VIOLAS.		
Messrs. BLAGROVE, R. (Principal.)		
,, BOWIE, W. R.		
,, DOYLE, C.		
,, ELGAR, H.		
,, HANN, W. H.		
,, WAUD, W. V.		
,, WEBB, S. B.		
,, WAUD, W. W.		
,, WOODWARD, E. G.		

The Chorus is supplied by Worcester, Hereford, Gloucester, Cardiff, and Mr. Alfred Broughton's Leeds Festival Chorus.

SUPERINTENDENT OF THE CHORUS

The Organ will be erected by Messrs. Nicholson & Co. of Worcester.

E. W. Elgar and W. H. Elgar in the orchestra of the Worcester Festival in 1890 (Elgar Birthplace)

Bishop of London's charge with Moore's "Irish melodies," and no more. We consider this substitution as nothing short of profanity. The mighty genius of Beethoven should command more respect.²⁰

Another review of the same concert flatly rejects the existence of any link between the two stories while also lamenting the Victorian hypocrisy leading to such a transformation:

Our antipathy to this new version is too strongly rooted, to be easily removed. We cannot, for the life of us, see any connection between Beethoven's music and the interpolated text. The magnificent recitative of "John the Baptist" is perfectly absurd in connection with the present words – the absolutely thrilling interest of the original is entirely lost. What similitude is there between the following, for example?

In thunder,
An angel voice I hear, our master calling (*Mount of Olives*)
O Father,
Hear and grant thy servant's prayer (*Engedi*)

How can the same music possibly describe one and the other of these? These are not the only [...] instances of such preposterous non-resemblances between the two versions, – and moreover what is of most consequence, the entire feeling of "Engedi" differs from that which induced the composition of the "Mount of Olives." The preface of the concoctor of this sad specimen of mistaken taste, is, as we take it, little but an ingenious piece of sophistry, – we have no patience for such ultra-fastidiousness, – which, to our notion, is profanity out-profaned. Poor Beethoven! How stone-like must have been the hearts of those who could thus travesty the sublime outpourings of thy transcendent genius. [...]

We may perhaps be permitted to inquire where Dr. Hudson has hidden himself, and how he has caulked up his ears, during the last five-and-twenty years, knowing, as every one else does, that "the Mount of Olives" has been performed continually, in almost every country of England, as well as every city in Europe, ever since its production in London in 1815 (we think). Dr. Hudson, and the Sacred Harmonic Society will, we hope, excuse our commending them to the serious consideration of the wise old proverb – "let well alone" – and speedily give us a repetition of Beethoven's magnificent work, with the words to which we have been accustomed, and which really convey the sense and feeling of the music. No human being, nor any class of human beings, can cherish a more profound reverence for things sacred and holy, than ourselves; and such we deem the divine inspirations of genius unquestionably to be – we therefore feel, that any attempt to improve them to the level of our own perceptions of propriety, is either an evidence of the most ignorant cant, or of less pardonable presumptuous profanity. Luckily, "the Mount of Olives" will outlive its assailers, and their puerile endeavours to qualify the sunshine that belongs to, and will blaze about it for ever.²¹

It is perhaps slightly ironic that *The Musical World* should praise as a reference Thomas Oliphant's translation of the text, a version which can hardly be seen, with hindsight, as a model of fidelity and longevity. And yet, in spite of the staunch opposition it met as soon as it came out, Henry Hudson's version of the text was to predominate in the decades to come, side by side with the 1855 translation by William Bartholomew. Obviously, religious considerations were to take precedence over authorial intentions and, consequently, over aesthetic priorities.

20 *The Musical Examiner* 4 (1842), 20.

21 *The Musical World* 17.48 (1842), 385.

Joseph Warren (1844)

Another attempt at correcting the radical transformation constituted by *Engedi* can be found with the ephemeral version offered by Joseph Warren (1804-1881) in 1844. Like the contemporary version by Bartholomew, it displays a certain balance between the words given to Christ and those uttered by the anonymous narrator:

Jehovah! O my father, thus said the Lord our Saviour, on the Mount; Father, if thou be willing, Remove this cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but thine, be done. From Heaven there appeared an Angel, to strengthen him; he pray'd more earnestly, in agony. And when he rose up from pray'r, he spoke to his disciples, Why sleep ye? Rise and pray!

The sun shall be darken'd, saith the Lord our God.
And the stars of Heaven shall fall,
the moon shall not give her light,
And the powers that are in Heaven shall be shaken.
And then shall they see the son of man coming with great pow'r and glory.
And then he shall send his Angels,
And shall gather together his elect from the four winds,
From the uttermost part of Heav'n to the uttermost parts of the earth.
But of that day knoweth no man, no... not the Angels,
which are in Heaven, neither the son, but the Father.
Not my will but thine be done, O Father.²²

Nevertheless, what makes this version stand out from the others lies more in the treatment of its subject-matter than in the enunciation of the text. Indeed, the new libretto does contain a significant change inasmuch as Jesus is presented far less as a suffering individual calling for his father's aid than as a powerful preacher and prophet proudly pronouncing the words of the gospel. If the original German text strongly underlines the humanity of Christ, a lonely figure dealing with his own conscience and sufferings, the new version deliberately shows him as a preacher recommending to his disciples the value of faith and prayer. To the suffering Jesus of Beethoven's original – a Florestan, or even a Prometheus, according to various critics²³ – Warren thus substitutes a triumphant Christ, preaching the word of God and announcing the final victory. Here, the semantic modification of the text and the "trans-valorization" of the figure of Christ – to use a phrase once coined by Gérard Genette – can of course be seen as the ultimate strategy used to make acceptable to the eyes of the English public the presence of a figure "desacralized", or made profane, by the mere fact of its textual, musical and vocal presence. Warren's translation, by far the freest of all, also resolutely departs from the original text. Based on a compilation of biblical quotations or paraphrase, it does not hesitate to add new elements to the initial German version. The final trio is thus transformed into a partly narrative and partly dramatic sequence unexpectedly referring to both Judas's betrayal and Peter's denial of Jesus:

22 Beethoven, *Christ at the Mount of Olives; an Oratorio, newly adapted to English words, principally selected from the Holy Scriptures, with accompaniment for the Organ or Piano Forte by J. Warren* (London, [1844]), 6-10.

23 See Tyson, 'Beethoven's Heroic Phase', *The Musical Times* 110.1512 (1969), 139-41.

Trio

Petrus:

In meinen Adern wühlen
gerechter Zorn und Wuth,
lass meine Rache kühlen,
in der Verwegenen Blut.

Jesus:

Du sollst nicht Rache üben!
Ich lehrt' euch blos allein
die Menschen alle lieben,
dem Feinde gern verzeihn.

Seraph:

Merk' auf, o Mensch, und höre:

Nur eines Gottes Mund
macht solche heil'ge Lehre
der Nächstenliebe kund!

Jesus und Seraph:

O Menschenkinder fasset
dies heilige Gebot;
Liebt jenen, der euch hasset,
nur so gefällt ihr Gott.

Trio

Bass: No, no, I'll not deny thee, though I die
with thee.

Tenor: But I have prayed for thee, said Jesus
that thy strength fail not: and when thou art
converted strengthen thy brethren. I tell thee,
Peter, the Cock shall not crow this day before
thou shalt deny me thrice. And while he yet
spake, Behold a Multitude, and he they called
Judas, and one of the twelve, drew near unto
him, drew near unto Jesus to kiss him.

Soprano and tenor: Hereafter shall the Son of
man sit on the right hand of God.

Bass: Man I know not what thou sayest, I do
not know thee, I do not know thee, I do not
know thee, I know not what thou sayest.

Tenor: The Lord turned to Peter, The Lord
looked upon Peter and Peter remembered what
the Lord said.

Soprano, tenor and bass: Hereafter shall the
Son of man sit on the right hand of God.²⁴

One can note, in the distribution of the text among the three soloists, how both the bass and the tenor confusingly oscillate between the parts of character and commentator.

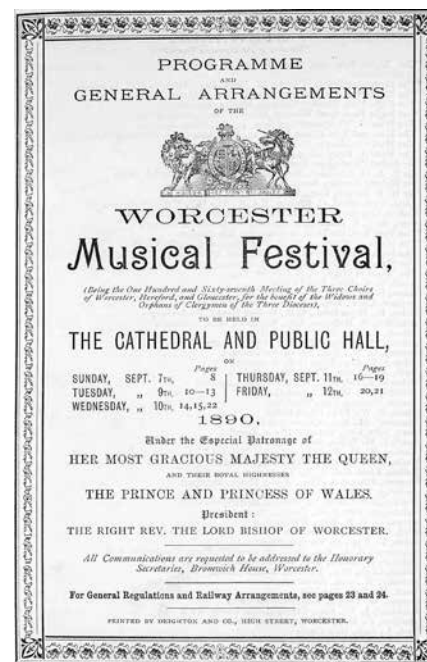
As could be expected, the carefree, haphazard treatment inflicted upon the original text was not without generating certain confusions for Victorian audiences, all too often left with the uneasy task of sorting out textual contradictions, irrelevancies or fluctuations. When the oratorio was given in Northampton in 1853, a critic mentioned the part of David, the protagonist of *Engedi*, when the version performed was explicitly called *Mount of Olives*.²⁵ In the 1842, as we have seen, *The Musical World* mistook John the Baptist for John the Apostle.²⁶ Others had no scruples referring to the *part* of Christ [my emphasis], even when the figure had no dramatic function in the version alluded to. In 1858, the celebrated Sims Reeves was extolled for his interpretation of the Redeemer – ‘in the part of The Saviour’ – when the text sung during that performance was obviously the second version by William Bartholomew, in which the words of Christ are either given to a narrator or to St. John.²⁷ Behind the surface of the correct, acceptable reading, the public was visibly aware of the sub-textual but nonetheless real presence of Christ, the full understanding of the text being obviously conditioned by the perception of its hidden, implicit elements. The time had definitely come for a definitive, more explicit version.

24 Beethoven, *Christ at the Mount of Olives*, arr. Warren, 49-55.

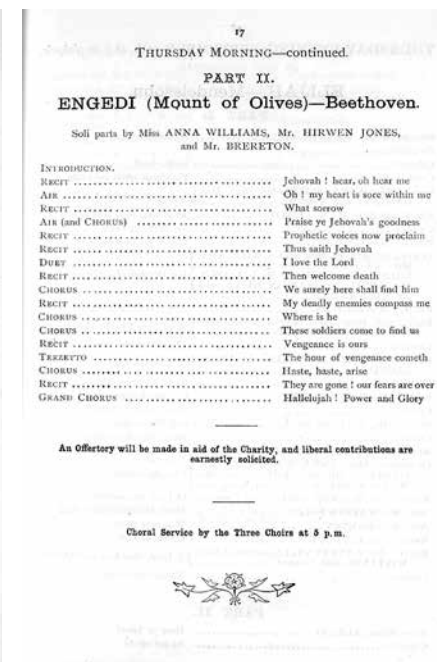
25 See *The Musical World* 31.27 (1853), 420.

26 See *The Musical World* 1.12.1842, previously quoted.

27 See *The Musical World* 36.28 (1858), 595.



Programme of the Worcester Festival 1890 (Elgar Birthplace)



John Troutbeck (1876)

When it came out in the mid-1870s, in a context marked by so much textual confusion, the highly literal translation by John Troutbeck²⁸ was no doubt expected to put everything right. Such was not to be the case at once, even though the new translation, the first English version to scrupulously follow the dramatic pattern set by Franz-Xaver Huber, was warmly received by the public and critics alike. In *The Musical World*, Otto Beard pointed out the unusual fidelity to the Beethovenian Ur-text: “The English translations [that of *Mount of Olives* and that of Bach’s *Matthew Passion* that significantly came out together] are as masterly as they are close to the originals”.²⁹ A few months later, the same journal praised the Leeds Festival’s choice of the new version, while deploring the absence of the word “Christ” in the new title:

There was [...] the one oratorio of Beethoven, not this time under the strangely adopted title of *Engedi*, but as the *Mount of Olives*. A far more appropriate English version of the one affixed to his work by Beethoven himself – Christ on the Mount of Olives – would have been still closer. For this

28 See Beethoven, *The Mount of Olives: an Oratorio. Edited, and the Pianoforte Accompaniment Revised, by E[benezzer] Prout; the English Version by J[ohn] Troutbeck* (London: Novello, 1877).

29 *The Musical World* 55.11 (1877), 200.

adaptation we are indebted to the Reverend J. Troutbeck.³⁰

As shown in a contemporary article that came out in *The Musical Times* at about the same time, the alleged superiority of the latest version was explicitly put down to the use of the dramatic mode that had carefully been avoided in the previous versions. Perhaps more importantly, the author of the article also attributes the relatively recent rediscovery of Bach's Passions to the public's acceptance that Christ's words might actually be set to music without offending common decency:³¹

What gives special interest and value to the present edition is that the new English version by Mr. Troutbeck reflects faithfully, for the first time in our language, the spirit of the original. Those who are familiar with the German score will be aware that the part of Jesus is dramatically treated, just as in Bach's Passion-music; the only difference being that, instead of the original words of Scripture, a metrical paraphrase is given. In consequence of the prejudice which formerly existed in this country, against such a practice, the earlier English versions so imperfectly reproduced the feeling of the original as in many parts to do violence in a great measure to Beethoven's music. In Mr. Bartholomew's translation the part of Jesus is given to St. John. How absurd the effect of this is may be seen from a collation of one passage. In the magnificent tenor solo which opens the work, the close translation of the German words given by Mr. Troutbeck is as follows:—

Father! Bowed with fear and sorrow,
Lifts Thy Son His prayer to Thee;
By Thy power to save unbounded,
Take this cup away from Me.

Many of our readers will remember the exquisitely pathetic setting of these words by Beethoven, and will therefore be able to see how utterly the feeling of the music is ruined when sung to the text of Mr. Bartholomew:

Angels from above descending!
Gave him strength again to pray;

"O My Father," he exclaimed,
"Take his cup of grief away."

[...]

Thanks no doubt in a great measure to the frequent performances of Bach's Passion-music, our audiences are learning that there is no more necessary irreverence in singing the words of Jesus than in singing any other words of Scripture; and the publishers of the present edition have considered that the time has arrived when an English version of the Oratorio might be produced which would do justice to the composer's intentions. It is difficult to speak too highly of the manner in which Mr. Troutbeck has acquitted himself of this task. We have never met with a more closely literal adaptation of words to music; in no one instance is violence offered to the sense of the original, and in several cases the translation is of rare felicity; [...] it is to be hoped that it will in future be the "authorized version," and that Beethoven's music will thus have a chance of appreciation which in

30 *The Musical World* 55.39 (1877), 647-48.

31 On that point, see also Mohn, "Personifying the Saviour": English Oratorio and the Representation of the Words of Christ', 236-37 as well as Glen Stanley, 'Religious Propriety versus Artistic Truth: The Debate between Friedrich Rochlitz and Louis Spohr about the Representation of Christ in *Des Heilands letzte Stunden*', *Acta musicologica* 61.1 (1989), 66-82.

this country has hitherto been impossible.³²

However, despite the enthusiastic response evinced by most critics, it took some time for Troutbeck's version to be firmly established in the repertory. In 1881, an article from *The Musical Times* still deplored the choice of *Engedi* for a concert given at the Worcester Festival. Incidentally, Elgar played first violin and his father second violin during that performance; when they played for the 1890 Worcester Festival, the version chosen was the Troutbeck one:

Beethoven's 'Mount of Olives' – or rather the version prepared for the English public by Dr. H. Hudson, and entitled 'Engedi' – formed the first part of the programme. Lovers of pure art are bound to protest against such an "adaptation" of a great composer's ideas; but if we cannot have Christ pursued by the Roman soldiers, it is certainly better to have David pursued by Saul than to lose Beethoven's sublime music altogether.³³

If performances of *Engedi* were reported until the very late nineteenth century, the period also saw the development of the new habit of performing Beethoven's work in a mixed version. Such an occurrence was thus deplored in the review of a Birmingham concert in 1899: "[...] the soloists used Dr. Troutbeck's text, while the chorus sang the older version [probably Bartholomew's], which was also adopted in the book of words, causing the audience some perplexity".³⁴ In 1885, during a concert given in London by the Sacred Harmonic Society, the text handed out to the public apparently differed from that of the version performed, generating further puzzlement:

Of Beethoven's 'Mount of Olives' [...], it is only necessary to remark that while the old English version by Bartholomew, in which the words of the Saviour are placed in the mouth of St. John, was printed in the book of words, the performers sang the more literal translation of Mr. Troutbeck. This misunderstanding, which tended to confuse the audience, might surely have been avoided.³⁵

More than ten years after the publication of the Troutbeck text, the controversy over the suitability of metaphorically giving Christ 'a graven image to pray to', to quote from the commandments, was far from being solved...

Be that as it may, the overview of the various translations that have come down to us all has repeatedly shown the coexistence of two contradictory movements: one the one hand the critical stance, advocating the predominance of aesthetic priorities requiring a literal rendition of the original text, and on the other hand what appears to have been the demand from other quarters for a strict observance of those religious and theological tenets according to which the musical and vocal representation of Christ had better be avoided. As Howard Smither has pointed out, other nineteenth-century oratorios like George Macfarren's *St. John the Baptist* (1872) displayed the same reluctance to represent Jesus as an operatic personage.³⁶ Much later than that, the controversy around the first English performances of Strauss's *Salomé* in the early 1910s, with the ban on

32 *The Musical Times* 18.416 (1877), 493.

33 *The Musical Times* 22.464 (1881), 511.

34 *The Musical Times* 40.674 (1899), 256.

35 *The Musical Times* 26.54 (1885), 718.

36 See Smither, *History of the Oratorio*, 4: 345.

RESULTS OF EXAMINATIONS IN MUSIC.—The Royal Academy of Music has just published the results of the examinations held throughout the kingdom, and the following names appear among those to whom the Academy certificates have been awarded:—Passed with honours: Mr. Edward Elgar, Worcester, violin and general musical knowledge; Master W. Wolstenholme, Blind College, piano, organ and general knowledge. Passed: Miss Marion Chapman (Malvern Wells) piano, Miss Frances Ellen Gedge (Malvern Wells) piano, Miss Amy Reader (Worcester) singing, Miss Madelein Martin (Ham Court) piano, Miss Ellen Thompson (Worcester) piano, Miss Myra Taylor (Evesham) singing, Mr. C. Fleet (Worcester) singing, Mr. Frederick J. Griffiths (Worcester) organ, Mr. Charles Lane (Worcester) singing. The examiners were Mr. Brinley Richards, Prof. R.A.M., and Mr. Alfred J. Caldicott, Mus. Bac., Cantab.

Above: Elgar's qualification as a violinist (Elgar Birthplace)

Left: Edward Elgar, violinist (Arthur Reynold's Archive)



showing biblical characters on stage,³⁷ is an appropriate reminder of a cultural reticence which had also affected in Britain the textual dressing-up of various operas on a Biblical subject (Rossini's *Mose*, Verdi's *Nabucco*, etc.).³⁸

Now, even if the textual fluctuations that might have been solved with the appearance of the Troutbeck text lasted throughout the nineteenth century, it cannot be denied that the English public slowly and gradually grew familiar with the dramatic presentation of the figure of Christ, simultaneously propagated by the rediscovery of Bach's Passions. Before the two Elgar works already mentioned, other late nineteenth-century works had assigned a dramatic role for Jesus, such as Sullivan's *Light of the World* (1873),³⁹ Giovanni Bottesini's *Garden of Olivet* (1887), Frederic Cowen's *Transfiguration* (1895), and a few others.⁴⁰ Bearing in mind Elgar's admiration and fascination for Beethoven⁴¹, it is somewhat touching to consider that the textual history of *Christus am Ölberge* may well have prepared the English public for a smooth reception of some of Elgar's best-known works.

Pierre Degott is Professor of English at the Université de Lorraine, where he mainly teaches eighteenth-century literature. His PhD was a study on the themes and poetics of Handel's libretti for his English oratorios. His current research is on the following subjects: librettology and the reflexivity of the sung text; the representation of musical and operatic performances in Anglo-Saxon fiction; opera and oratorio in translation. Even though his research covers all eras concerned by operatic practice, he mainly concentrates on eighteenth-century musical forms (opera, semi-opera, oratorio, odes, ballad-opera, musical plays...). He has published about 100 academic articles and organised several conferences, mainly on musico-literary subjects.

37 See for instance Bernard Banoun, 'Princesse de Babel: les adaptations françaises, anglaises et italienne du livret allemand de *Salomé* de Richard Strauss (1905)', *La traduction des livrets: aspects théoriques, historiques et pragmatiques*, ed. Gottfried R. Marschall (Paris: P de l'U Paris-Sorbonne, 2004), 539-58.

38 See Harold Rosenthal, *Two Centuries of Opera at Covent Garden* (London: Putnam, 1958), *passim*.

39 For developments on the dramatic role of Jesus in this work, see Martin Yates, 'Approaching *The Light of the World*', *Sir Arthur Sullivan Society Magazine* 86 (2014/2015), 16-21; and Martin Yates, 'The *Light of the World* shines through', in Antje Tumat / Meinhard Saremba / Benedict Taylor (eds.), *Sullivan Perspektiven III: Arthur Sullivans Musiktheater; Kammermusik, Chor- und Orchesterwerke*, (Essen: Oldib, 2017), 265-298.

40 See Smither, *History of the Oratorio*, 4: 308-309.

41 The Nimrod variation (no 9) of the *Enigma Variations* is an allusion to the slow movement of Beethoven's Pathétique sonata. In 1904 Elgar told Dora Penny ('Dorabella') that this variation is not really a portrait of his friend Jaeger, but 'the story of something that happened': 'Once, when Elgar had been very depressed and was about to give it all up and write no more music, Jaeger had visited him and encouraged him to continue composing. He referred to Ludwig van Beethoven, who had a lot of worries, but wrote more and more beautiful music. "And that is what you must do", Jaeger said and he sang the theme of the second movement of Beethoven's Piano Sonata No. 8 Pathétique. Elgar disclosed to Dora that the opening bars of Nimrod were made to suggest that theme. "Can't you hear it at the beginning? Only a hint, not a quotation.'" (Mrs. Richard Powell, *Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation*, (London, Remploy 1947), 2nd ed., 110-111.)

Two Artistic Opinions of one Artistic Subject



GUSTAV MAHLER

GUSTAV MAHLER, the famous conductor of the Philharmonic Society, writes us as follows:

This was written to Steinway & Sons. The subject was a Steinway Vertegrand Upright Piano.

"I never imagined that an upright piano could be constructed which would satisfy a musician's requirements in every respect."



SIR EDWARD ELGAR

SIR EDWARD ELGAR, the great English composer, exclaimed enthusiastically:

This was written to Steinway & Sons. The subject was a Steinway Vertegrand Upright Piano.

"This piano would bleed TONE if I would wound it with a knife."



Two of the greatest living composers of their age in a full-page advertisement by Steinway & Sons in *The Musical Courier* on 2 February 1910 (Indiana University)

Edward Elgar and Gustav Mahler: 'the only man living who could do it' (part three)

Alexander Odefey

In this final part of my reflections on Elgar and Mahler,¹ I continue to investigate both the question to what extent Elgar and Mahler were acquainted with the other's career and oeuvre, and correspondences between some of their compositions. Again, I will proceed in roughly chronological order.

But first, I would like to mention a kind letter from Jerrold Northrop Moore of 4 August 2017 who kindly informed me that in 1961/62 at Yale University one of his students wanted to write a comparison of Elgar's and Mahler's music. So Dr Moore 'wrote to May Grafton to ask if she remembered any conversation about Mahler during the years she served as her Uncle Edward's secretary at Plas Gwyn, 1905–1908. She answered that she had no recollection of Mahler's name being mentioned during those years (or indeed later, when Uncle E. visited the Grafton house at Stoke Prior).' He added that in his judgment 'both May and her sister Madeline (with whom she lived when I knew them) both had keen and accurate memories.' I am grateful for this information which indicates that Mahler's name certainly has not been the subject of conversation in the Elgars' home at that time, at least not often. If, however, it was mentioned only once or twice during those years – in marked contrast to other German names like Richard Strauss or Hans Richter – then it would seem to be entirely possible that, more than half a century later, even with a good memory May Grafton couldn't remember it. Anyhow, as I have already shown, there exists Julius Buths's letter to Elgar of 19 July 1902 in which he described on no fewer than twelve pages his impressions of Mahler's music.² Of course, this happened before May became her uncle's secretary. Nevertheless, there is also August Jaeger's letter of 19 January 1905. In it he suggested to Elgar that he should compose a work for the upcoming Lower Rhenish Musical Festival, and explicitly referred to Mahler: 'But it must be of your Best entre nous, because You will be matched with Mahler whose 3rd Symphony with chorus will form an important part of the Fest. most likely [...].'³ The choice of words reveals that Jaeger must have been sure that Elgar was acquainted with

1 See Alexander Odefey, 'Edward Elgar and Gustav Mahler: The possibility of an encounter (part one)', *The Elgar Society Journal* 20/1 (2017), 5–33 [hereafter: *Part one*]; Alexander Odefey, 'Edward Elgar and Gustav Mahler: "who is virtually unknown in England" (part two)', *The Elgar Society Journal* 20/2 (2017), 17–37 [hereafter: *Part two*].

2 See *Part two*, 28–30.

3 See *ibid.*, 30. Actually it was Mahler's Second Symphony that was played on 12 June 1905 at the Festival in Düsseldorf. Elgar, who seems not to have responded to Jaeger's proposal, in February received an invitation from Samuel Sanford to come to America in June. He and Alice then left England on 9 June; see *Part one*, 22f.

Mahler's name. Otherwise he would have written something like 'that Austrian composer Gustav Mahler' or even 'an Austrian composer called Gustav Mahler'. And it is highly probable that he could have been sure of it only because he and Elgar had previously had a talk about Mahler. Furthermore, Jaeger apparently held Mahler's music in high esteem.

Orchestral song cycles: Elgar's 'Sea Pictures' and Mahler's 'Kindertotenlieder'

Song cycles held an important position in the music of the nineteenth century. Beethoven's *An die ferne Geliebte* (1816), Schubert's *Die schöne Müllerin* (1823) and *Winterreise* (1827), Schumann's *Frauenliebe und -leben* and *Dichterliebe* (both 1840), Brahms's *Die schöne Magelone* (1861–69) and *Vier ernste Gesänge* (1896) are among the most famous cycles written by German or Austrian composers. In English music of that time, Arthur Sullivan's *The Window* (1869/70) and Arthur Somervell's *Maud* (1898), both on poems by Tennyson, are well known examples. All these were written for voice and piano. Original cycles of orchestral songs, on the other hand, are to be found much more rarely. Hector Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été* have achieved fame in the orchestral version which however was composed several years after the version for voice and piano, and the same is true in the case of Mahler's *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*.⁴ Ralph Vaughan Williams's cycle *Songs of Travel* (1901–04) on poems by Robert Louis Stevenson, too, was written with piano accompaniment, and only three of them were later orchestrated by him.

What, then, was the first song cycle to be composed with orchestra from the outset? This question is not easily answered, as also works or even composers that are hardly known today would have to be considered. A well-known composer is, of course, Frederick Delius. In 1891, he wrote down his Tennyson song cycle *Maud* for tenor and orchestra. Like the single song *Sakuntala* from two years earlier, the five songs of *Maud* were composed for orchestra from the start. But Delius left them as separate songs and didn't specify their order. Moreover, while Christopher Redwood called them 'immediately attractive' and representative of 'a formidable mastery of compositional technique' that Delius had achieved by this stage of his career, he also notes 'some lack of understanding of the human voice' appearing in 'little consideration for his singer's *tessitura* [...] or his range'. Perhaps for this reason the composer never performed or published the cycle in his lifetime.⁵

Thus, with good reason, two song cycles composed only a few years later may lay claim to be the earliest original orchestral song cycles: Elgar's *Sea Pictures* and Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder*.

The *Sea Pictures* date from 1899. Elgar had promised to write a new work for the Norwich Festival in October, and began sketching some songs for contralto in early January, including a revision of the *Lute Song* he had composed in May 1897, a setting of Alice's poem *Love alone will stay*. In mid-January he met with Clara Butt in London who agreed to sing the song cycle he was writing at the Festival. Following the very successful première of the *Enigma Variations* under Hans Richter at St. James's Hall on 19 June, Elgar returned to his songs in July and finished their orchestration in August. On the last page of the score he wrote: 'Edward Elgar / Birchwood / Lodge / Aug. 18: 1899'. The first performance of the *Sea Pictures* took place on 5 October at St.

4 Berlioz: 1840/41 version for voice and piano; 1843 orchestration of *Absence*, 1855/56 orchestration of the other five songs. Mahler: 1884/85 version for voice and piano, between 1891 and 1896 orchestral version.

5 See Christopher Redwood, 'Five Songs from Tennyson's *Maud* by Delius', *The Delius Society Journal* 127 (2000), 16–21, quotations 17, 20; Martin Lee-Browne, Paul Guinery, *Delius and his music* (Woodbridge: Boydell, 2014), 37f., 53f.

Love alone will stay.

The original version of 'In Haven' from *Sea Pictures* published in a cultural magazine *The Dome* in 1898 (Elgar Birthplace)

Andrew's Hall in Norwich. Elgar himself conducted, and Clara Butt sang. The next day Edward wrote to August Jaeger:

The cycle went marvellously well & 'we' were recalled four times – I think – after that I got disgusted & lost count – She sang really well.⁶

Ascertaining the genesis of Mahler's *Kindertotenlieder* proves to be a rather intricate problem. Studying the memoirs of his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner and his wife Alma as well as the autograph sketches, drafts and fair copies reveals that he began composing the cycle in summer 1901. Reasons for choosing such tragic and deeply personal poems at a time when he had not experienced the loss of his own children (as the poet Friedrich Rückert did in winter 1833/34) may be found both in the deaths of several of his brothers and sisters he had witnessed (of his thirteen siblings only three were alive in 1901) and in a near fatal haemorrhage he had suffered in February of that year. In addition to parts of his Fifth Symphony and other songs, he then composed during his summer holiday the *Kindertotenlieder* songs 'Nun will die Sonn' so hell aufgeh'n', 'Wenn dein Mütterlein' and 'Oft denk' ich, sie sind nur ausgegangen', i.e. the songs 1, 3 and 4 of the

6 See Julian Rushton (editor), *Solo Songs with orchestra*, Elgar Complete Edition, Vol. 14 (Rickmansworth: Elgar Society Edition Ltd., 2012), vii; Edward Elgar, *Road to Recognition. Diaries 1897–1901*, edited by Martin Bird (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2015), 141, 144–146, 188, 194f., 205–207, quotation 207.

finished cycle. The completion was accomplished three years later, in summer 1904, when Mahler composed two further songs, ‘Nun seh’ ich wohl, warum so dunkle Flammen’ and ‘In diesem Wetter, in diesem Braus’. He didn’t simply attach them, but rather put the former to the second position of his by now full song cycle. Its first performance took place on 29 January 1905 at the Brahmsaal of the Musikverein in Vienna with baritone Friedrich Weidemann as the soloist and Mahler conducting an orchestra consisting of members of his k. k. Hof-Opernorchester.⁷

Both Elgar and Mahler considered their compositions to be cycles of orchestral songs. Indeed, when Mahler learned that no orchestra would be available for a concert devoted exclusively to his songs (including the *Kindertotenlieder*) that he was to give with the renowned Dutch baritone Johannes Messchaert on 14 February 1907 in Berlin, he wrote to the promoter Herwarth Walden:

You have to enable by all means that I have an orchestra at my disposal for the evening with Meschaert [sic!]. My compositions would appear characterless without orchestra since they are designed for orchestra, and the use of the instruments combined with the voice result in their style. It would be a capital error to come with surrogates when it is important to fight for appreciation of something new.⁸

And Elgar, too, stated in a letter to Henry Reginald Clayton (Novello) of 15 May 1914 that his *Sea Pictures* ‘require orchestra’.⁹

Of course, both song cycles were also published in a version for voice and piano, on the one hand to link them to the Lieder tradition of the nineteenth century, on the other hand to provide the possibility of a performance without orchestra. Elgar himself sometimes played the piano part of the *Sea Pictures*, for example just two days after the Norwich première at St. James’s Hall in London, again with Clara Butt. Mahler gave altogether seven performances of his *Kindertotenlieder*, only one of them at the piano, which, ironically, was the Berlin concert with Messchaert.¹⁰

Both cycles also have in common that they frequently have been criticised for the allegedly low quality of the poems. Interestingly, both Elgar and Mahler have commented similarly on this matter. Vera Hockman recalled this utterance from Elgar:

E.E. used to say that it is better to set the best second-rate poetry to music, for the most immortal verse *is* music already.¹¹

In Ida Dehmel’s diary that has been partly reproduced in Alma Mahler’s memoirs, we find a description of Mahler’s view:

7 See Alexander Odefey, *Gustav Mahlers ‘Kindertotenlieder’. Eine semantische Analyse* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 1999), 29–86, 123–164.

8 German original: ‘Sie müssen es unbedingt ermöglichen, daß ich den Meschaertabend ein Orchester zur Verfügung habe. Meine Compositionen würden ohne Orchester charakterlos erscheinen, denn es ist für Orchester berechnet, und die Behandlung der Instrumente in Verbindung mit der Singstimme ergeben den Styl der Sache. Es wäre ein schwerer Fehler, mit Surrogaten zu kommen, wenn es gilt, das Verständniß für etwas Neues zu erkämpfen.’; Rudolf Stephan, ‘Mahlers letztes Konzert in Berlin. Unbekannte Briefe Mahlers’, in Ernst Herrtrich, Hans Schneider (Ed.), *Festschrift Rudolf Elvers zum 60. Geburtstag* (Tutzing: Schneider, 1985), 494–496; my translation.

9 Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar and his Publishers. Letters of a Creative Life* (Oxford: OUP, 1987), 784.

10 See Elgar, *Road to Recognition*, 207; Knud Martner, *Mahler’s Concerts* (New York: Kaplan, 2010), 192–195, 197, 200f., 212f., 254f.

11 Quoted from Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar. A Creative Life* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 280.

He said it always strikes him as barbaric if musicians dare to set perfectly beautiful poems to music. That was as if a great sculptor had chiselled a statue out of marble, and then some painter would want to put paint onto it. He, Mahler, had only taken possession of some poems from the Wunderhorn; with this book he had had a special relationship since his early childhood. Its poems were not of consummate perfection, but rather blocks of stone from which everyone was free to shape what he wanted.¹²

Furthermore, Mahler told the critic Ludwig Karpath in a letter of 2 March 1905 that he considered the collection *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* to be essentially different from other types of (more literary) poetry, and almost ‘more nature and life than art’.¹³ Shortly before, on 3 February 1905, he had made a quite remarkable statement to Anton Webern:

After *Des Knaben Wunderhorn* I could only do Rückert – that is poetry at first hand, everything else is poetry at second hand.¹⁴

Thus the two composers obviously chose first of all those poems which seemed suitable for them to be transformed into their own, very distinctive music.

Both song cycles have, of course, highly different topics. Nevertheless, there are still more similarities between them. Each comprises five songs, and is written for low voice, the *Sea Pictures* for contralto, the *Kindertotenlieder* for contralto/mezzo-soprano or baritone. Moreover both cycles are about the same length, a typical performance of each lasting approximately 24 minutes. There are structural correspondences, too:

<i>Sea Pictures:</i>			<i>Kindertotenlieder:</i>		
song	key	length ¹⁵	song	key	length
1	E minor/major	49 bars	1	D minor/major	84 bars
2	C major	33	2	C minor ¹⁶	74
3	C major	88.5 [89–0.5]	3	C minor	87 [70+17]
4	B minor	51	4	E flat major/minor	74 [71+3]
5	D major	134	5	D minor – D major	139

12 German original: ‘Es käme ihm auch immer wie Barbarei vor, wenn Musiker es unternehmen, vollendet schöne Gedichte in Musik zu setzen. Das sei so, als wenn ein Meister eine Marmorstatue gemeißelt habe und irgendein Maler wolle Farbe darauf setzen. Er, Mahler, habe sich nur einiges aus dem Wunderhorn zu eigen gemacht; zu diesem Buch stehe er seit frühester Kindheit in einem besonderen Verhältnis. Das seien keine vollendeten Gedichte, sondern Felsblöcke, aus denen jeder das Seine formen dürfe.’; Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler. Erinnerungen* (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer, 1991), 116; my translation.

13 See Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, hrsg. von Herta Blaukopf (Wien: Zsolnay, 1996), 322.

14 German original: ‘Nach des Knaben Wunderhorn konnte ich nur mehr Rückert machen – das ist Lyrik aus erster Hand, alles andere ist Lyrik aus zweiter Hand.’; Friedrich Wildgans, ‘Gustav Mahler und Anton von Webern’, *Österreichische Musikzeitschrift* 15 (1960), 304; my translation.

15 All five songs of the *Sea Pictures* have 4/4 time throughout (with one 2/4 bar in ‘Sabbath Morning at Sea’), but in the *Kindertotenlieder* there are to be found several places where Mahler uses other times. To compare the respective lengths of the songs correctly, in all of them 2/4 or 3/2 have been converted to the length of a 4/4 bar.

16 Beginning in G minor and heavily modulating to remote keys.

Mahler uses mainly flat keys, D minor in the framing songs 1 and 5 and the not very remote keys C minor and E flat major for the other songs. The final conclusion then turns to the major as had already been indicated in the opening song. Elgar also applies keys that are not very remote from each other, but predominantly sharp keys. The sketches for the final song being in E major,¹⁷ Elgar seems to have intended to return, just as Mahler, to the key of the first song. Perhaps the final D major was indeed a request by Clara Butt, but anyhow it corresponds well to the B minor of the preceding song. The final songs, 'The Swimmer' and 'In diesem Wetter' also have in common that they are by far the longest (134 and 139 bars respectively) of both cycles. In addition, they have the fastest tempo indications of all songs, thus leading to dramatic endings.

There are differences between the two cycles, too, most obvious in the fact that Mahler used Rückert's highly personal collection as his source, while Elgar chose poems of five different authors. Interestingly, in regard to coherence, both composers seem not to have seen their respective works in the same way. Mahler wanted his *Kindertotenlieder* to be performed always as a complete cycle. In the first edition of the songs he had a comment printed which he also demanded to be added on the programmes of all performances. It reads:

'The five songs are conceived as a unit, an indivisible whole, and their continuity at a performance should be preserved by the prohibition of interruptions of any kind; applause, for instance, at the end of a number.'¹⁸

By contrast, Elgar often performed only parts of his cycle, and equally did Hans Richter. Between 1900 and 1911, Richter conducted ten performances of the *Sea Pictures*, only one of them with all five songs, yet six times two songs, two times three songs, and even one concert with just 'Sabbath Morning at Sea'.¹⁹ Apparently, it was not unusual at the time to proceed with song cycles in this way. When the first editions of Elgar's *Sea Pictures* appeared at Boosey & Co in London and New York in 1899 (version with piano) and 1900 (orchestral version), their title pages in any case read: 'Sea-Pictures / A Cycle of Five Songs for Contralto'. However, even Mahler himself, when he performed Elgar's cycle in New York in 1911 with Louise Kirkby Lunn (see below), left out 'The Swimmer'.

Life after death: Elgar's 'The Dream of Gerontius' and Mahler's Fourth Symphony

In the summer of 1899 Mahler began to compose a new symphony, his Fourth. During that holiday in Bad Aussee in Austria he managed to draft larger parts of its first three movements. One year later he chose Maiernigg am Wörthersee as his holiday destination, where he was able to finish his composition on 5 August. As usual, the full score was written out in the following winter, the autograph fair copies of the second and third movements bearing the date of 5 January 1901. For the final movement of his symphony he made use of a *Wunderhorn*-Lied, 'Das himmlische

17 See David Owen Norris, 'The Seas of Separation: The mythic archetype behind Elgar's songs, with a performer's analysis of *Sea Pictures*', *The Elgar Society Journal* 15/1 (2007), 24.

18 German original: 'Diese 5 Gesänge sind als ein einheitliches, untrennbares Ganzes gedacht, und es muß daher die Kontinuität derselben (auch durch Hintanhaltung von Störungen, wie z. B. Beifallsbezeugungen am Ende einer Nummer) festgehalten werden.'; see Odefey, *Gustav Mahlers 'Kindertotenlieder'*, 61. English translation quoted from the programme of Mahler's performance on 26 January 1910 in New York; see Martner, *Mahler's Concerts*, 254.

19 See Martin Bird (Ed.), *Hans Himself: Elgar and the Richter Circle* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2017), 371.



Elgar's short score/piano arrangement of 'Sabbath Morning at Sea' (Elgar Birthplace)

Leben', he had composed in 1892, but whose instrumentation he now accommodated.²⁰ Elgar worked almost simultaneously on *The Dream of Gerontius*. While early sketches may have been compiled in summer or autumn 1899, serious work on it did not begin until early in 1900. On 6 June the composition was completed and, less than two months later on 3 August, he finished the orchestration.²¹

Remarkably enough, both these great creations have a common subject: life after death. In case of *Gerontius* this is evident. Yet Mahler, as he had done in his Second ('Resurrection') Symphony, again based his new symphonic work on a religious ground. To Natalie Bauer-Lechner he explained:

It contains the cheerfulness of a higher and, to us, an unfamiliar world that holds for us something eerie and horrifying. In the final movement ('The Heavenly Life'), although already belonging to this higher world, the child explains how everything is meant to be.²²

And his friend, the Dutch composer Alphons Diepenbrock, recalled that Mahler in this symphony dealt 'exclusively with the emotions of the soul freed from all earthly bonds, either as childlike though divinely cheerful or as the highest ecstasy to which the mystics of early times would rise in their concept of the divine.' The 'childlike happy mood' found expression in the first movement, the ecstatic in the third movement. The transition between these two movements was accomplished by the second movement: 'It is Death who strikes up the dance and wants to lure the souls into his kingdom.'²³

Thus indeed, Mahler's Fourth Symphony is a meditation on life after death, combining solemn, earnest, eerie, but also ironic and humorous elements. In a sketch he explicitly referred to it as 'Humoreske' even, and in a letter to the conductor Julius Butts of 12 September 1903 he wrote that he 'had experienced that this kind of humour (to be distinguished from wit and friskiness) often is not recognised even from the best'.²⁴ Mahler's concept of humour was, besides other sources, strongly influenced by Jean Paul, one of his favourite authors. Of course, due to its content, there is not to be found any indication of humour in Elgar's *Gerontius*. It's again a remarkable coincidence then, that of all things Elgar inscribed a beautiful quotation by Jean Paul in Frank Schuster's copy of the *Gerontius* vocal score in the German edition. It is, admittedly, from a chapter concerning faith in his educational essay *Levana*, and reads:

When in your last hour (think of this) all faculty in the broken spirit shall fade away and die into inanity – imagination, thought, effort, enjoyment – then at last will the Nightflower of Belief alone continue blooming, and refresh with its perfumes in the last darkness.²⁵

20 See Constantin Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies* (Pompton Plains, NJ: Amadeus Press, 1993), 109–112.

21 See Elgar, *Road to Recognition*, 191f., 213, 215, 225, 230–237, 239, 241, 244–247, 257, 259, 261.

22 Quoted from Floros, *Gustav Mahler: The Symphonies*, 113.

23 Quoted from *ibid.*, 115.

24 See Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, 305.

25 See Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 290f.

Mahler's Sixth Symphony and Elgar's First

In May 1906 Mahler conducted the first performance of his Sixth Symphony at the Tonkünstlerfest of the Allgemeiner Deutscher Musikverein in Essen. *The Musical Times* reported:

At the second orchestral concert on May 27 the chief novelty of the festival, Gustav Mahler's sixth Symphony in A minor, was produced. Realizing that a gigantic work, lasting over ninety minutes, would make quite exceptional demands upon the receptiveness of his audience, Herr Mahler had stipulated that his symphony should form a programme entirely by itself. 'Either this, or no performance!' quoth he. Events proved the soundness of his policy, for whereas some of the other concerts lasted five hours and produced utter exhaustion long before the end was reached, the audience came fresh to Herr Mahler's symphony, and the impressions it produced were not obliterated by several succeeding hours of other composers' music. It says much for his position in the musical world in Germany that he could make such a condition and that it was agreed to. But then a Mahler première is as great an event in Germany or Austria as, say, the production of Sir Edward Elgar's hypothetical Symphony in E will be in England – when it does eventually get completed and is produced by Dr. Richter.²⁶

It is noteworthy that Mahler and Elgar were compared in this article. Looking at their respective oeuvres from today, there are actually some similarities. Unlike their contemporaries Puccini, Strauss and Janáček, but also Saint-Saëns, Dvořák, Debussy and Busoni, they did not compose operas (despite some plans). Neither did they write any piano music of greater significance. Besides his early cantata *Das klagende Lied*, Mahler confined himself to just two musical genres, the symphony and the song. Elgar's compositional spectrum was much wider: he wrote an important organ sonata, the wonderful chamber works of 1918/19 and fine church music and partsongs, too. But his fame is based primarily on his orchestral and choral-orchestral compositions. Ignoring the Violin and Cello Concertos for a moment, the difference from Mahler is not that huge, especially as his Second, Third and Eighth Symphonies make use of choirs, too.



Hans Richter (1843-1916, Elgar Birthplace)

As is well known, Elgar was already fifty years old when he started to work on his First Symphony. When he completed it in September 1908, Mahler had almost finished the *Lied von der Erde*, his actual ninth symphony. Elgar's two symphonies are quite long, not as long as Mahler's but among the longest of their time.²⁷ While

26 'The Forty-Second Tonkünstler-Festival of the General German Music Society, at Essen. May 24–28.', *The Musical Times* 47 (1906), 486.

27 Their respective durations are longer than those of all symphonies by Brahms, Tchaikovsky, Dvořák, César Franck, Saint-Saëns, Chausson, Strauss (*Sinfonia domestica*, *Eine Alpensinfonie*, and the two early symphonies), Nielsen, Sibelius, Dukas, Magnard, Roussel, Taneyev, Arensky, Glazunov, Franz Schmidt,

Elgar maintained in them the classical four-movement layout, Mahler used six movements in his Third and in *Das Lied von der Erde*, five movements in the First (original version), Second, Fifth, Seventh and Tenth, and two parts in his Eighth. Only his Fourth, Sixth and Ninth have four movements, but the Ninth shows the highly unusual structure of an Andante and an Adagio framing two fast movements, and the Fourth closes with an orchestral song. Mahler's Sixth is, indeed, his only symphony to follow the classical layout.

Interestingly, there exist some correspondences between Mahler's Sixth Symphony (1903/04) and Elgar's First Symphony (1907/08). Mahler used the key of E flat major for the slow movement, and A minor for the other three movements. The same very distant relationship (a tritone apart) is to be found in the combination of A flat major and D minor in the first and last movements of Elgar's symphony. Moreover, both symphonies are built in cyclic form, as several themes and motives return in later movements, not least the famous 'Nobilmente' theme from the beginning of Elgar's work.

Elgar's 'The Dream of Gerontius' and Mahler's Eighth Symphony

In the last issue, I mentioned the first performance in Vienna of *The Dream of Gerontius* that took place on 16 November 1905 at the great hall of the Musikverein, with Franz Schalk conducting the Wiener Concertverein and the Singverein der Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde.²⁸ Two weeks later, on 1 December, the following report was given in *The Musical Times*:

Three years ago our Concertverein introduced Elgar's 'Enigma' Variations into Vienna. Director Ferdinand Löwe was so decidedly successful with that work that soon afterwards he felt justified in producing the 'Cockaigne' overture, with which he was equally fortunate. He was followed by Felix Mottl, who, as conductor of the Philharmonic Society, performed the overture 'In the South' before an admiring audience; and finally, only a few weeks ago, Director Löwe delighted us with a superb reading of the Introduction and Allegro for strings.²⁹ Thus the production of 'The Dream of Gerontius' on November 16 took place before an audience already acquainted with Elgar's music, and eager for further samples. To introduce the work, moreover, Dr. Eusebius Mandyczewski, a few days before the performance, lectured on Elgar and his oratorio to the members of the Leo Society, consisting of the most distinguished circles of Vienna, when he illustrated his remarks by some selections from the work.

The performance at the concert of the famous Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde was conducted by Director Franz Schalk, one of the Kapellmeisters at our Court Opera House. A sincere admirer of the work, he had prepared chorus and orchestra with the rarest devotion, with the result that the great and wonderful beauties of the score were fully and convincingly revealed. We owe it to his deep and penetrating insight into the spirit of Elgar's music that the whole performance was steeped in an atmosphere of religious and artistic exaltation which held the audience enthralled from the first note to the last.

The rôle of Gerontius was sung with the greatest finish by Herr Felix Senius, of St. Petersburg. His splendid voice, his eminently musical nature, as well as his fine artistic temperament fitted him to be

an ideal Gerontius. His singing in the death-scene in the first part, of the soul's approach before the throne of God, and many other details will not easily be forgotten. Herr Richard Mayr, a very able baritone from the Court Opera, was the Priest. He sang the music with expression and dignity, his powerful voice sounding imposing even in the large room. The rôle of the Angel was entrusted to Frau Rosa Stwertka, a hitherto unknown singer with a rich, full and well-trained voice of great beauty.

The public received the excellently prepared performance with every sign of appreciation and delight. At the end of both parts of the work there was a great display of enthusiasm; Director Schalk and Herr Senius were especially admired and praised. To crown the event there was only one thing needed – the presence of the composer, to whom the audience would have been only too delighted to express their admiration.³⁰

I also mentioned that while this was the first 'regular' concert of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde in the season 1905/06, Mahler three weeks later conducted the Vienna première of his Fifth Symphony at the first 'special concert' of the season. Schalk, who had succeeded Ferdinand Löwe in 1904 as director of the concerts of the Gesellschaft der Musikfreunde had suggested it to Mahler and organised the concert as he had done the previous year when Mahler had very successfully presented his Third Symphony. It seems therefore quite possible that Mahler might have attended Schalk's performance of *Gerontius* (if only by courtesy) or at the very least the rehearsals. On the day of the concert (16 November, a Thursday, at 7.30pm) Mahler, indeed, was in Vienna and had no duty to conduct at the Hofoper. Actually, he had to give only two performances there during that week, on 14 and 18 November and, on 16 November, Francesco Spetrino whom Mahler had engaged as a Hofoper Kapellmeister in 1903 conducted a performance of Vincenzo Bellini's *Norma*.³¹ Contrary to the wealth of information that can be found in the Elgars' diaries, we have in the case of Mahler very little knowledge of his 'private' activities in Vienna. Nevertheless, for example we know that Mahler was present, too, at the great hall of the Musikverein the year before, on 13 March 1904, when his own k. k. Hof-Opernorchester (i.e. the Vienna Philharmonic) and the Singverein gave a performance of Berlioz's Requiem (*Grande messe des morts*) that was conducted by Ernst von Schuch.³²

In the next summer, Mahler composed his Eighth Symphony in Maiernigg am Wörthersee. Remarkably enough, there exist some revealing similarities between Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* and Mahler's symphony. Both compositions are laid out in two parts of comparable durations, about 36 + 60 minutes (Elgar) and 23 + 60 minutes (Mahler), respectively. Both are 'through-composed', without single 'numbers', and both have significant and long orchestral introductions, the 'Prelude' of Part I (Elgar) and the introduction of Part II (Mahler). That Elgar's *Gerontius* uses instruments as well as voices seems natural, but Mahler's decision to write a symphony which almost continuously employs voices was highly unusual. In a conversation with Richard Specht in August 1906, he explained:

30 "The Dream of Gerontius" in Vienna', *The Musical Times* 46 (1905), 802.

31 See Gustav Mahler, „Mein lieber Trotzkopf, meine süße Mohnblume“. *Briefe an Anna von Mildenburg*, hrsg. und kommentiert von Franz Willnauer (Wien: Zsolnay, 2006), 485–491, and the schedule of performances at the Hofoper from 1897 to 1907 at the website of the International Gustav Mahler Society, Vienna: <https://gustav-mahler.org/mahler/calendar-f-e.htm> (29 August 2017).

32 See Ida Dehmel's diary; Alma Mahler, *Gustav Mahler. Erinnerungen*, 113; <http://www.wienerphilharmoniker.at/konzerte/archive> (29 August 2017).

Ives, Parry, Stanford, Bantock and Vaughan Williams (the only exceptions being Tchaikovsky's *Manfred Symphony* op. 58, Sibelius's *Kullervo* Symphony op. 7, and Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* and the first version of *A London Symphony*).

28 See *Part two*, 33f.

29 For the exact dates of these concerts see *ibid.*, 32f.

Its form is also something altogether new. Can you imagine a symphony that is sung throughout, from beginning to end? So far I have employed words and the human voice merely to suggest, to sum up, to establish a mood. I resorted to them to express something concisely and specifically, which is possible only with words – something that could have been expressed symphonically only with immense breadth. But here the voice is also an instrument. The whole first movement is strictly symphonic in form yet is completely sung. It is really strange that nobody has thought of this before; it is simplicity itself, *The True Symphony*, in which the most beautiful instrument of all is led to its calling. Yet it is used not only as sound, because the voice is the bearer of poetic thoughts.³³

Finally, both composers were aware that they had created something new and unique. When the question arose at Novello in which category *The Dream of Gerontius* should be placed, Elgar wrote to August Jaeger on 23 August 1904:

[...] there's no word invented yet to describe it.³⁴

And in a quite similar way Mahler told Willem Mengelberg in August 1906 in a letter from Maiernigg:

I have just completed my Eighth. It is the greatest I have composed thus far. It is so unique in content and form that it does not lend itself to description.³⁵

Mahler's and Elgar's transcriptions of music by J. S. Bach

To learn that Johann Sebastian Bach's music was held in highest esteem by both Elgar and Mahler may not be very surprising. Actually, nearly all of their fellow composers at least since Mozart and Beethoven felt in a similar way. Anyhow, in many regards they shared specific views on their great predecessor.

Elgar came to know Bach's music quite early. In 1896 then, he told his first biographer Robert Buckley:

No man has a greater reverence for Bach than I. I play three or four preludes and fugues from the 'Well-tempered Klavier' every day.³⁶

Dora Penny also recalled that he had played Bach fugues to her, and that he had introduced her to *Der Streit zwischen Phoebus und Pan* BWV 201 and had played most of it to her at various times.³⁷ When Edward and Alice Elgar visited Eisenach, Bach's birthplace, in May 1902 they sent a postcard to Hans Richter on which Elgar inscribed the theme of the fugue from the first Kyrie of the Mass in B minor.³⁸ On another postcard which he sent his father that same day, he wrote:

33 Quoted from Floros, *Gustav Mahler. The Symphonies*, 214.

34 Moore, *Elgar and his Publishers*, 580.

35 Quoted from Floros, *Gustav Mahler. The Symphonies*, 213. German original: 'Ich habe eben meine 8. vollendet. – Es ist das Größte, was ich bis jetzt gemacht. Und so eigenartig in Inhalt und Form, daß sich darüber gar nicht schreiben läßt.'; Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, 335.

36 Robert J. Buckley, *Sir Edward Elgar* (London/New York: Lane, 1905), 31.

37 See Mrs Richard Powell, *Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1994), 35, 145.

38 See Bird, *Elgar and the Richter Circle*, 116f.

Just been to see where old Bach was born & feel rather small.³⁹

The *Nekrolog* of 1754 stated that Bach had learnt his skills in the art of composition 'in great measure [...] only from the study of the works of the most famous composers of the time, and from his own reflections on them'.⁴⁰ If Elgar knew this, then he might have seen a clear parallel to his own musical education.

Evidence for Mahler's engagement in Bach's music is to be found in several sources. His friend Friedrich Löhr reported that Mahler had played to him the *Well-tempered Klavier* 'and other works by the beloved master' in the first half of the 1880s. The composer Josef Bohuslav Foerster recalled several talks with Mahler on Bach's sacred cantatas in 1893. Both of them had admired Bach as 'the greatest of all contrapuntists and the most daring proficient of harmony'. Three years later Mahler gave the full scores of the *St Matthew Passion*, the *St John Passion* and the *Christmas Oratorio* to the young Bruno Walter as a gift. His most intense immersion into Bach, however, happened in 1901. After the near fatal haemorrhage he had suffered, he spent in March two weeks at a sanatorium near Vienna, where his friend Natalie Bauer-Lechner found him studying his copies of the Bach Gesellschaft Edition. In the following summer when she stayed with Mahler in Maiernigg am Wörthersee, he enthused again about Bach. He talked of 'the marvel of his polyphony' that he considered incredible 'not only for his own age but for all time', and admitted: 'It is ineffable how I learn more and more from Bach, however sitting at his feet as a child.'⁴¹ The last remark corresponds nicely to the aforementioned one by Elgar.

Interestingly, both Mahler and Elgar produced transcriptions of works by Bach, and both did so late in their lives. Mahler arranged a *Suite aus den Orchesterwerken von Joh. Seb. Bach* in 1909 for his concerts with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, combining selected movements of the suites in B minor BWV 1067 and D major BWV 1068:

I	'Ouverture'	B minor	[from BWV 1067]
II	'Rondeau und Badinerie'	B minor	[both from BWV 1067]
III	'Air'	D major	[from BWV 1068]
IV	'Gavotte No. 1 und 2'	D major	[from BWV 1068]

Besides the combination of the movements, Mahler applied detailed articulations and dynamic markings, added some counterpoints and, particularly, realised a continuo part for 'clavicembalo' and organ. In the first performance of his *Suite* on 10 November 1909 at the Carnegie Hall (the evening had been announced as 'The First of a Series of Historical Concerts') he played the continuo himself, using a Steinway piano with metal tacks affixed to the hammers to approximate the sound of a harpsichord. In a letter to Paul Hammerschlag of the Wiener Concertverein he reported:

39 Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2012), 132.

40 Quoted from Philipp Spitta, *Johann Sebastian Bach. His work and influence on the music of Germany, 1685–1750. Vol. I*, translated from the German by Clara Bell and J. A. Fuller-Maitland (London: Novello, 1884), 235. German original: '[...] in der Composition, welche er größtentheils nur durch das Betrachten der Werke der damaligen berühmten und gründlichen Componisten und angewandtes eigenes Nachsinnen erlernt hatte'; Hans-Joachim Schulze (Ed.), *Bach-Dokumente. Vol. III: Dokumente zum Nachwirken Johann Sebastian Bachs 1750–1800* (Kassel: Bärenreiter, 1972), Nr. 666, 82.

41 See Alexander Odefey, 'Gustav Mahler, Johann Sebastian Bach und die Mystik', in Gottfried Krieger, Matthias Spindler (Ed.), *Musik als Lebensprogramm. Festschrift für Constantin Floros zum 70. Geburtstag* (Frankfurt am Main: Lang, 2000), 129–131.

A particular delight had been recently a Bach concert for which I had set the Basso continuo for organ. On a spinet of big sonority having been prepared by Steinway I conducted and improvised – after the manner of the ancients. Thereby very surprising things emerged for me (and for the listeners, too).⁴²

Mahler's *Suite* was given another nineteen times in this and the following season, and appeared in print at Schirmer in 1910.⁴³

In April 1921 – one year after Alice's death – Elgar once again delved into Bach fugues. 'Now that my poor wife has gone I can't be original, and so I depend on people like John Sebastian for a source of inspiration.', he confessed. Elgar decided to orchestrate Bach's Fugue in C minor BWV 537. He told Ivor Atkins that he had treated Bach's fugue 'in *modern* way – largest orchestra', and continued: 'So many arrgts have been made of Bach on the "pretty" scale & I wanted to shew how gorgeous & great & brilliant he would have made himself sound if he had our means.'⁴⁴ In May he sent his arrangement to Novello, and on 27 October Eugene Goossens gave its first performance in London, at the Queen's Hall. The previous day, Elgar had written to Ernest Newman:

Here is the score [...]. Goossens rehearsed it today with his gorgeous orchestra & it comes off well. [...] P.S. You will see that I have kept it quite solid (diapasony) at first; – later you hear the sesquialteras & other trimming stops reverberating & the resultant vibrating shimmering sort of organ sound – I think⁴⁵

Elgar's Bach transcription had a connection with Richard Strauss, too. I quoted in the last issue a letter to Adrian Boult from August 1920 in which Elgar expressed his hope that the old friendship with the German composer might not be at an end because of the First World War.⁴⁶ They actually met again in January 1922 when Strauss came to London. Elgar wrote to him:

I send you a word of warm welcome & an assurance that your return to our country gives the greatest pleasure to myself & to very many of my musical countrymen. I hope we may meet soon.⁴⁷

Some days later Elgar gave a lunch for Strauss and a number of young British composers. It was a very successful and nice time, and there was even a discussion on the orchestration of Bach's organ works between Elgar and Strauss. The latter favoured a more restrained approach than his colleague had used, and Elgar invited him to orchestrate the accompanying Fantasia. But Strauss evaded the challenge, and Elgar himself took over the task. At the Gloucester Festival in September

42 German original: 'Besonderen Spaß hatte ich neulich an einem Bach-Konzert, wofür ich das Basso continuo für Orgel gesetzt, und an einem von Steinway hiezu präparierten Spinett von sehr großem Klange dirigierte ich und improvisierte – ganz nach Art der Alten. – Da sind für mich (und auch für die Hörer) ganz überraschende Dinge dabei herausgekommen.'; Gustav Mahler, *Briefe*, 395; my translation.

43 See Martner, *Mahler's Concerts*, 317; Norbert Bolin, 'Mahlers Bach. Zu Mahlers Suite aus Orchesterwerken J. S. Bachs', *Nachrichten zur Mahler-Forschung* Nr. 62 (2011), 14–30; David Pickett, 'Arrangements and *Retuschen*: Mahler and *Werktreue*', in Jeremy Barham (Ed.), *The Cambridge Companion to Mahler* (Cambridge: CUP, 2007), 195–197.

44 See Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 759.

45 Moore, *Letters of a Lifetime*, 401f.

46 See *Part two*, 26.

47 Moore, *Letters of a Lifetime*, 405.



A page from Elgar's copy of the published organ score of Bach's *Fantasia and Fugue* (BWV 537) containing his annotations in preparation for orchestrating it (Elgar Birthplace)

he conducted the first performance of the complete Bach Fantasia and Fugue in his arrangement,⁴⁸ which then was published under the opus number 86 – his first use of an opus number since the Cello Concerto of 1919. As Elgar intended, the scoring is 'gorgeous & great & brilliant', indeed. It comprises piccolo, 2 flutes, 2 oboes, english horn, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, timpani, bass drum, 2 harps, strings, and additionally, in the fugue only, side drum, triangle, tambourine, cymbals and glockenspiel.

Frank and Walter Damrosch

Among the most renowned conductors who personally knew both Elgar and Mahler were, for instance, Hans Richter, Arthur Nikisch and Felix Weingartner. Just like Richard Strauss and Julius Butts,⁴⁹ all of them were great admirers of Elgar's music and performed it frequently. Richter, of course, is the most famous example. He conducted the first performances of the *Enigma Variations*, *The Dream of Gerontius* and the First Symphony (which the composer dedicated to him), and became a close friend. Elgar's compositions appeared in Richter's programmes in every year from 1899 until his retirement from the concert platform in 1911.⁵⁰ Nikisch with the

48 See Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 760f.

49 See *Part two*, 21–30.

50 See Bird, *Elgar and the Richter Circle*; Christopher Fifield, *True artist and true friend. A biography of Hans Richter* (Oxford: OUP, 1993).

Berliner Philharmoniker and the London Symphony Orchestra, and Weingartner with the Berliner Hofkapelle and the Munich Kaim Orchester gave several performances of works by Elgar, too, in those years.⁵¹ But while Mahler had previously been in contact with all of them, this ceased to apply after 1901.

With the brothers Frank Damrosch (1859–1937) and Walter Damrosch (1862–1950), the situation was different. Walter succeeded his father, Leopold, as conductor of the Oratorio Society of New York and New York Symphony Society in 1885. His brother Frank was chorus master at the Metropolitan Opera from 1885 to 1891. In 1894 he also became conductor of the Musical Art Society of New York, a professional mixed chorus which performed older music and the a cappella repertory. He occupied this position until 1920, but principally succeeded his younger brother as conductor of the Oratorio Society in 1898. As he held that post until 1912, and Walter likewise remained with the Symphony Society until 1928 (when it merged with the Philharmonic Society), in the years of Elgar's and Mahler's stays in New York both brothers ranked among the city's most important musical figures.⁵²

Frank Damrosch and his Oratorio Society gave the first performance in New York of *The Dream of Gerontius* on 26 March 1903 (with an open rehearsal two days earlier), and even the first performance in America of *The Apostles* on 9 February 1904, both times at the Carnegie Hall.⁵³ Later that year he was in England and visited Elgar at Craeg Lea on 10 and 11 June 1904. Previously Damrosch had written from Cologne:

I expect to be in England from the 7th to 14th June and write to ask, whether I might have an opportunity of visiting you during this period. I would esteem it a great favour, if it would be agreeable to you to see me. I would, of course, be glad to come to Malvern or any other place you may designate.⁵⁴

Alice Elgar's diary entries for the two days of Damrosch's visit read:

10 June:

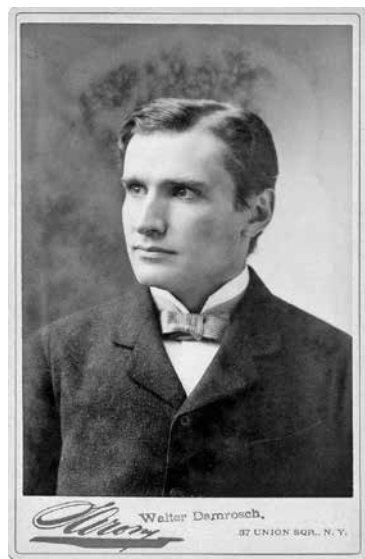
[...] A. into town after lunch [...] then to Gt. Malvern Station to meet Mr. F. Damrosch, Woodyatt cab. Took him to Imperial Hotel & showed him the Priory & then here, 9pin to tea & then we walked down to meet E. who came about 6 – Delightful evening Ivor Atkins to dinner – Delightful guest – Cross took him to Imperial –

51 See Raymond Holden, *The Virtuoso Conductors. The Central European Tradition from Wagner to Karajan* (New Haven/London: Yale UP, 2005), 54–56, 280, 297.

52 For the dates of those stays see *Part one*, 23.

53 See Edward Elgar, *The Path to Knighthood. Diaries 1902–1904*, edited by Martin Bird (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2016), 159f.; Richard Smith, “‘Shophar, sho good’: early American performances of The Apostles”, *The Elgar Society Journal* 13/2 (2003), 27–30.

54 Elgar, *The Path to Knighthood*, 299.



Walter Damrosch (1862–1950, Elgar Birthplace)

11 June:

[...] E. went to station with Mr. F. Damrosch, 10.20, he came up to breakfast We had such a pleasant morning.⁵⁵

In April 1906 Edward and Alice travelled a second time to America to keep his promise to conduct at the Cincinnati Festival he had given the year before. When they arrived in New York on 15 April they met their friend Julia Worthington and both brothers Damrosch in the evening. The next day the Elgars took the overnight train to Cincinnati.⁵⁶

In the following year Elgar embarked alone for New York where he conducted *The Apostles* at the Carnegie Hall on 19 March, his first professional appearance in the city. With the same forces – Frank Damrosch's Oratorio Society, and his brother Walter's New York Symphony Orchestra – Elgar one week later, on 26 March, there also gave the American première of *The Kingdom*. Both performances were very successful. On the former the press reported:

At the conclusion, Mr. Frank Damrosch embraced Sir Edward Elgar with un-Teutonic fervour, to which Sir Edward responded with quite un-British warmth.⁵⁷

Only a few weeks after the overwhelming triumph that Elgar achieved in England with the first performances of his First Symphony, Walter Damrosch conducted its American première at the Carnegie Hall on 3 January 1909. He gave further performances there on 5 and 24 January, and moreover conducted the symphony in that month in Milwaukee, Chicago, Toronto and Cincinnati.⁵⁸ From St. Louis, Damrosch wrote a letter to Elgar on 12 January, reporting of the ‘overwhelming effect’ the work had made on him, his orchestra and on the public. Rarely had he ‘seen an audience in such transports of enthusiasm from the first movement on’. He also asked in this letter:

Do you remember our conversation a few years ago when I implored you to write a Symphony, that you were the only man living who could do it?⁵⁹

‘The only man living’ implied: not Gustav Mahler, who had given the first performance in America of his own Second Symphony the month before with Damrosch's orchestra, and whose Fourth Symphony Damrosch himself had conducted in November 1904 (see below)!

I have already described in the April 2017 issue of this Journal that Elgar on his way to meet the Sheffield Choir in Toronto, was present at an afternoon concert Walter Damrosch gave with the New York Symphony Orchestra on 2 April 1911 in New York, and that when he appeared in the box, at the conductor's initiative he was welcomed with applause from the orchestra and equally from the audience.⁶⁰ This was his last stay in North America. But his contact with the

55 Ibid., 300.

56 See Richard Smith, ‘Julia Worthington – The Elgars’ American friend’, *The Elgar Society Journal* 18/1 (2013), 10; *Part one*, 25.

57 See Smith, “‘Shophar, sho good’: early American performances of The Apostles’, 32–34, quotation 32; *Part one*, 26.

58 See Stephen Lloyd, ‘Did Elgar achieve a century?’, *The Elgar Society Journal* 17/1 (2011), 37–40; *Part one*, 28f.

59 Moore, *Letters of a Lifetime*, 236.

60 See *Part one*, 31f.

Damroschs seems not to have broken off, as yet in December 1930 Elgar wrote a letter to Walter commending highly ‘My young soprano friend, Miss Joan Elwes’ for potential concerts in the United States.⁶¹

To comprehend how far Mahler might have been acquainted with Elgar’s music during the time he was in New York (1907–1911), it seems reasonable not only to have a look on performances of compositions by Elgar in those years but also on the New York audience’s familiarity with them, i.e., on earlier performances, too. We will see that the brothers Damrosch figured prominently in it. (The following considerations are confined to the most important performances.⁶² Of course, there might have been further concerts from smaller concert promoters. Unless otherwise stated, the venue is Carnegie Hall.)

Already in 1892 and 1896 Elgar’s part-song *My love dwelt in a northern land* op. 18/3 was performed at Carnegie Hall by choirs directed by William Rogers Chapman. The English organist and choirmaster Walter Henry Hall who had emigrated to America in 1883 gave the US première of *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* op. 30 with his Brooklyn Oratorio Society on 29 April 1904. Two years later, on 24 April 1906, he conducted the Musurgia Choir in the New York première of *Scenes from the Bavarian Highlands* op. 27.

Almost every year in the first decade of the 20th century a composition by Elgar was played in concerts of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, who regularly performed in New York:

- 1901 Dec 14 Boston Symphony Orchestra, Wilhelm Gericke
Cockaigne op. 40 (First performance in New York)
- 1903 Jan 17 Boston Symphony Orchestra, Wilhelm Gericke; Louise Kirkby Lunn,
mezzo-soprano
‘Sea Slumber Song’ and ‘In Haven’ from *Sea Pictures* op. 37
- 1904 Mar 17 Boston Symphony Orchestra, Wilhelm Gericke
Enigma Variations op. 36 (First performance in New York)
- 1905 Jan 14 Boston Symphony Orchestra, Wilhelm Gericke; Muriel Foster, contralto
three songs from *Sea Pictures* op. 37
- 1906 Jan 13 Boston Symphony Orchestra, Wilhelm Gericke
In the South op. 50
- 1907 Jan 12 Boston Symphony Orchestra, Karl Muck
In the South op. 50
- 1910 Jan 15 Boston Symphony Orchestra, Max Fiedler
Symphony No. 1 op. 55

On 23 and 24 March 1906, Fritz Steinbach presented the *Enigma Variations* with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. It was the first performance of a composition by Elgar in the

61 See Edward Elgar, *Darling Chuck. The Carice Letters*, edited by Martin Bird (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2014), 384; see also Martin Bird, ‘An enduring friendship: Elgar and Joan Elwes’, *The Elgar Society Journal* 19/6 (2016), 19–39.

62 Information on these concerts is available at the Digital Archives of the New York Philharmonic: <http://archives.nyphil.org> (8 September 2017), and of the Carnegie Hall: <https://www.carnegiehall.org/PerformanceHistorySearch> (8 September 2017).

concerts of the Philharmonic Society of New York. Steinbach had also conducted the first performance in Germany of Elgar’s *The Apostles* op. 49 two years before, on 22 May 1904, at the Lower Rhenish Musical Festival in Cologne. He was on friendly terms with Mahler, too, who performed his Third Symphony with Steinbach’s Gürzenich Orchester on 27 March 1904 in Cologne, and with the same forces later that year, on 18 October, there gave the first performance of his Fifth Symphony. Following the March concert, Steinbach had even suggested that Mahler should conduct the première of his Fifth on 20 May at the Lower Rhenish Musical Festival, but Mahler had decided against this because Alma was expecting their second child and he wanted her to be present at the première. Otherwise the symphony would have been performed within two days of Elgar’s *Apostles* had the two composers surely would have met.⁶³



Fritz Steinbach (1855-1916, Elgar Birthplace)

And here now the quite long list of concerts given by Frank and Walter Damrosch:

- 1900 Dec 1 New York Symphony Orchestra, Frank Damrosch; Marguerite Hall, mezzo-soprano
‘In Haven’ and ‘Where Corals Lie’ from *Sea Pictures* op. 37
- 1903 Mar 26 Oratorio Society of New York, Frank Damrosch
The Dream of Gerontius op. 38 (First performance in New York)
- 1903 Nov 19 Oratorio Society of New York, Frank Damrosch
The Dream of Gerontius op. 38
- 1904 Feb 9 Oratorio Society of New York, Frank Damrosch
The Apostles op. 49 (First performance in America)
- 1904 Mar 24 Oratorio Society of New York, Frank Damrosch
The Apostles op. 49
- 1904 Nov 6 New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch
In the South op. 50 (First performance in New York)
- 1904 Nov 26 New York Symphony Orchestra, Frank Damrosch
Speak, Music op. 41/2
- 1904 Dec 15 Musical Art Society of New York, Frank Damrosch
The Snow op. 26/1, *Fly, Singing Bird* op. 26/2, *Spanish Serenade* op. 23
- 1905 Mar 11 New York Symphony Orchestra, Frank Damrosch
In the South op. 50

63 See Gustav Mahler, *Ein Glück ohne Ruh’. Die Briefe Gustav Mahlers an Alma. Erste Gesamtausgabe*, hrsg. und erläutert von Henry-Louis de La Grange und Günther Weiß, Redaktion: Knud Martner (Berlin: Siedler, 1995), 190–192, 220; Martner, *Mahler’s Concerts*, 186f.

1905 Jun 5	New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch Gavotte (1885?) (Venue: New York Theatre Roof)
1905 Nov 26/28	New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch <i>Introduction and Allegro</i> for Strings op. 47 (First performance in America)
1906 Dec 13/15	Musical Art Society of New York, Frank Damrosch <i>Evening Scene</i> (1905)
1907 Feb 2/3	New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch <i>Enigma Variations</i> op. 36
1907 Mar 31	New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch <i>Enigma Variations</i> op. 36
1907 Dec 22	New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch ‘March. “With Pomp and Circumstance”’ [sic!]
1908 Apr 8	New York Symphony Orchestra, Frank Damrosch <i>Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf</i> op. 30
1908 Nov 1	New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch <i>Enigma Variations</i> op. 36
1908 Nov 10	New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch <i>Enigma Variations</i> op. 36
1908 Dec 17	Musical Art Society of New York, Frank Damrosch <i>There is Sweet Music</i> op. 53/1, <i>O Wild West Wind</i> op. 53/3
1909 Jan 3/5	New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch Symphony No. 1 op. 55 (First performance in America)
1909 Jan 24	New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch Symphony No. 1 op. 55
1909 Mar 11	Musical Art Society of New York, Frank Damrosch <i>Deep in my Soul</i> op. 53/2
1909 Mar 20	Oratorio Society of New York, Frank Damrosch <i>The Dream of Gerontius</i> op. 38
1909 Nov 7	New York Symphony Orchestra, Walter Damrosch Symphony No. 1 op. 55
1910 Mar 17	Musical Art Society of New York, Frank Damrosch <i>Go, Song of Mine</i> op. 57

To be added to this are the two concerts that Mahler conducted in 1910 and 1911. I will go into that in more detail later.

Several performances of works by Elgar given by the brothers Damrosch in the following years should be mentioned, too: From 1912 to 1919, Frank Damrosch and the Musical Art Society of New York presented smaller choral works of Elgar in nine concerts. In addition there were more than twenty concerts by Walter Damrosch and his New York Symphony Orchestra in the years from 1911 to 1920, among them a concert in memory of Samuel S. Sanford on 6 February 1912 during which the Adagio from the First Symphony was played. Moreover Walter gave complete performances of both symphonies (including the New York première of the Second on 10 December

1911) as well as presentations of the *Enigma Variations* and *Introduction and Allegro*, but also of works he had not yet conducted: *Cockaigne*, *Falstaff*, *Sospiri*, *Polonia* and *Carillon*.

Mahler, too, was acquainted with the brothers Damrosch. As early as 1895 he met with Walter who witnessed him conducting Wagner’s *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg* in Hamburg. Some years later it was reported that Damrosch then had sent him a congratulatory letter and Mahler had replied ‘that he had never received one from a colleague before’.⁶⁴ In November 1904 Walter conducted Mahler’s Fourth Symphony in New York (see below), and when Mahler in December 1907 came to America for his first season at the Metropolitan Opera, Damrosch invited the Austrian colleague to give concerts with his New York Symphony Orchestra as a guest conductor. Initially these were designated to take place already in that season, but as the Met’s director Heinrich Conried withheld approval the plans were postponed to the beginning of the next season. Mahler and Walter Damrosch met several times in March and April 1908 to discuss the matter; in addition a couple of letters that were exchanged between them have survived. When Mahler was in Philadelphia to conduct a matinée performance of Wagner’s *Siegfried* on 24 March, he even surprised Damrosch by attending a concert the fellow-conductor gave there that same day. After having finished Beethoven’s *Eroica*, Damrosch introduced Mahler to members of his orchestra.⁶⁵

At the end of his first season, Mahler left New York with his wife on 23 April and travelled to Europe. They returned on 21 November; eight days later Mahler began his little series of performances with the New York Symphony Orchestra at the Carnegie Hall. In this first of altogether three concerts he conducted works by Schumann, Beethoven, Smetana and Wagner, in the last on 13 December works by Wagner, Weber and Beethoven. Between them he gave on 8 December the first performance in America of his Second Symphony – the *Resurrection* Symphony – in which Walter Damrosch’s Orchestra (enlarged up to 115 players) was combined with Frank Damrosch’s Oratorio Society (200 singers).⁶⁶ Mahler seems to have had quite amicable relations with Frank, too. There exists a postcard he and Alma wrote to him during their journey back to Europe in April 1908, and much later Frank’s wife Hetty remembered that the Mahlers ‘frequently’ came to their house, and that Mahler had been ‘very fond’ of Frank and always ‘simple and charming with him’.⁶⁷

Let us now have a look on performances of compositions by Mahler in New York.⁶⁸

Before he arrived, there had been in the city only two important concerts presenting his music. The first of these was already mentioned: When Walter Damrosch and his New York Symphony

64 See Mahler, *Briefe an Anna von Mildenburg*, 208; Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 3. Vienna: Triumph and Disillusion (1904–1907)* (Oxford: OUP, 1999), 59f.

65 See Henry-Louis de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 4. A New Life Cut Short (1907–1911)* (Oxford: OUP, 2008), 145–150.

66 See Martner, *Mahler’s Concerts*, 232–235.

67 See de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 4*, 299. Henry-Louis de La Grange’s claim that the relationship between Mahler and Walter Damrosch deteriorated sharply after the announcement of the formation of a new orchestra (or, as it finally happened, the reorganisation of the New York Philharmonic Orchestra) to be conducted by Mahler, seems to be grossly overstated and not well documented. Equally annoying is the consistently negative depiction of Damrosch’s abilities as conductor. (Ibid., 148–152, 290–300, 380–382.)

68 See again <http://archives.nyphil.org> (8 September 2017) and <https://www.carnegiehall.org/PerformanceHistorySearch> (8 September 2017). See also Martner, *Mahler’s Concerts*, 232f., 248f., 254f., 284–287, 296f. The venue is again Carnegie Hall except for the concerts on 28 January and 20 November 1910 which took place at the Brooklyn Academy of Music, and the concert on 6 February 1916 at the Aeolian Hall in Manhattan.

Orchestra on 6 November 1904 gave the first performance in New York of Elgar's overture *In the South*, there followed after the interval another première, the first performance in America of Mahler's Fourth Symphony in which the soprano Etta de Montjau took the solo part. Fifteen months later, on 15 February 1906, the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Wilhelm Gericke played his Fifth Symphony, again a first performance for New York.

Next came the concert of 8 December 1908, followed by further performances in which Mahler conducted his own works, now with the Philharmonic Orchestra:

- 1909 Dec 16/17 New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Gustav Mahler
First Symphony (First performance in America)
- 1910 Jan 26/28 New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Gustav Mahler; Ludwig Wüllner, baritone
Kindertotenlieder (First performance in America)
- 1910 Nov 20/22/25 New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Gustav Mahler; Alma Gluck, soprano
Ging heut' morgen übers Feld, Rheinlegendchen
- 1911 Jan 17/20 New York Philharmonic Orchestra, Gustav Mahler; Bella Alten, soprano
Fourth Symphony

And finally there was a performance of his song *Rheinlegendchen* on 14 January 1911, with Alma Gluck as the soloist and Walter Damrosch conducting the New York Symphony Orchestra, as part of a benefit concert for the Council of Jewish Women, New York Section. This was the only work by Mahler besides the Fourth Symphony that was performed during his lifetime by one of the brothers Damrosch. In addition Walter and his orchestra later presented the *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (6 February 1916, Aeolian Hall, with soprano Marcia Van Dresser) and the *Wunderhorn-Lieder Das irdische Leben, Der Schildwache Nachtlied* and *Rheinlegendchen* (5/6 November 1925 with contralto Sigrid Onegin).

Checking against each other the above New York performances of Elgar's music and Mahler's music clearly reveals that there are to be found in the time of their respective visits and before considerably more performances of works by Elgar than by Mahler. Thus Elgar's compositions not only in Europe were much more popular than those of his contemporary.

An advertisement by Steinway & Sons

Interestingly enough, the names of both Elgar and Mahler can be found in an advertisement by Steinway & Sons that was published in several American newspapers in January and February 1910. It concerned one of the company's upright pianos, called Steinway Vertegrand. First the instrument is characterised as 'the embodiment of scientific research and musical progress of the Twentieth Century'. Then the two composers appear on the scene:

GUSTAV MAHLER, the famous conductor of the Philharmonic Society, writes us as follows:

"I never imagined that an upright piano could be constructed which would satisfy a musician's requirements in every respect."

SIR EDWARD ELGAR, the great English composer, exclaimed enthusiastically after playing on his Vertegrand:

"This piano would bleed TONE if I would wound it with a knife."

Advertisement by Steinway & Sons, 1910 (author's archive)

The
STEINWAY
VERTEGRAND

is the embodiment of scientific research and musical progress of the Twentieth Century.

GUSTAV MAHLER, the famous conductor of the Philharmonic Society, writes us as follows:

"I never imagined that an upright piano could be constructed which would satisfy a musician's requirements in every respect."

SIR EDWARD ELGAR, the great English composer, exclaimed enthusiastically after playing on his Vertegrand:

"This piano would bleed TONE if I would wound it with a knife."

Yet the price of this remarkable upright, in ebonized case, is only

\$550

Reasonable Time Payments will be accepted and liberal allowances will be granted for Pianos of all makes offered in exchange.

STEINWAY & SONS,
Steinway Hall, 107 and 109 East Fourteenth Street, New York
Subway Express Station at the Door

Also on sale at 17 East 125th St., between Madison and Fifth Aves.
OPEN EVENINGS

And finally the potential buyer is told: 'Yet the price of this remarkable upright, in ebonized case, is only \$550 [...].'

The advertisement appeared six times, on every Sunday from 2 January to 6 February, in the part 'Musical Notes and Comment' of the *New-York Tribune*, and also five times, from 25 January to 10 February in *The Sun*.⁶⁹ Revealingly, and in accordance with the above stated greater popularity of his music at that time, Elgar is referred to as the great composer whereas Mahler is called the famous conductor.

A slightly larger variant of the advertisement that appeared on 27 February in the *Los Angeles Herald* has this wording on our composers:

69 *New-York Tribune*: 2 January 1910, Part IV, p. 2; 9 January 1910, V, 2; 16 January 1910, IV, 2; 23 January 1910, IV, 3; 30 January 1910, IV, 2; 6 February 1910, IV, 2. *The Sun*: 25 January 1910, 7; 27 January 1910, 5; 1 February 1910, 7; 3 February 1910, 5; 10 February 1910, 6.

Sir Edward Elgar's Remarkable Testimonial

Sir Edward Elgar, the famous English composer, is the author of what is perhaps the most unique testimonial ever issued. "This Piano," he said, speaking of the Steinway Vertegrand, "would bleed tone if I would wound it with a knife." Such a sentence is literature; it is not mere writing. The testimonial is very recent, as is also one of Gustav Mahler, the noted composer-conductor, to the same Piano: "I never imagined that an upright piano could be constructed which would satisfy a musician's requirements in every respect."⁷⁰

Here, differently, appears a heading – one that contains only Elgar's name. Again he is qualified as composer, and Mahler this time at least as composer-conductor.

Lastly, the weekly magazine *The Musical Courier* had also published the quotations of both composers on 2 February, and even on two full (facing) pages, with photographs and the heading: 'Two Artistic Opinions on One Artistic Subject' (see p. 24).

Already on 17 May 1906 – the final day of his second stay in the United States – Elgar apparently had visited the factory of Steinway & Sons in New York. In a book of testimonials published in 1915 by the company, this letter from Elgar was printed:

May 17, 1906.

I am happy to-day in having seen the "birthplace" of the pianoforte in the possession of which I take so much pride, and which gives me such great and lasting pleasure to play upon.

EDWARD ELGAR.

To Messrs. Steinway & Sons,
New York.⁷¹

In the same book is also to be found a letter from Mahler:

December 8, 1909.

Dear Mr. Steinway,

Many thanks for the beautiful Vertegrand which you so kindly have put at my disposal. I use it daily for the study of orchestral effects, and am delighted by the possibilities of the instrument in this respect. I intend to take it with me to Vienna, as I simply will not be without it.

With greetings,
GUSTAV MAHLER.⁷²

Mahler's letter, which seems to be in private hands today, was only partly reproduced in that book. According to Henry-Louis de La Grange it included the sentence 'I never imagined that an upright piano could be constructed which would satisfy a musician's requirements in every respect.', quoted in the advertisement.⁷³ Thus Mahler's testimonial was a very recent one, indeed – he wrote it down just a month before. A source for Elgar's certainly remarkable utterance, however, I was not able to detect.

70 *Los Angeles Herald*: 27 February 1910, 7.

71 Steinway & Sons (Ed.), *Portraits of Musical Celebrities. A Book of Notable Testimonials* (New York: Publishers Printing Company, 1915), 48.

72 *Ibid.*, 17.

73 See de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 4*, 669f.

It might be added that the pianist Olga Samaroff mentioned in her memoirs that her first meeting with Mahler had occurred at a dinner party at the home of Charles Steinway, the company's president from 1896 to 1919.⁷⁴ Olga (who was to marry conductor Leopold Stokowski in 1911) does not tell the date of that event. Probably it was not long before a performance of Grieg's Piano Concerto she gave on 23 February 1910 in New Haven at Yale University's Woolsey Hall with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra under Mahler's direction.⁷⁵

Mahler conducting compositions by Elgar in New York

As we have seen, from time to time Mahler attended concerts given by fellow conductors, both in Europe and in America. The aforementioned concert in Philadelphia wasn't the only one of Walter Damrosch's he heard. On 22 December 1907, having just arrived in New York for the first time, he was present at Carnegie Hall where Damrosch conducted his New York Symphony Orchestra in a programme that included Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* and Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto (with Teresa Carreno as soloist).⁷⁶ Hence Mahler might very well have attended performances of Elgar's music in New York. From those listed above he should have been able to hear the concerts on 22 December 1907; 8 April, 17 December 1908; 3, 5, 24 January, 11, 20 March, 7 November 1909; 15 January 1910, 17 March 1910 – i.e., particularly Frank Damrosch's presentations of *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* and *The Dream of Gerontius*, and the four performances of the First Symphony by Walter Damrosch as well as the one by the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Max Fiedler. (As already told, there even was to be found at the bottom of the programme of Mahler's own concert as a guest conductor of Damrosch's orchestra on 13 December 1908 the announcement: 'January 3rd and 5th First production in America of Edward Elgar's new Symphony, the first symphonic work from his pen.')⁷⁷ Of course, he also might have witnessed in addition, or instead, the rehearsals of his colleagues.

For whatever reason, the fact is that Mahler decided to conduct, for the first time in his life, compositions by Edward Elgar in his second season with the New York Philharmonic Orchestra. First he chose the *Enigma Variations* for the Fourth Regular Subscription Concert that took place at the Carnegie Hall on 29 November 1910 (Tuesday, at 8.15pm) and was repeated on 2 December (Friday, at 2.30pm). Here the complete programme:

Elgar	Variations on an Original Theme op. 36 'Enigma'
Goldmark	Violin Concerto in A minor op. 28 (Francis MacMillen, soloist)
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Mozart	Symphony in G minor K550
Mendelssohn	Overture to <i>A Midsummer Night's Dream</i> op. 21

74 See Olga Samaroff-Stokowski, *An American Musician's Story* (New York: Norton, 1939), 159f.

75 See Martner, *Mahler's Concerts*, 260f.

76 See de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 4*, 47.

77 See *Part one*, 29.

In the Twelfth Regular Subscription Concert two and a half months later, Louise Kirkby Lunn sang four songs from the *Sea Pictures*. Again on a Tuesday evening and a Friday afternoon at the Carnegie Hall, Mahler presented on 14 and 17 February 1911 a programme of music by British and American composers:

Chadwick	Overture <i>Melpomene</i>
Stanford	Symphony No. 3 in F minor op. 28 'Irish'
Elgar	'Sea Slumber Song', 'In Haven', 'Sabbath Morning at Sea', 'Where Corals Lie' from <i>Sea Pictures</i> op. 37 (Louise Kirkby Lunn, contralto)

Loeffler	<i>La Villanelle du Diable</i> , Fantaisie symphonique op. 9 (Frank L. Sealy, organ)
MacDowell	<i>Die Sarazenen & Die Schöne Aldâ</i> , Fragments after <i>The Song of Roland</i> op. 30
Hadley	<i>The Culprit Fay</i> , Rhapsody for Grand Orchestra op. 62

Originally, Stanford's *Irish* Symphony and Elgar's *Sea Pictures* had been intended to form a 'British half' before the intermission, followed by works of the American composers Charles Martin Loeffler, Edward MacDowell and Henry Hadley. But when the eight-page programme booklet had already been printed some final modifications were made which were added in red print at the bottom of the first page:

In response to a general request it has been decided to offer George W. Chadwick's Overture "Melpomene" as the opening number of this programme. Also, by request, Mme. Kirkby Lunn will sing four Elgar "Sea Pictures" instead of three, the one added being the first, "The Sea Slumber Song."⁷⁸

For several pieces performed by Mahler and the Philharmonic Orchestra a set of parts has survived, among them that of the *Enigma Variations*. David Pickett who had thoroughly investigated these materials pointed out that while Mahler made alterations for example to Loeffler's *La Villanelle du Diable*, Pfitzner's *Christ-Elflein* overture, Enescu's Suite op. 9, and even Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*, no such 'emendations' can be found in the *Enigma* parts.⁷⁹ Obviously, Mahler here saw no need to make any changes. Unfortunately, not a single remark by him on the *Enigma Variations* or the *Sea Pictures* seems to have been recorded.

The performance on 17 February was Mahler's last concert but two. If his health hadn't deteriorated so much that his concertmaster Theodore Spiering had to take over the remaining concerts of the season,⁸⁰ he would have conducted another of Elgar's compositions: for the Fifteenth Regular Subscription Concert on 14 and 17 March he had planned to include the overture *In the South*.⁸¹

78 The programme booklets for both concerts can be found again at <http://archives.nyphil.org> (8 September 2017). See also Martner, *Mahler's Concerts*, 286f., 304f., 307. Chadwick was American, too.

79 See Pickett, 'Arrangements and *Retuschen*: Mahler and *Werktreue*', 193.

80 See *Part one*, 32.

81 See de La Grange, *Gustav Mahler: Volume 4*, 1615f.; Martner, *Mahler's Concerts*, 314. Spiering then conducted a partly different programme, without *In the South*.



Louise Kirkby Lunn (1873-1930, Elgar Birthplace)

Alexander Odefey graduated from the University of Hamburg in mathematics in 1989 and, having returned to this university some years later, with a PhD in musicology in 1998 (on Mahler's Kindertotenlieder). Apart from working as a mathematician he is doing scholarly research in the fields of history of music and history of mathematics. He has had a special affinity for British music in general and for Edward Elgar's life and work in particular since his youth. He is a member of the committee of Gustav Mahler Vereinigung Hamburg and the editor of its 'Mahler-Studien'.

Tales from the Complete Edition–10: There but for the King's appendix ...

John Norris

What do you know about Elgar's *Civic Fanfare*? Probably not very much as it is among Elgar's least known orchestral works. The sum total of most people's knowledge is that:

- it was composed for the 1927 Hereford Three Choirs Festival to accompany the arrival of the mayoral procession, leading into Elgar's orchestration of *God save the King*;
- Elgar conducted the first performance on schedule but the mayoral procession was unexpectedly delayed from entering, forcing Elgar to repeat the performance a few minutes later before continuing with the National Anthem;
- the *Fanfare* was performed again at the 1930 Festival, but when it was decided to continue the practice at the 1933 Festival, the performing material could not be found. Fortunately HMV had dispatched their van-mounted mobile recording unit (fig.1) to capture some of the 1927 Festival performances, including that of the *Fanfare*. Elgar therefore prepared a new score for the 1933 Festival by transcribing test pressings of the HMV recording;¹
- and, while composed for a full orchestra, the score lacks parts for violins.

The reality is rather different, although the chronology of its early history is broadly correct. Elgar composed the *Fanfare* at short notice at the request of his friend Percy Hull, organist at Hereford Cathedral, to accompany the mayoral procession as it entered the Cathedral for the opening ceremony of the 1927 Three Choirs Festival, after concerns were voiced that it might be thought inappropriate for the mayors to enter to the National Anthem. Elgar constructed the *Fanfare* to lead directly into his orchestration of *God save the King*, with which it shares the key of B \flat , allowing performance of the latter to begin once the mayoral procession had reached its seats. After 1927, the work continued to be used at all Hereford Three Choirs Festivals until 1949, after which the practice was dropped; but it has been performed only once at other Festival venues - at Gloucester in 1937.²

Elgar felt the work was not worth publishing, writing to Wane Daley, the manager of Keith Prowse's Education Department in August 1933:

Will you please have orchl. parts made (for the Hereford Festival) as soon as possible: The '*Fanfare*' is a prelude to the National Anthem: it was performed six years ago: I do not think it is worth publishing so you must charge *me* for copying the parts.

Elgar enclosed a list of the parts required:

- 1 This recording, with Elgar conducting, was issued on the 9-CD Elgar Edition set, first issued in 1992 (EMI CDS 7 54560 2), re-issued 2011 (EMI 0 95694 2).
- 2 Donald Hunt: *Elgar and the Three Choirs Festival* [Worcester: Osborne Books, 1999], p.162; the *Fanfare* was performed once more, again in Hereford, at the 1973 Festival.



fig.1: The HMV mobile recording unit, seen outside Hereford Cathedral during the Three Choirs Festival 1927.

No Violins

One each wind & percussion & organ

One each Viola

” Cello

” C.Basso

(I will let you know the number of duplicate Va., Cello & C.B. later)

Daley thought the work had potential in other directions, immediately replying:

Dear Sir Edward,

I expect to be able to send you early next week the required parts to the '*Civic Fanfare*', together with a copy of the score. Although such a work, owing to its character, may not be a commercial proposition from a publishing viewpoint, it should be very useful in connection with films, where a particular situation calls for a fanfare. As the composition is intended as a prelude to the National Anthem, nothing of course, would be done in this matter without your sanction.

I do hope that the newspaper reports of your being indisposed are entirely without foundation.

and three weeks later:

Dear Sir Edward,

The 'Fanfare' is such a fitting prelude to the National Anthem, that I wondered if it would be possible to effect an arrangement with the powers that be, whereby the work should always precede the latter on official occasions. In the event of such a proposal achieving fruition, we could then go ahead with the Military Band version.

But nothing came of Daley's initiatives and a full score of the *Fanfare* was not published until 1991.³ Over the past 30 years, a number of autograph scores have also come into the public domain, but without any certainty over the way they might interrelate to each other.

And that might be the end of this article if it were not for a chance encounter between Arthur Reynolds and Adrian Partington at the 2016 Three Choirs Festival, held in Gloucester. The latter revealed that he held a short score of the work in Elgar's hand with a marginal annotation reading: 'N.B. Originally composed for P.G.H. in 1927, but the whole of the parts & score were lost!! So "E.E." wrote this copy for use in 1933!'. This proved to be the missing piece in the jigsaw. Although the annotation is not in Elgar's hand, there seems to be no reason to question its veracity. Comparison of the 1933 short score with another short score held at the Elgar Birthplace (EBMS 54) revealed significant differences in the phrasing of certain bars which are also reflected in the full scores,⁴ making it possible to assemble the following chronology:

EBMS 54	short score for the 1927 version;
EBMS 161-2	a draft of the full score of the 1927 version;
EBMS 161-1	fair copy of the full score of the 1927 version;
HMV RLS 708	the 1927 recording;
Adrian Partington's score	short score for the 1933 version;
EBMS 106	a single page removed from what appears to be a draft full score of the 1933 version;
BLMS Mus 1810	fair copy of the full score of the 1933 version.

With the chronology in place, the oral history of the work can be reassessed.

Considering the short compositional period⁵ and the brevity of the work (a mere 22 bars), it is surprising that Elgar felt the need to write out two full scores as well as a short score of the *Fanfare*. EBMS 161-1 contains Elgar's handwritten instructions to the copyist on the parts required for the 1927 performance (fig.2), leaving no doubt that this, and not EBMS 161-2, was the score intended for use in the 1927 performance.⁶

3 Hereford: Acuta Music, 1991.

4 The most obvious differences are in the phrasing of bb.1/2/6a/8/15/22 of the score, where Elgar has replaced semi-quaver pairs in the 1927 score (fig.a) by a triplet rhythm in the 1933 score (fig.b).



5 According to Wulstan Atkins (*The Elgar-Atkins Friendship* [Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1984], p.401), Elgar was not asked to compose the Fanfare until after the Festival programme had been printed.

6 The instruction reads:

'To Copyist: 1 ea[ch]: 3 Clarinets, 2 Fagotti, C.Fag.;
4 Horns, 3 Trombe, 3 Tromboni, Tuba, Timpani, Side dr., Grancassa [sic], organ.
4 ea. Viola, cello and Contra B (CB separate)
Number each bar in all parts:
do not write out the repeat (first five bars) in full. EE'



fig.2: the first page of EBMS 161-1, showing Elgar's detailed instruction to his copyist and the unorthodox repeat section for bars 1-5 with (circled) second-time differences included in b.1 on the 1st trumpet, timpani and strings staves.

A further difference between the two scores is the inclusion in *EBMS 161-2* of not only violin parts but also those for upper wind, both missing from *EBMS 161-1* (fig.3). While the absence of violin parts may have become part of the work's folklore, Elgar's decision to exclude these instruments would appear to have been taken late in the day. As the players were available to him in the Three Choirs orchestra, we can only surmise that his intention was to provide the *Fanfare* with a deeper sonority, contrasting it with his arrangement of *God save the King* which was to follow it.

Of course, if the recording of the première performance is an accurate performance from the 1927 score and Elgar has produced an accurate transcription of the recording, there would not be significant differences between the 1927 score and the 1933 transcription. In advance, it seemed more likely that the differences in phrasing between the two scores would be attributable to Elgar's mis-transcription of the recording. However, a careful comparison of the 1927 and 1933 scores with the recording shows the transcription to be accurate - the performance is much closer to the 1933 score than to the 1927 score. This indicates that the changes in phrasing must also have been introduced at a late stage in preparations for the première performance, certainly after Elgar had written out the two Birthplace full scores and possibly only in the course of rehearsals.

There is another notable difference between *EBMS 161-1* (the score containing Elgar's instructions to his copyist) and the 1933 transcription: the upper woodwind (piccolo, flutes, oboes and cor anglais), all present in *EBMS 161-2* but missing from *EBMS 161-1*, have reappeared in the 1933 score, and Elgar even introduced three bars for the second violins to the latter before strenuously crossing through the whole of the violin staves. This realisation caused us to question *EBMS161-2*'s position in the chronology. The upper woodwind parts in the two scores are by no means identical and we felt it more likely that, having initially planned on a full orchestra, Elgar decided to experiment by removing upper woodwind and violins, only to find once rehearsals began that the reductions left an undesirably thin orchestral sound in the vastness of Hereford Cathedral, leading to his re-introduction of the upper woodwind but not the violins. But we also considered whether, having provided the copyist with a full score from which to copy out the parts, Elgar continued to revise the work, turning up at rehearsals with *EBMS 161-2* from which he dictated amendments to the parts to the assembled players.

Sadly the parts used in 1927 have not resurfaced. However derived, one feels they must have ended up covered in amendments in the players' hands as Elgar's wishes continued to evolve until the very last minute, giving a clear picture of the chaos which regularly surrounds the first performance of a new work. But a comparison of the opening bars of the three full scores throws up yet another significant event in Elgar's evolution of the work which not only reconfirms our original chronology above but also allows us to suggest one further correction to the work's oral history. *EBMS 161-2*, the score we place first in the chronology, contains 27 bars written out without repeats; but the two later scores have been shortened to 22 written bars by the introduction of a 5-bar repeat section at the start of the work. In *EBMS 161-1* (the 1927 performance score), this has been created in an unconventional fashion⁷ with first- and second-time differences shown by annotations in the first bar of the repeat (see fig.3); in the 1933 score, Elgar has moved the repeat back a bar to become bb.2-6, with more conventional first- and second-time bars at b.6 (fig.4).

In most respects, the account of Elgar beginning the first performance of the work before the mayoral procession was ready to enter, thus requiring him to repeat the work in its entirety, does not

7 Unconventional perhaps, but not unique among Elgar's autograph scores. He used the same device in his autograph score of *The Mill Wheel*, which proved decisive in demonstrating that he had provided a performable song - see *Elgar Society Journal* Vol.18 No.2 (August 2013) p.31.

5

fig.3: the fifth page of *EBMS 161-2*, showing the inclusion of parts for the violins and upper woodwind.



fig.4: the first page of the 1933 full score, showing a more orthodox repeat section for bars 2-6, with first- and second-time repeat bars at the end of the section on the following page.

ring true. His introduction of the repeat section suggests that, even before starting the rehearsals, Elgar realised that his work might not provide the mayoral procession with sufficient time to reach their seats and so introduced the repeat section as a rare example among his output of a ‘vamp until ready’ ostinato. How wise he was - in the 1927 recording, the repeat section is played not twice but three times, thus avoiding an embarrassing silence between the *Fanfare* and the National Anthem as members of the mayoral procession shuffled to their seats.

It is unusual for surviving sources to provide such a detailed picture of our composer at work. For that reason, we have included all three full scores in the latest volume in the Complete Edition, published in August.

~ ~ ~

Coronation Ode, the main work in the latest Complete Edition volume, is a far better known work than the *Fanfare*, making it less prone to misunderstandings, one might think. Elgar was commissioned to write it for a gala concert which was to be staged by the Grand Opera Syndicate of Covent Garden on the eve of the coronation of King Edward VII. The concert was conceived by Henry Higgins, the syndicate’s manager, and words by A.C. Benson had already been submitted for Elgar to set, but these were initially rejected. Other considerations, including a revival of *The Dream of Gerontius* after its disappointing première two years previously and Elgar’s suggestion of an operatic version of *Caractacus*, found even less favour, August Jaeger in particular arguing strongly against the latter proposal in a letter he wrote to Elgar on 9 December 1901:

Dont cook up Caractacus for Covent Garden. It will never do. Write a real opera, - wait a year or two. I cannot imagine Englishmen & women, however operatically “Fashionable” or blasé enjoying Britons being shown on the stage under the Conqueror’s Yoke! Your labour will all be wasted & they’ll never ask You again if the thing is a failure. You cant alter a Cantata into an opera. no one can. It has been tried times without number (Mendelssohn, Liszt, Dvorak are a few cases). Think it over & dont make rash promises, and dont waste your genius & Your time on a forlorn hope

Write a new work.⁸

Higgins shared Jaeger’s reservations and the King had already approved the use of Benson’s ode, to ‘be preceded by your Pomp & ceremony [sic] March in d & the performance must not exceed twenty minutes’.⁹ Elgar accepted the inevitable and, taking Jaeger’s advice, began working with Benson to develop a new work. The two developed a remarkably harmonious relationship, with Benson repeatedly reassuring Elgar that he was ‘a very willing librettist, & [I] will rewrite & correct to any extent - so do not scruple to suggest that any passage whatever is unsuitable from the musical point of view: & I shall do my best to satisfy you.’¹⁰ The work progressed steadily and, unusually for Elgar, was finished in good time for the gala performance, despite Benson’s late realisation that the work contained nothing for Queen Alexandra. He quickly produced two stanzas for Elgar to set as ‘Daughter of Ancient Kings’, to be performed following the opening movement, ‘Crown the King’.

8 EB letter 9184.

9 EB letter 2019.

10 EB letter 3295, 3 December 1901.

Rehearsals got under way at Queen’s Hall on 14 June. Fate cruelly intervened, however: the King developed appendicitis, causing the postponement not only of the coronation itself but also of the preceding gala performance. Elgar heard of this when out cycling with Rosa Burley on 24 June, two days before the intended date of the coronation. The news reached him in Stretton Grandison near Hereford where they had stopped to take ‘tea in the inn’.¹¹ In a letter to Jaeger, he professed himself unconcerned by the postponement, claiming that it gave him more time to relax in the countryside.¹²

A shortened coronation was rescheduled for 9 August but, with the King still recovering from his illness, plans for a gala concert were not resuscitated. One hundred and sixty members of the Sheffield Choir, democratically selected in a ballot drawn by the city’s mayor, had been engaged for the original gala performance.¹³ It was therefore deemed appropriate to reschedule the première of *Coronation Ode* for the Sheffield Festival where it was given on 2 October 1902. To an extent, the identification of the work as a ceremonial piece has tended to limit subsequent performances to occasions deemed appropriate, although a run of recent royal anniversaries, and in particular a surfeit of performances in 2012, the sixtieth anniversary of the Queen’s accession, has introduced it to a much wider audience. The work has also been recorded twice¹⁴, and of course ends with Nimrod’s only serious competitor as Elgar’s most widely-recognised work.

One might therefore consider it surprising if the work held any undivulged secrets ... except that the Complete Edition is obliged to explore depths which none has previously visited. With a limited number of supporting sources, the opportunities on this occasion seemed limited. One of his sketchbooks¹⁵ contains an incomplete sketch in which, in occurrences of the phrase ‘We have crowned our King!’, Elgar has inexplicably replaced the first occurrence of the word ‘King’ by ‘Kat’ and the second by ‘Tibbert’, possibly a family joke; but unusually, it was the published editions which initially excited most interest. The *Ode* was revived in 1911 for the coronation of George V, necessitating the replacement of ‘Daughter of Ancient Kings’, a specific reference to Edward’s Danish Queen Alexandra, by the more anodyne ‘The Queen’. This elicited a variety of improvisations from Boosey, the publisher. Each instrumental part gained a printed insert containing either the part for the new movement or, for the many instruments given nothing to play, a ‘tacet’ slip (fig.5); but for the faster-selling vocal scores a new edition was published.

The retention of the seemingly redundant ‘Daughter of Ancient Kings’ in the new edition seems to have been driven by Benson who wrote to Boosey:

Many thanks for your letter and the Ode. I will gladly write a short lyric about the present Queen, to go before the Queen Mother’s, and I quite agree about the titles. But I don’t much want to rewrite the first piece.¹⁶

11 Rosa Burley and Frank C. Carruthers, *Edward Elgar: The Record of a Friendship* (London: Barrie & Jenkins, 1972), p.158.

12 *EB* letter 8543, 25 June 1902, dated ‘June 24’ in error by Elgar.

13 Bury, “Elgar, the Eton Housemaster and the Coronation Ode”, p.111.

14 By Alexander Gibson in 1976 (Chandos Records CHAN 6574) and by Philip Ledger in 1977 (EMI ASD 3345).

15 *BLMS* Add.MS 63160 f.10.

16 *EB* letter 3325 dated Nov 29 1910. Benson’s willingness to ‘write a short lyric about the present Queen, to go before the Queen Mother’s’ (my italics) suggests an intention that, rather than ‘The Queen’ replacing ‘Daughter of Ancient Kings’, both should be sung in sequence. Both were in fact printed in copies of the



fig.5: the ‘tacet’ slip included in the parts of the many instruments without a note to play in ‘The Queen’.

What might strike the current readership as strange, however, is the omission of ‘Peace, Gentle Peace’ from the 1911 vocal score, in part the consequence of a confusion between Elgar and Benson. It began with a letter from Benson:

It seems to me a little awkward to include a section dealing directly with the Boer War in the new Coronation Ode. It would be infallibly regarded as a dishing-up of old material. In spite of its beauty and spirituality (I am referring to your music not to my words!) I think it would be better to omit the Peace section. But if you prefer it, I will try to write a passage called ‘Memory’ or ‘Remembrance’ dealing with Queen Victoria and King Edward on the same lines. It is very difficult to do, to fit new syllables into old; or I would write an entirely new section. May I have your views on this point? But will it not be long enough without?

I am so glad you like the new stanzas.¹⁷

Elgar evidently did not digest Benson’s letter, to which he eventually responded:

I have this moment received proofs of the Ode from Boosey and all your suggestions I adopt. I am sorry I did not understand that you proposed to write new words for the ‘peace’ section now discarded: I should gladly have welcomed them but I thought you wished the portion removed: it is rather too late now to think of reinstating the movement and the Ode is long enough as it stands – only I am sorry.¹⁸

Benson replied immediately:

revised vocal score published in 1911, with ‘The Queen’ preceding ‘Daughter of Ancient Kings’ as is customary in performances today.

17 *EB* letter 3326, 4 December 1910.

18 *EB* letter 3327, 15 February 1911.

I wrote, I believe, to you about the Peace section. If it was not to you, it was to Boosey who was representing your views, and might just as well have let you know ... I don't know if you can refer to my letter? – in answer to your suggestion about retaining the Peace section.

I felt, and said, and I still feel, that the words were wholly inappropriate to the present time; and that the effect of retaining them would make a kind of rechauffe of the whole. I offered, if you approved, to write words which would follow the exact rhythm of the original section – of course that rather destroys any sense of aesthetic correspondence between words and music – but after all, there is always the B Minor Mass!

I did not at all wish the section removed, if you wished to retain it. I think it, musically, a most beautiful thing – but I was most decidedly against retaining the words. But it really does not matter now – and as you say, its retention would have made the whole thing too long.

I will gladly and proudly do whatever I can that you may desire. If you'll send me the rhythm and idea of the passage, I will experiment and submit results. But the choir must be made to sing in that case.

P.S. I like your new section about the Queen very much – a most beautiful and dignified passage!¹⁹

Possibly it was the continued use of the 1902 full score and parts which rescued 'Peace Gentle Peace' from obscurity; today it remains an integral part of the *Ode*.

But while the published vocal scores were not without interest, the autograph vocal score eventually proved to be more so. Elgar had written out each section as a separate piece with self-standing page numbering: an upper-case roman numeral distinguishing the section, followed by sequential numbering of the pages in arabic numerals. These show the steps in the evolution of the full work, the pages of 'The Queen' being identified by the prefix 'Q Mary' while 'Daughter of Ancient Kings' and 'Britain Ask of Thyself' share the prefix 'II', a consequence of the former's late addition to the 1902 score and a record of the latter's original position, immediately after 'Crown the King'.

Elgar has overcome ambiguities in the section numbering by indicating continuation at the end of each piece. To the end of his setting of 'Daughter of Ancient Kings', he has added '(to No.III) formerly No.II', these being the original and corrected section indicators for 'Britain, Ask of Thyself'. More puzzling is the annotation at the end of 'Britain, Ask of Thyself': "Segue No. IV' / Edward Elgar / Feb 1902', with 'IV' circled but crossed through and 'III' added below in red ink' (fig.6). This initially seemed counter-intuitive: under the original numbering scheme, part IV was 'Peace, Gentle Peace' becoming part V under the revised scheme, in which part III was (and remains) 'Britain, Ask of Thyself'. So, instead of helping the engraver to maintain the intended continuity following the renumbering caused by the introduction of 'Daughter of Ancient Kings', he seems to be suggesting that 'Britain, Ask of Thyself' should now be followed not by 'Peace, Gentle Peace' but by a repeat of 'Britain, Ask of Thyself'? It doesn't make sense. Was Elgar confused, or is there another explanation?

Well, there is. The change in section numbers to accommodate 'Daughter of Ancient Kings' is not the only renumbering apparent on the pages of the autograph vocal scores. Elgar has added a further consolidated sequence of numbers from 1 to 63 to the pages of just three of the sections - 'Crown the King', 'Britain, Ask of Thyself' and 'Peace, Gentle Peace' - without any explanation

19 *EB* letter 3328, 16 February 1911. The words of 'Peace, Gentle Peace' reflect on 'when the sounds of war are dumb', prescient for a première scheduled for barely a month after the conclusion of the Boer War but less relevant to 1911. In consequence, 'Peace, Gentle Peace' was omitted from the 1911 edition of the vocal score and presumably from the 1911 performance.



fig.6: the unexpected continuation requested by Elgar at the end of his autograph vocal score of 'Britain, Ask of Thyself', suggesting that the work should continue with 'Peace, Gentle Peace'.

of their purpose. At this point one has to recall Elgar's original tasking from Higgins: 'your Pomp & ceremony [sic] March in d & the performance must not exceed twenty minutes'.⁹ As Elgar's and Benson's ambitions expanded the work towards its current 35 minutes, Higgins became more insistent that the work must be kept within limits imposed by the King. In a letter dated 7 March he wrote:

H.M. is very anxious that the evening's performance should be as short as possible. If therefore you could reduce your composition or at all events make it reduceable to 15 minutes, it would be better.²⁰

and then in early June:

I know you will not think I am saying anything rude when I say that I do not think it will prejudice you in any way if your work is not done in its entirety – I do not think we can possibly allow more than 25 minutes inclusive of "God Save the King".

Elgar seemed oblivious to such counsel and yet, within days of the preceding letter, Higgins wrote again to say that "I am much obliged to you for meeting our views as you have done", without any indication of the terms of the agreement reached. Is the consolidated page numbering the product of the agreement, reducing the work to within reach of the King's requested 15 minutes by the omission of 'Daughter of Ancient Kings', 'Hark, upon the Hallowed Air', 'Only let the heart be pure' ... and 'Land of Hope and Glory'? Surprising as the latter might seem, not only do the pages of 'Land of Hope and Glory' lack page numbers in the consolidated numbering scheme but nor is there a continuity indication at the end of 'Peace, Gentle Peace'; and the unexplained change in continuity at the end of 'Britain, Ask of Thyself' would be met by the replacement of 'Hark upon the Hallowed Air' (section IV under the then current scheme) by 'Peace, Gentle Peace' (section III in the 15-minute abridgement). Boosey were far more concerned to get the vocal score printed than the full orchestral score, so the addition of the consolidated numbering is likely to have been concurrent with the conclusion of the agreement with Higgins; and Elgar may well have been assuaged if the King had sustained his insistence that the *Ode* should be preceded by a performance of Elgar's 'Pomp & ceremony March in d'.

In the event, the agreement between Elgar and Higgins was of no significance. The cancellation of the planned première released the time shackles imposed by the King, allowing an unfettered performance of the full work in Sheffield in the Autumn. This leaves us to ponder one tantalising question: if the King had not been struck down with appendicitis, would 'Land of Hope and Glory' be as familiar to all as it is today? The loss of a first performance at the 1902 coronation would in itself be of little lasting importance, but its omission from the published vocal score of the *Ode* would surely have prevented its inclusion at subsequent performances ... with what consequence?

John Norris has been the Complete Edition's General Manager since 2003 and a member of the Elgar Society for thirty years.

MUSIC REVIEWS

Elgar: *Coronation Ode, Op.44, Civic Fanfare, God save the King*

Elgar Complete Edition Vol. 7, edited by Iain Quinn (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2017)

And still these, for me, 'eagerly anticipated volumes of the Complete Edition' come: now it's the turn of the *Coronation Ode*. I see that I bought my vocal score on 29th March, 1965, when I was still at school. It was Boosey's 'Jubilee Edition' of 1935, in a magnificent royal blue and silver cover, and cost me 4/- second-hand from Foyles. It wasn't until the I heard the King's College/Philip Ledger 1977 Jubilee recording that I realised that Boosey had omitted the war-cry 'Britain, ask of thyself' – an act of surprising sensitivity for the period.

Let me say immediately that this volume, which also includes Elgar's arrangement of the National Anthem and no fewer than three versions of the brief *Civic Fanfare*, is, musically, well up to the standard that we have come to expect from the Complete Edition. I'm told that the software has once again worked its alchemy at one point, but I haven't spotted the mistake and don't intend to look too hard.

I am always fascinated by Elgar full scores, just to see how he achieved his orchestral effects. This time I was particularly looking forward to studying his writing for military band which is an *ad lib* feature in both the *Ode* and the National Anthem. I was surprised to discover that Elgar had, to use Jaeger's word *à propos* the climax of *Gerontius*, shirked the task and handed it over to John Mackenzie Rogan, Bandmaster of the Coldstream Guards, who had been booked, with his band, for the Covent Garden première of the *Ode*.¹ All Elgar provided was an annotated piano reduction of where and what he wished the band to play, and this is faithfully reproduced in the present edition. A pretty good idea of what Rogan provided for the *Ode* can be had from the cues provided in the main orchestra to be played when a military band is not available.

The *Civic Fanfare* was very much an afterthought, dashed off seemingly at the last minute. Wulstan Atkins explains:

Some expert of ceremonial etiquette had drawn the festival authorities' attention to the fact that the National Anthem should only be played in such circumstances for the entry of the King's official representative, and when the Lord Lieutenant of the county was present it was not appropriate to play it for the Mayor as well as for him. This raised the difficulty of appropriate music to be played on the entry of the mayors. Hull had approached Elgar in his

¹ Rogan was certainly entrusted with the military band parts for the National Anthem, and surviving correspondence suggests that he also provided the band parts of the *Ode*.



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141 pp. + xlii.

capacity as Master of the King's Musick for a ruling, but had hinted strongly that the ideal solution would be for Elgar to write a special composition for the mayors. Elgar confirmed that the point raised was correct, and responded to Hull's challenge by immediately writing the *Civic Fanfare*. This decision was taken after all the programmes had been printed.²

For an afterthought, and one of such little significance that, six years later, Elgar deemed it to be 'not worth publishing', it seems astonishing that three versions of it exist. But when Percy Hull wanted to perform it at the 1933 Hereford Festival Elgar had to confess that he could not find the *Fanfare* 'so have rescored it'.³ It is a tribute to all concerned with the Complete Edition that such thorough scholarship should have gone into unravelling all the complexities of this little piece.

Many years ago, not wishing to pay a hire fee for Elgar's arrangement of the National Anthem, which occupies all of nine pages of full score, I took the liberty of orchestrating it myself from the Novello piano reduction. Despite having the luxury of two harps in my orchestra (a steal at £20 the pair, if I remember correctly), I 'shirked' writing a part for them. So absolutely the first thing I turned to in the new volume was the Anthem to see if Elgar had provided a harp part. There, on page 132 in the list of instruments, is a harp, but on page 133 in the score itself no trace of a harp is to be found. And this brings me, sadly, to the one downside of the present volume: the lackadaisical⁴ correcting and proof-reading of its non-musical pages. Iain Quinn has written one of the most interesting and comprehensive Forewords to appear in any of the Complete Edition volumes, but, as printed, it has the appearance more of a first draft than a finished product, so numerous are the little niggles that have crept through the editorial process. None of these, I hasten to add, is important enough to spoil the Foreword for readers – though some may be perplexed by the sentence in a letter from Emma Albani quoted towards the bottom of page xiv which reads 'It would be only to play once, say (???) just as you like it and conceived it.'⁵

Nevertheless I must repeat what I said at the beginning: the volume is 'musically well up to the standard that we have come to expect from the Complete Edition', and a most valuable and welcome addition to the series.

Martin Bird

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- 2 Wulstan Atkins, *The Elgar-Atkins Friendship* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles, 1984), p.401
 - 3 Herefordshire Record Office BA88/114, 7 August 1933.
 - 4 definition by the brilliant 'I'm Sorry I Haven't a Clue' team: 'a bicycle made for one'
 - 5 Your reviewer recognises '(???)', originally standing out in red, as his shorthand for 'I'm not sure I've transcribed the preceding word correctly so remember to come back to it later if you ever need to use this letter and correct it.'

BOOK REVIEWS

Martin Bird (ed.): *The Path to Knighthood: Diaries 1902–1904*
(Edward Elgar: Collected Correspondence, Series V, Vol. 3)

This third volume of the Elgar family diaries portrays the period between 1901 and 1904, when Edward Elgar develops to a rising popular composer in the British society and on the international stage.¹ In this detailed research Martin Bird not only collates the diary entries and letters of the Elgar family but also works with a database of 'some 15,000 letters, reviews, newspaper articles and other items'² and sets these documents in a valid, concrete historical context.

So, the reader gets a deep insight into the daily life of the composer himself, of his wife Alice and his daughter Carice, their circle of friends, their journeys and Edward's colleagues. In view of a 'wealth of contemporary sources, including letters to and from the Elgars'³, Bird succeeds in creating both a science-based, vivid and fascinating portrait of the private life and a brilliant impression of the social atmosphere in this period.

As already in the previous volumes, this book reveals pictures from this time and huge often unknown material which illuminates the knowledge of Elgarians and lovers of Elgar's music, for example *Edward's Notebook* from the years 1903–1904 (see appendix).

Right at the beginning of the 1901 diary the reader is close to the actual situation of the Elgars, who were leaving Mainz overnight on 31 December on the way back to England where they visited the Promenade Concert on 1 January 1902. In the following entries, which are written almost entirely by Alice⁴, there is detailed information about daily routines and atmospheres, as for example about Edward's sentiments and his health: 'E. very busy.'⁵, 'E. porsley badsley, Dr. East came', 'E. better & to Links at aftn.'⁶, 'E besser out for walk on Links.'⁷ This very special intimate use of language in their way of writing, running like a kind of common thread through their diary entries, seems to be a mixture between German and a sort of mumbling. Bird calls it

1 The first two volumes of Series V covered the family diaries of the first forty years in Elgar's life (Vol. I: 1857–1896; Vol. II: 1897–1901); see <http://www.elgar.org/6edition.htm> (last access: 14 October 2017)

2 See: <http://www.elgar.org/6vol52.htm> (last access: 14 October 2017)

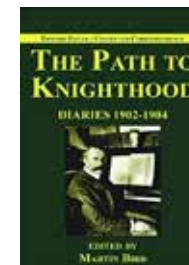
3 Bird 2016, blurb of the book

4 Cp. *ibid.*, p. 1 and 128.

5 2 January 1902 (*Ibid.*, p. 2).

6 5 and 8 January 1902 (Bird 2016, P. 3). "E. poorly bad" (cp. p. xivff.)

7 13 January 1902 (*ibid.*, p. 4).



Elgar Works Limited,
2016

a ‘form of baby language’⁸ which the Elgars often used when they communicated with each other. Helping the reader to understand this special talk, the editor adds an Elgar-English dictionary at the entry of the book (this specific editorial add-on was set already in the second volume).

Beside this Bird also supports the reader in his general orientation with regard to the years concerned by using throughout illustrated comments between the diary entries, the letters from as well as to Edward and the newspaper articles. In the very beginning for example he remarks that, in 1902, ‘there is no mention at all in the diary of work in progress, yet composition was certainly a feature of the early days of 1902’⁹. This interesting conclusion comes true in the diary entries of Alice, who is primarily concerned with Edward’s health¹⁰, the daily appointments or activities of the family, the concerts and rehearsals and, once in a while, the weather. Her notes are often short – sometimes consisting only of a few headwords or short sentences – so that the comments of Bird as well as the correspondence of Edward are essential.

Through these letters, the reader gets an impression of Elgar’s compositional work and progress, for example on the beginning and the completion of *The Apostles* in these years (1902–1904). This piece has a singular state, because it is the first oratorio of a planned trilogy about the evolution of Christianity. Suggested by Richard Wagner’s *Der Ring des Nibelungen*¹¹, Elgar intended to write three parts: *The Apostles*, *The Kingdom* and *The Last Judgment*, but the third oratorio remained unfinished. The first source related to *The Apostles* one can find on 15 January 1902: at that time Elgar wrote to the Chairman of the Birmingham Festival orchestral sub-committee, George Hope Johnstone, that he will conduct *The Apostles* at the *Birmingham Festival* in 1903 and that he ‘will do all [his] power to make it [his] best work’¹².

After his trip to Bayreuth in July 1902, where he attended the performances of Wagner’s *Der fliegende Holländer*, *Parsifal*, *Das Rheingold*, *Die Walküre* and *Siegfried*, Elgar began ‘to be very busy collecting material for *Apostles*’¹³, as Alice notes. Perhaps the live-performance of the Wagner pieces had motivated him and given him a further impulse for composing. As the work proceeded, Edward played some sketches for *The Apostles* in the presence of friends and colleagues, who were deeply impressed about the music¹⁴. Lord Northampton, for example, was enthusiastic about what he heard: ‘[...] you gave me a great pleasure, & I shall wait anxiously until I can hear the complete great work without any interruption.’¹⁵

Furthermore the reader gets more detailed information about other major Elgar works in this period, for example on the performance history of *The Dream of Gerontius*, which first started with a disappointment: Although the famous Hans Richter conducted the première and the press complimented Elgar on his opus, the orchestra was overstrained by the score. But there would be more performances, as the *Berrow’s Worcester Journal* announced on 8 February 1902:

8 Ibid., p. xiv.

9 Ibid., p. 4.

10 He was often depressed and felt insufficient in his particular situation: as a catholic in Anglican England, as an autodidact without academic studies of music and, a result of the latter, as a composer whose great breakthrough emerged first at the age of 42 (with the *Enigma Variations*, 1899).

11 He also visited the Bayreuth Festival in July 1902.

12 Bird 2016, p. 5.

13 Ibid., p. 75.

14 Cp. *ibid.*, p. 133 and 135.

15 In: *ibid.*, p. 115.

‘It was now going to be performed at many places in England and at the Lower Rhine Festival to be held this year at Düsseldorf – the first time a work by an English composer had ever been performed at one of these festivals’¹⁶ (!).

Although Alice’s comment about the rehearsal for the concert in the diary entry from the 19 May 1902 was negative (‘E. to rehearsal early [...]. E. very angry – At last hurried unsatisfactory rehearsal. E. called up after each part’¹⁷), the concert was a great success. Edward’s life-long friend Arthur Jaeger stated that the performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* at Düsseldorf¹⁸ was ‘a great triumph for English music’¹⁹. Henry Wood recalled: ‘[I]t is quite impossible to describe the ovation dear Elgar received; he was recalled twenty times after the end of the first part. I have never seen an audience so excited nor a composer so spontaneously acclaimed.’²⁰

Beside the performances through Hans Richter, Elgar conducted a few concerts himself. But there were also critical voices about: a member of the *Worcestershire Philharmonic Orchestra* published an article for the *Musical Standard* and wrote: ‘In the actual way of conducting [...] he is somewhat inexperienced. [...] he is somewhat hopeless with the regard to inexperienced back-desks. If players have to be taught the elements of orchestral playing, they should go elsewhere...’²¹. Further down, the article contained positive comments, too, but these criticisms must have offended Elgar –unfortunately the book reveals neither further information concerning Edward’s reaction nor his feelings about the orchestra’s players.

The main benefit of the research of Martin Bird lies in the fact, that both successful and difficult terms in Elgar’s life are revealed in a differentiated way. The reader dives into the world of Elgar’s private life and the developing of his compositions, becomes aware of his emotional states, of important career steps through the genesis of the *Coronation Ode*, the rising of *The Dream of Gerontius*, Elgar’s knighthood by Edward VII and hence the *Elgar Festival* emerging in 1904.

From the beginning of the year 1902, when Elgar was often depressed due to the low compositions fee²², until the year 1904, when he had become a popular person, one reads this book with tension and curiosity – perhaps just for this reason, that Elgar did not have a straight career. However, the high-flying and triumphant moments predominate in these years when he becomes an important and respected composer in England and Germany and, besides this, a Professor of Music at Birmingham University at the end of 1904. ‘His absorption into the highest circles of the country’s musical and social life was complete.’²³

Sarah-Lisa Beier

16 In: *ibid.*, p. 11 (emphasized by the author Sarah-Lisa Beier).

17 In: *ibid.*, p. 45.

18 Cp. *ibid.*, p. 43.

19 *Ibid.*

20 Bird 2016, p. 43.

21 In: *Ibid.*, p. 16.

22 Cp. *ibid.*, p. 225.

23 *Ibid.*, blurb of the book.



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CD REVIEWS

Elgar: The Dream of Gerontius

Andrew Staples (Ten)
Catherine Wyn-Rogers (Mezzo)
Thomas Hampson (Bar)
Staatskapelle Berlin
Staatsopernchor
RIAS Kammerchor
Daniel Barenboim

If like me your perception of the recording history of *The Dream of Gerontius* is that it has been largely the preserve of British conductors with British orchestras, then, like me, you will be surprised to see just how many overseas ensembles and conductors have recorded the work either in the studio or the concert hall. These range from the New York Philharmonic and the Orchestra Sinfonia di Roma della RAI (both Barbirolli), through the Austrian Radio Orchestra (Swarowsky) and the Boston SO (Colin Davis) to the USSR State SO (Svetlanov) to name but a few. This distinguished roster is now joined by Daniel Barenboim with his Staatskapelle Berlin orchestra in a live recording from September 2016 at the Philharmonie, Berlin. The two performances that were given at this time were both recorded, together with the rehearsal sessions and the new release edited from the accumulated material.

The opening bars of the score are marked pp. By taking the opening very quietly indeed, Barenboim ensures that the climaxes that follow in the Prelude have an added impact that may otherwise be less marked. The prelude itself has a feeling of space and despite coming in at some sixty five seconds faster than Sir Mark Elder with the Halle, never sounds rushed or in any way superficial. Indeed, to my ears, it has never sounded more Wagnerian!

Tenor Andrew Staples offers a well characterised Gerontius and is excellent throughout. His entry with the words 'Jesu, Maria, I am near to death,' are accompanied with some finely judged orchestral detail and lead to the first choral entry where the Staatsopernchor and RIAS Kammerchor prove themselves to be perfectly at home in this idiom.

The remainder of the first part of the work is littered with good things, not least the wealth of orchestral detail (for which the recording engineers deserve praise for the way in which they have captured the atmospheric acoustic of the hall), the outstanding 'Rescue him,' episode leading to the 'David from Goliath...' 'plainsong' interlude and the entry of the Priest, which in the hands of Thomas Hampson is delivered with great authority.

Muted strings open the second part. This creates a mysterious, ethereal sound world into which the Soul of Gerontius enters with the words 'I went to sleep.' Staples' subtle changes of characterisation are well executed and

are accompanied by some exceptional orchestral playing, not least in the woodwinds.

Catherine Wyn-Rogers shows every bit of her experience and understanding of the Elgar oeuvre and whilst the lustrous timbres of Janet Baker, with whom I grew up in this role, remain embedded in my memory, Ms Wyn-Rogers slips seamlessly into the part and proves what we already know, she is an Elgarian of distinction.

I have always felt that 'A presage comes upon me,' is to Gerontius what 'The Sun goeth down,' is to The Kingdom. Here it is presented with poise and elegance, with the two voices blending beautifully.

At the end of the souls in purgatory section, which is sung with just the right amount of menace, but not overdone as in some recordings, I was delighted to clearly hear the double bassoon brought right to the fore. To me this is just one of the many touches of genius that Elgar used in this score and with the word 'Dispossessed' spat out with real venom, this section compares favourably with anything that I have yet heard.

'Praise to the Holiest,' is a 'Wow' moment. It is sung here with both power and great expertise and paced to perfection. This chorus ends with a chord lasting eight and a bit bars, which Barenboim seems to hold on to for an even greater period of time which is at once surprising and very effective.

Since the 1945 Sargent recording only one complete set of this work has used four singers. All of the succeeding recordings have used one voice for both the Priest in the first part and the Angel of the Agony in the second. Thomas Hampson is much more the lyric baritone than the full bodied bass and so seems more at home in the role of the Priest. Notwithstanding this, the power of his interpretation in the part of the Angel of the Agony, leads me to suggest that, should my soul be in anyway retrievable, then I would be more than satisfied with Mr Hampson doing the pleading on my behalf!

As the work comes towards its close, Elgar comes up with a trademark golden moment, 'Softly and gently', 'The Angel's Farewell'. Here it is presented superbly paced and balanced, with Catherine Wyn-Rogers, the chorus and orchestra bringing out every ounce of beauty and grace contained in this music. Indeed, I was sad to see the Angel go, even if the parting is done with real style.

As one would imagine, when a musician of the standing of Daniel Barenboim comes to a masterpiece such as this, he brings an intellectual rigour to the music that, in less skilled hands, can be detrimental to the overall sweep of the work. This is a criticism that most certainly does not apply here. Clearly this is a deeply thought through performance, which both allows the listener to fully appreciate the genius of the piece and to glory in the magic of the music itself. This is a *Gerontius* to live with and one to which I will return often.

Stuart Freed

This is something of a miracle for a number of reasons not the least being that Decca decided to issue the recording after two of the soloists dropped out; almost at the last moment. This is a recording of performances given in Berlin's Philharmonie in September 2016. For this, both Dame Sarah Connolly and Jonas Kaufmann were contracted to sing. Both pulled out through illness, Kaufmann being replaced by Toby Spence who, in turn, was replaced by Andrew Staples. That Staples makes such a wonderful job of his role as Gerontius is a tribute to him: his knowledge of the piece and the way that he established an obvious rapport with Barenboim was particularly noticeable. Apparently, they only had time for a brief piano rehearsal. Staples's tenor is light but it is accurate and he has no fear of being stretched by Elgar's score. With others from the Society I had the privilege of attending the first of the performances of *Gerontius* and the relaxed communication between conductor and soloist was obvious then and, no doubt, became more so subsequently. I believe there were two subsequent performance's and a 'patching' session.

Not the least of the miracles is the wonderful elastic conducting of Barenboim and the way this great musician brings his experience as a Wagner conductor to complete a quartet of exceptional Elgar recordings. I write this in the aftermath of those two remarkable Promenade concerts which, to me, summed up one of the reasons why I joined this Society: to hear non-British musicians playing Elgar's music as if it is part of their nature. I now realise that to achieve this an orchestra must live and breathe Elgar's music over time. Only then will Elgar's markings and nuances become second nature to the players. Because of Barenboim's stature and his devotion to this music this orchestra now understands Elgar's music as no other on the Continent. This was especially evident from the encore given after each Promenade Concert. *Pomp and Circumstances March No 1* was played with precision (quickly and rightly) and seemed unencumbered with layers of tradition. I thought it brilliant!

Of course, not every reader will share my enthusiasm for Barenboim's performances or this recording of *The Dream of Gerontius* but I would hope they would celebrate this wonderful orchestra's achievement and the glorious way their conductor has re-absorbed music that, as he told his audience in the Royal Festival Hall two years ago, means so much to him. If ever there was a case to invent a bar to the Society's medal Barenboim surely makes the case!

Thomas Hampson, the only soloist left standing, is an imperious priest and heartfelt Angel of the Agony. Perhaps his voice shows a sign or two of wear but he invests his singing with such integrity and attention to detail that he fulfils the two roles magnificently. This did not really come over in the live performance when Hampson was placed at the back of the orchestra in front of the choir. In the Philharmonie Hampson's voice lacked the imposing presence that is achieved here.

The combined choirs were magnificent even if they could have been somewhat more devilish in the Demon's Chorus: there needs to be an edge to those 'Ha Ha's' to carry conviction these days. The English of the choirs is so

good as to be beyond criticism. As for the orchestra well I love its sound: it is warm and clear and full of character. The players have taken Elgar around Europe and, with the Hallé can be considered one of Elgar's Orchestras now. It is a magnificent body coping with Barenboim's occasional strange changes or choices of tempi.

If Barenboim is the hero of this recording, and we Elgarians are now seriously in his debt, he is not beyond criticism which in the end is really only the expression of another opinion. As stated I would have preferred more urgency and bite in the Demons but for much of the remainder of the recording his sense of forward movement and final resolution is exciting and deeply moving.

Here are some notes I made as I listened:

The bloom in Catherine Wyn-Rogers's voice has faded but her experience carries her through the tougher moments notably at moments when the voice is stretched.

Barenboim's attention to detail is wonderful – notably (for example at 3 bars after cue 117. On the other hand there are surprising moments such as a sudden slowing at, say, five bars after cue 33. On the whole the balance is excellent, particularly allowing the wood wind to shine. However, the oboe phrase at two bars before cue 127 is more *f* than *pp*.

Clayton's understanding of the role is noticeable at such moments of tension when he sings (asks) at four after cue 56, if he will have 'sight of the Most Fair'?

'Praise to the Holiest' is not the visceral experience I had expected as Barenboim points one toward the end of the chorus which is shattering.

Sudden details I had not noticed before suddenly grab the attention such as the brief violin and viola dialogue in the bar after cue 78.

And so on.

Am I aware that Barenboim's interpretations are not to everyone's taste; but even if this the case, any doubter listening to these recordings will have been made to think again about works they feel they know intimately. They will be made to think about the music with this recording and, in many cases, they might end by rejoicing that such a performance is available for them to study for the remainder of their lives.

Andrew Neill



CRQ Editions
CD310-311

Obtainable from CRQ
Editions @ £20 (see
the website)

The Apostles, Op. 49

Joan Hammond, soprano (Mary)
Marjorie Thomas, contralto (Mary Magdalene)
William Herbert, tenor (John)
John Cameron, baritone (Peter)
Owen Brannigan, bass (Judas)
John Standen, bass (Jesus)

BBC Choral Society
BBC Symphony Orchestra

Conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent
(recorded live in the Royal Festival Hall, London, 12 June 1957)

The Music Makers, Op 69

Marjorie Thomas, contralto
Royal Choral Society
Huddersfield Choral Society
London Philharmonic Society
London Symphony Orchestra
Conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent
(recorded live in the Royal Albert Hall, London, 29 April 1965)

(Both recordings remastered by Ian Jones)

There are legendary performances I would have liked (a mild word) to have heard or attended: the first complete *Ring Cycle*, the first night of *Der Rosenkavalier* and that foggy night in Manchester when Elgar's first Symphony was born. In 1957 the BBC broadcast a Festival of Elgar's music in celebration of the centenary of his birth. I have always had the feeling the BBC was very slightly churlish with the Violin Concerto and the Second Symphony ignored. On the other hand, all three chamber works were broadcast as well as the two Oratorios and *The Dream of Gerontius*. Some of these performances, most notably the performance of *The Kingdom* under Sir Adrian Boult on 29 May and, two weeks later, *The Apostles* under Sir Malcolm Sargent, have achieved the sort of status that inspired comments such as 'if only you could have been there' or 'you were too young, alas!'. The legendary status of these performances has been aided by the contributions of Heather Harper as the Blessed Virgin in *The Kingdom* and Owen Brannigan as Judas in *The Apostles*.

I have long been familiar with both performances albeit in inferior sound and, in the case of *The Apostles*, very inferior sound! Well here is that performance: available for our delight sixty years on. The sound is much improved thanks to the efforts of Ian Jones although it remains restricted and hardly 'hi-fi'. It is not, therefore, for everyone if you worry about sound. However, I urge you to ignore this caveat and buy something that will offer

a chance to review your thoughts about this work. Here is Sargent, the great choral conductor, in his element supported by an orchestra that knew him well and a good team of soloists. It is important to remember that neither of these works were well known in 1957 and, outside the Three Choirs Festival, virtually unperformed. Perhaps it was this Festival in the summer of 1957 that brought *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* to the notice of many whose ignorance was put in its place by the quality of Elgar's writing.

It is *The Apostles* that concerns me today and I will try and explain why this performance is important and why it should be on the shelves of every Elgarian. Sargent, like Sir Mark Elder today, does his best with the weaker parts: The scene in The Tower of Magdala and the chorus 'Turn ye to the stronghold' and integrates these as effectively as he can so that the feeling of disjointedness that mar some performances is mitigated. However, Sargent's broader tempi do not assist these sections as much as I had hoped but, perhaps because of Owen Brannigan, part two has more life to it as well as having superior sound. The great Choral conductor Alan J. Kirby whose Croydon Choir performed for Boult in the earlier broadcast of *The Kingdom* understood the importance of the occasion when he wrote separately along lines that, ironically, would have appalled the composer: 'One wonders from time to time whether it might be possible to produce an edition (of both works) requiring a reduced orchestra to help choral societies which have adequate vocal forces, but cannot afford the Elgar orchestra...if something could be done to make these two works better known, it would be a worthwhile effort in the cause of choral singing in this country.'¹

The Apostles, as Kirby knew, is the problem with the need to employ six soloists and Elgar's largest orchestra but, gradually, it has gained prominence with four commercial recordings sitting on my shelves and the occasional broadcast. There were other important broadcasts, in the years when the works were largely ignored, by Groves, Gibson and Rozhdestvensky ensuring that it remained in view – just. These performances are fascinating each with its own merits with one taking fifteen minutes longer than the longest of the others. My own feeling is that, if the conductor can move the work along at a reasonable pace then, as Elder proved, the work can make not only an overwhelming impact but also choruses such as 'Turn ye to the Stronghold' sound convincing and an appropriate way to end part one.

Of the soloists, it is Marjorie Thomas and Owen Brannigan who make the greatest impact. Joan Hammond who was possibly unfamiliar with the work seems unengaged and her voice rather passes one by. John Standen as Jesus is fine but his singing does give the impression that he is a Church of England Jesus not a man of the desert. Despite my enthusiasm for the performance I was slightly underwhelmed at the end, Sargent making not a great deal of the climax. I do not think this the fault of the sixty year old sound which manages the forces well. Brannigan, before Brindley Sherratt in the Elder recording,

1 Edward Elgar Centenary Sketches edited by H A Chambers Novello and Company Limited, p.27.

is in a class of his own. Judas's misery as he contemplates his fate is deeply moving and Brannigan's diction is exemplary.

This recording of *The Music Makers* is the second iteration of this performance. Some readers may have the 'pirate' version on the *Itaglio* label which became available in the 1980's. Marjorie Thomas. A true contralto and a singer of opera, oratorio, Gilbert and Sullivan and a pioneer of new music Thomas performed *The Music Makers* throughout her professional life. She is magnificent, bringing her great experience and glorious voice to the work. With some justification she may well have been disappointed not to have been invited to record the work in 1964 when EMI made their pioneering recording with Dame Janet Baker and Sir Adrian Boult. This performance demands to be taken on its own merits: both soloist and conductor equally at home in the piece. Once more the choral singing is superb and the London Symphony Orchestra, whose players must have been unfamiliar with the piece, seem equally at home. I feel Sargent is even more at one with this work than in *The Apostles*. Listen, for example to the poignant moment at cue 88 'Bring us hither your sun and your summers' – this is beautifully managed by soloist and conductor. As the work ends the contradiction between the music and the words seem as heart-breaking as I have heard them: the hope for the future broken by Elgar's concentration on the 'singer who sings no more'. The sound is consistent and really very good.

These two discs are a significant contribution to Elgar recordings and worthy of being in the collection of all Elgarians. The break in *The Apostles* recording comes five bars after cue 163, side two beginning 'Then they led Jesus into the hall of judgment'. This, therefore, allows the inclusion of the performance of *The Music Makers*.

Andrew Neill



**Introduction and Allegro for Strings
Symphony No 1 in A Flat**

BBC Symphony Orchestra
Edward Gardner

Chandos
CHSA 5181

So, they keep on coming and how odd it is for me to write that! When I wrote my first review for what was then The Newsletter over forty years ago recordings of Elgar's symphonies were then rare and we had little choice except to choose between Barbirolli, Boult or Handley. 'Plus ça change': in the last year recordings of the Symphonies have appeared on my shelves from Barenboim, Pappano, Petrenko, and Oramo. Apart from the Olympian Barenboim disc, which had no coupling, the other discs, like this new recording by Edward Gardner, fill out the space in a variety of ways. Most original is Onyx's recording of the E Flat Symphony by Petrenko with

delightful performances of three Elgarian miniatures including Carissima and Mina. Enticingly this new Chandos recording couples the Symphony with The Introduction and Allegro and, in an echo of Barbirolli's last recording of the piece, names the quartet.

Getting to know and understand Elgar's music turns out to be a never-ending quest: the peeling back of subtle layers that reveal new understandings leading to new appreciations and the consequent realisation that what one had taken for granted, perhaps over many years, was no longer sustainable. Recently, I enjoyed some deep and wide-ranging discussions about Elgar's music and this Symphony in particular. By considering in depth its construction and the way Elgar utilizes his material is to reveal secrets I had not understood before. It is, I am certain, something of a miracle and if Sir Thomas Beecham's quip that 'it is the musical equivalent of the towers of St Pancras Station' had any meaning (which I doubt) then this station can claim to be one of the glories of British architecture! So, does this recording reveal something to me that can add to what I have learnt these last months and over the years of listening to Elgar's music?

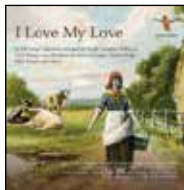
Some years ago I attended a disappointing performance of this symphony with the same orchestra in this recording, the BBC Symphony. This dull experience was exemplified by the playing of that magical clarinet phrase as the slow movement ends. It was thrown away in what seemed to be a sign to the other members of the orchestra that there was only one more movement to play and then 'we can all go home'! So, straight away I went to those final bars that lead to the movement's end (Cue 104), where, to quote Jaeger, 'we are brought near heaven', *molto espressivo e sostenuto*: that moment when you know this movement is worthy of Beethoven. In this recording all was well, the warm glow of the Chandos recording aiding the richness of this performance and allowing Elgar's subtle orchestration to affirm Jaeger's sentiments. This is a broad reading of the movement (adding two minutes to Elgar's own recording) but it does not seem slow - more it is unhurried: the music developing at its own pace, Gardner savouring this most glorious of musical moments.

The CD begins with the Introduction and Allegro. Straight away I was enveloped in the sound which, despite its lushness has a glorious transparency. The recording and performance more than justify employing a quartet that is not drawn from the orchestra. The Doric has a personality of its own which seems to be in accord with that of Gardner and his interpretation: it is distinct but part of the performance and I found it all rather wonderful. My benchmark has always been the Britten recording from 1969. It had a freshness and sense of momentum which I preferred to Barbirolli's more classical interpretation: there was a sense of discovery about the music. So, nearly fifty years on with the benefit of modern recording techniques, we have this performance which I commend enthusiastically. Take, for example the way Gardner eases into the Allegro at Cue 7 - there is almost a sense of Viennese hesitation - and the final pizzicato: it is not rushed but there is no time to sit around and await its arrival!

In the Symphony, the BBC Orchestra produces something memorable for their guest conductor. This is a recording of great depth, warmth and clarity and there is no part of the Orchestra that does not display the quality that this recording demands. The players respond instinctively to Gardner's shading of the dynamics notably as the Allegro takes over after the introduction; the music propelling us forward. There is subtlety in the bars before Cue 32 as the great tune (motto) is recalled and, when ppp is requested the Chandos sound allows us to hear the change and it is the same in the slow movement most notably as the Allegro molto subsides into the Adagio. As for the finale, this is very exciting with the tension established from the opening bars as the motto is heard in the bass. The cantabile at 130 is managed so that it flows naturally from the motto played on the last desks freely and naturally. This sets up the tension as the work builds for the battle ahead: the motto eventually emerging (just) triumphant.

I could go on and on but it is not necessary. If you require one final pointer listen from Cue 147 as Gardner and Orchestra gird their loins for the finish – it is brilliant, as is the recording!

Andrew Neill



Albion ALBCD032

'I Love My Love' – folk song arrangements by Vaughan Williams, Bantock, Butterworth, Grainger, Holst, Ethyl Smyth and others
The English Singers, The Fleet Street Choir, Glasgow Orpheus Choir, Oriana Madrigal Society
Frederick Ranalow, Conchita Supervia, Steuart Wilson
British Symphony Orchestra, Light Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult

Here we have yet another valuable and imaginative reissue by the Vaughan Williams Society, this time of 78s from the period 1919 to 1947, many of which are appearing on CD for the first time.

The first ten of the twenty-five tracks are of the 1928 recordings of Vaughan Williams folk songs arrangements by the six voices of The English Singers. The Singers, one of the very earliest of early music groups had been formed by Cuthbert Kelly in 1917, and had recorded extensively for HMV since 1921, their records of Elizabethan music, both sacred and secular, being revolutionary at the time. While it is hard to square the sound of these cultured, carefully produced voices with those noted by Vaughan Williams, Cecil Sharp, and the like on their collecting expeditions – as it is with the similarly cultured and beautifully enunciated tones of the solo singers on this disc – I am glad to have had the opportunity of hearing these historic performances, while admitting that a little goes a very long way.

My ear is far more attuned to the instrumental items, which include a performance by Leon Goossens of the *Londonderry Air* in a 1922 arrangement with piano accompaniment by Fritz Kreisler of all people.

But it is the recordings by Adrian Boult that are for me the gems of the disc. His 1939 recording of Ethel Smyth's *Two Interlinked French Folk Melodies* we have had before, but his 1920 recording of *A Shropshire Lad* we have not. This seems to me to be a quite remarkably historic document. For a start it is all but complete. Two 78 sides were allocated to the recording and the minor cuts that were necessary are confined to a few bars here and there near the beginning. The orchestral sound, certainly as restored in these admirably transfers, is remarkably good. I kept thinking that there must have been a typo in the booklet, and that the recording dated from 1930, until the appearance of a pizzicato tuba gave away its acoustic origins. Boult had been present at the first performance at the Leeds Festival of 1913 (its première was at the morning concert on 2nd October: *Falstaff* received its première that evening) and had sat next to Butterworth at the final rehearsal. He had performed it at the third of his four concerts with the LSO in 1918 and now, a mere seven years after it first saw the light at day, someone at HMV had had the guts and imagination to record it all but complete. And what a performance, too – no sign of a perfunctory play through in cramped conditions here!

Our thanks must go to the Vaughan Williams Society, too, for having the imaginations to issue such a disc as this.

Martin Bird

Chamber Music in the Shadow of War
Delius String Quartet in E minor RTVIII/8
Elgar String Quartet in E minor, op.83

Villiers Quartet: James Dickenson, Tamaki Higashi (violins) Carmen Flores (viola), Nicholas Stringfellow (cello)



Naxos 8.573586

To justify its new place in the catalogue, this enjoyable recording has to compete with some illustrious forebears. This particular coupling stands comparison with the Brodsky Quartet's ASV recording from 1984 and it has the added bonus of Daniel Grimley's excellent description of the quartet's original three-movement form and, more significantly, the additional recordings of the original first movement and of 'Late Swallows' compiled from the still extant original manuscripts. The final four-movement version is customarily described as from 1917 but Delius's quartet had its gestation probably when the composer and his wife, at the invitation of Sir Thomas Beecham, spent 8-9 months in England from November 1914. (*A propos* of this, Daniel Grimley's helpful notes do not mention that Delius and Jelka left Grez-sur-Loing having buried their silver and 1,000 (*sic*, indeed *hic*) bottles of wine. Nor, alas, does he tell us that Beecham arranged the couple's lease

of Grove Mill House (now known as The Dower House) in Grove Mill Lane near Watford between December 1914 and July 1915, a house that was later the home of the doyenne of TV cooks, Fanny Cradock).

The Villiers Quartet, hailed by *The Strad* as “one of the most charismatic and adventurous quartets of the British chamber music scene”, play the Delius beautifully and with such complete conviction in the abandoned versions of the quartet that I am led to question why Delius made such radical changes to it after its November 1916 première. But I still believe its final version, in this interpretation, should deservedly be hailed as a masterpiece even though more knowledgeable Delians than I have reservations about it when compared with other, bigger works from that fertile period of compositions by Delius.

Winners of the First Prize of the 2015 Radcliffe Chamber Music Competition, and Quartet-in-Residence at the University of Oxford, the Villiers Quartet have already developed a reputation as interpreters of English composers and I shall definitely explore their recordings of the quartets of Robert Still and Peter Racine Fricker on the strength of this CD.

And this brings me to the Elgar. It so happens that I listened to this disc having attended only a couple of days previously a magnificent and barnstorming live performance in Rickmansworth by the Maggini String Quartet. That event in turn had reminded me why my recorded favourites have long been those by the Gabrieli Quartet and the Maggini themselves. So I here plead guilty to prejudice, inclining towards the broadly expressive, the richly heartfelt.

The Villiers Quartet takes a different approach to the Elgar, more akin to that of the Brodsky, emphasising, particularly in the first two movements, the thoughtful, lyrical and introspective aspects of the work, but at the expense of attaining the limits of the quartet’s wide emotional range. The third movement is more expansive but still consonant with the interpretation of its predecessors. Taken as a whole, there is fine playing and a unanimity of intention in this version that is enjoyable, justifiable and adds to the Villiers’ growing and glowing reputation – a worthwhile addition to any Elgarian’s collection and indispensable to a Delian’s. However, for me truly to bask in the ‘captured sunshine’ of the middle movement and the emotional enormity of the outer movements, I need a different approach that – who knows? – the Villiers may adopt when they next record the work, as I hope they will.

Steven Halls

LETTERS

Dorabella

From Christopher Morley

Kevin Allen’s article about Dorabella is meticulously researched and full of fascinating detail. But it disappoints me that such an enchanting young lady as portrayed in the *Enigma Variations* should have metamorphosed into such an embittered old crow who thought that she, and only she, had the key to Elgar’s thoughts.

Was the solution of the Enigma so important that she and her husband should have had such a falling-out over it at the end of their long life together? I fear the Elgar industry loves its secretiveness. Ernest Newman went to his grave never revealing the five weighty words Elgar spoke from his deathbed; Billy (not ‘Billie’ as Dorabella spells) Reed disgracefully kept from us all those pages of sketches of the Third Symphony. The nature of the relationship with Vera Hockman was concealed for years.

I think there were people around Elgar who felt the honour of being privy to him enhanced their own status. And I also fear Elgar encouraged such a freemasonry.

Perhaps one reason for Dorabella’s fierce possessiveness is the fact that Elgar was in the habit of signing his letters to her with the opening phrase of the *Enigma Variations* (the rhythm of ‘Edward Elgar’). And I’m convinced that the answer to the Enigma itself is the outline of the Malvern Hills as viewed from the north, Dorabella’s perspective when cycling from Wolverhampton (‘you of all people’, chided Elgar).

ELGAR VIEWED FROM AFAR

Elgar features prominently in volume 3 of Jules Combarieu's *Histoire de la musique: des origines au début du XXe siècle* (Paris: Armand Colin, 1913-1919). The volume, an extensive study which covers the period ranging from Beethoven's death to the early twentieth century, basically focuses on French and German music. It is split into three chronological parts: 1. 'D'Auber à Berlioz'; 2. 'Les successeurs de Berlioz'; 3. 'Les courants nouveaux'. The third and final part ends with a sixty-page chapter called 'La musique à l'étranger', an astonishing hotchpotch dealing with all types of music other than French, in which Verdi, Mahler and Strauss are treated on a par with more obscure figures like Niels Gade, Arthur Farewell or François-Auguste Gevaert. The five pages about the English 'renaissance musicale', a term about which doubts and questions are implicitly raised, include developments on Macfarren, Sullivan, Mackenzie, Parry, Stanford (*sic*), Bantock and of course Edwar-William (*sic*) Elgar. Also mentioned in the section are Michael William Bolfe (*sic*), Julius Benedict, Frederic Cowen and Cyril Scott.

If Macfarren, Sullivan and Mackenzie are presented as the forerunners of the English Renaissance, mainly for their efforts to free English music from the domination of Handel and Mendelssohn, Parry, Stanford and Elgar are seen as composers torn between contradictory influences. Elgar, for one, is mentioned as a musician in search of his own national identity and originality, while being also submitted to German traditions; Richard Strauss is mentioned as a possible inspiration for the concert overture *In the South*. As expected, Combarieu lays strong emphasis on Elgar's choral music, the oratorio form being presented as 'le genre préféré' of the English. A good third of the entry is devoted to a description of *Le Rêve de Géronte* (1899-1900), a work whose 'mysticisme austère' is brought to the fore. If it is compared to César Franck's *Les Béatitudes* (1869-1879), *Les Apôtres* (1902-1903) and *Le Royaume* (1901-1906) are likened to Gounod's *La Rédemption* (1882). Elgar's first two symphonies (1907-1908 and 1909-1911) and his violin concerto (1909-1910) are mentioned as the sign of the composer's return to German music.

The section devoted to English music formulates the wish that future musicians find in the 'génie de leur race' the source of inspiration likely to enable them to create a genuine 'art national'. Obviously Elgar is not credited with having reached that aim.

Pierre Degott

— Avec ELGAR (Edwar-William), né en 1857, nous voyons alterner les deux mêmes tendances contraires : recherche de l'originalité et par intervalles soumission à l'influence allemande. En 1896, Elgar fit exécuter un oratorio, *La Lumière de la vie*, puis une grande cantate, *le Roi Olaf*. En 1898, il fut chargé d'écrire une cantate pour le festival de Leeds : *Caractacus, roi des Bretons, défait par les Romains*. Parmi ses autres œuvres on remarque : 1° *Enigme*, thème avec variations dans lesquelles s'annonce une grande originalité; 2° une ouverture, *Cockaigne*, musique imitative ayant la prétention de représenter le brouhaha des rues de Londres; 3° une ouverture, *In the South*, écrite sous l'influence de Richard Strauss. Mais Elgar ne pouvait se confiner dans la musique instrumentale; l'oratorio qui reste toujours le genre préféré devait l'attirer. *Le Rêve de Gérontius* fut exécuté à Birmingham en 1900. C'est un oratorio d'un mysticisme austère, écrit sur un poème du cardinal Newman. (Gérontius a une vision : il est sur son lit de mort, mêlant à ses prières l'aveu de ses fautes; ses amis l'assistent ainsi qu'un prêtre. Son âme s'élève vers le séjour des béatitudes, réconfortée par un ange, tandis qu'au loin on entend les clameurs et les plaintes de l'enfer. Le ciel s'ouvre, et l'âme va comparaître devant le Juge.) Elgar recherche peu les effets rares de l'instrumentation, mais il a une puissante écriture chorale, de l'éclat (particulièrement dans le chœur *Gloire au suprême Roi dans le Ciel*), de la couleur, quand il peint les démons, de l'émotion (dans les appels de Gérontius au dieu de miséricorde). La 1^{re} partie est la plus expressive; l'introduction de la 2^e et l'admirable thème de la conclusion font songer à César Franck. On peut reprocher à l'ensemble certaines longueurs, et des pages un peu froides.

Le Rêve fut suivi, en 1903, des *Apôtres*, et, en 1906, du *Royaume*, qui présentent un moindre caractère d'originalité; on les a rapprochés de la *Rédemption* de Gounod. Elgar se consacra ensuite à la musique instrumentale avec deux symphonies et un concerto de violon où l'on constate un retour vers la musique allemande.

Embarras de Richesse

This series of notes on Elgar's recording sessions began with *Carissima* in 1914 and since then has progressed in more or less chronological order as the 78s were recorded and placed on sale. HMV 78s of this period generally offered quite a heavy 'scratch' and it has been left to recording engineers in modern times to locate 78s in good condition which were pressed with quieter material (often described as Viva-tonal Recording, silent surface and other such encouraging slogans). The records themselves remained brittle, easily snapped or cracked or simply damaged by sheer wear and tear (notoriously from heavy sound-boxes and blunt steel needles). And that is before the depredations of salvage drives in two World Wars! And so a discriminating collector would try (with the assistance of a keen dealer), to obtain Menuhin's recording of Elgar's Violin Concerto on 6 smooth-playing Victor 78s (in album with notes). My own set of this famous recording is a mint HMV pressing (in album) of which every label (of twelve) has been signed by Master Yehudi Menuhin in a big, round boyish hand. I forbore to remind him of this when he kindly signed for me a copy of the LP remake!

The purpose of all these preliminaries is to showcase my amazement that any 78s survived into the '60s and '70s in good enough condition to offer the chance of successful transfers to LP or CD in good sound. Truly, this has been a golden age for lovers of Elgar's music and contemporary recordings thereof (starting with *Carissima*). Back in the '70s Pearl and Jerrold Moore between them devised an 'Elgar Discography' and published it in the Journal of the British Institute of Recorded Sound No. 9 (with a Foreword by Carice, January 1963) and it has been my Bible and Vade Mecum ever since. I have never seen Pearl's GEMM CDs 9951/5 – the Elgar Edition-funds were tight in the 1970s – but Pearl's pioneering role cannot be exaggerated. This offers transfers of all Elgar's acoustic recordings (as opposed to the electrical process which came in in the 1920s) with notes and music lovers were spoiled for choice when recordings unseen and unheard for years became accessible, at who knows what cost in time to the labourers in the EMI archives. Nothing of the kind had been attempted since the death of Caruso and the reissues which have kept alive his name to this day! Embarras de Richesse indeed, but more was to come. Jerrold Moore's 1972 paperback *Images of Elgar* is a handsomely produced book of pictures of Elgar, his world and his music, all offered with historic LPs of Elgar's longer works, conducted by the composer.

To conclude, we have *Elgar on Record* on CDs 7545 602 full of fascinating 'introuvables' and rarities, such as his piano improvisations.

This indispensable volume was also published separately, case-bound, and a comprehensive review in *The Independent* for 23/5/92 makes for compulsory reading (it must be out there on 'The Net?'). Space barely allows up-to-date reference to reissues from *Music & Arts* (acoustic recordings) & (from 50 mm) stereo reconstructions (*sic*). For the collector who cannot afford a home extension, I suggest EMI 0956 942: EMI's *Elgar Edition*. This is 9 CDs in a box, sold as *The Complete Electrical Recordings of Elgar*. These are stirring times indeed!

Michael Plant

The Elgars had been at Brinkwells since 29th August. On 3rd September they went to nearby Tillington where their friend 'Sidney Colvin met us & took us to E. V. Lucas' house wh. they have ... lovely views of downs & "The Cottage" charming as a house but much too residential & villa like'. On the 5th he told Windflower: 'We return on Saturday night as I must have Sunday to prepare for Chiswick Empire': further performances of *The Fringes of the Fleet* were imminent.

They went well, 'All most successful there & very nice understanding & very enthusiastic audience', and after a week resting ('E. vesy tired & mis') the Elgars set out for Chatham and a further week of performances. These were disrupted when 'Hostile aeroplanes attacked the South-eastern coast of England ... The raiders came in at different places in Kent and Essex and a few of them followed the River Thames and attacked London'. Back at Severn House late on the 29th, they were 'so thankful to wake up at home, after trying Chatham'.

On 3rd October Elgar went to Stoke Prior for a few days to visit Pollie and her family, returning on the 7th for a further week of 'Fringes'. Elgar shared the bill with 'the Swing Ladies – Very good'. The 13th was the 'last day of Coliseum for the present – A. fessed him home in Car'.

Frank Schuster had invited the Elgars to the Hut for the following week: 'I will hope to come on Wednesday ... Alice will be delighted to come on Saturday. I am awfully busy clearing up everything I can for the winter – I do hope we shall be away for months: I am sick of towns'.

At the end of October they travelled to Leeds where the Choral Union were giving *Gerontius* and the first complete performance of *The Spirit of England* on the 31st. 'Orch. & chorus very good. A. Nicholls splendid 4 Augt. gorgeous & the other 2 numbers most beautiful & heart moving. E. conducted splendidly', recorded Alice. The concert was repeated with the Huddersfield Choral Society on 2nd November.

After a few days at home, Elgar, 'not feeling vesy well', set out again on the 7th for his sister's. He returned on the 18th, 'but he did not look well', and Sir Maurice Abbott-Anderson was summoned next day 'who promised improvement'. On the 24th he conducted *The Spirit of England* at the Royal Choral Society's concert: 'Very poor stuff for the most part', thought Parry, 'pitiful choral writing – like a sentimental part-song'.

Further performances of 'Fringes' followed, but Elgar was still unwell, and on 3rd December 'Sir Maurice came & gave him admirable medicines', though to no good effect. He remained unwell for the rest of the year, to the extent that reports on his condition appeared in the press. On the 27th he was seen by 'a tummy specialist Dr. Hale White, evidently very disappointed & puzzled over E', who 'urged smoking & golf'. Summing up the year Alice could 'only pray E. be better soon – & that a Victorious Peace may come'.

Martin Bird

LSO

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Thursday 8 February 2018

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