

The Society

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Front Cover: The Entry of The Black Knight based on a wood engraving by Henry Vizetelly (1820-1894) from an original drawing by Myles Birkett Foster (1825-1899) taken from an illustrated first edition dated 1853 of Longfellow's Hyperion. The coloured image is published with the kind permission of Warner Classics/Erato.

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The Editors have a policy of not publishing possible solutions to the 'hidden theme' in the Variations on an Original Theme ('Enigma') or the 'Dorabella cypher'.

Presentation of written text:

Subheadings: longer articles benefit from judicious use of these.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Full version of the 'Notes for Contributors' please see:

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Editorial

Like so many other organisations, the Society and its branches have learnt to adapt to changing times and different ways of operating; these have seen us using 'Zoom' and other platforms for meetings and a number of presentations, lectures and discussions which have been disseminated electronically. Perhaps surprisingly, we seem to have managed to come to terms with these new ways of working with relative ease, although being very much reliant on those who have the technical expertise to produce and mastermind these ventures. Virtual meetings are going to be with us for some time and whilst viable and essential at present, they are no real substitute for physical meetings which involve personal interaction and direct communication – we must strive to regain our social activities when it is right to do so.

New technology held no fears for Elgar. Here was a man who readily welcomed the camera, the bicycle, the gramophone and wireless, the motor car and the aeroplane. Steeped in the humanities he also embraced science and in 1908 invented and patented the Elgar Sulphuretted Hydrogen Machine, which was a device for synthesising hydrogen sulphide, a product of his hours ensconced in The Ark, his chemical laboratory in a converted dovecote at Plas Gywn, Hereford. It is fair to say he would have been fascinated by the Internet and the composing tool Sibelius. Yet, whilst we rightly draw on the technological wonders of the 21st century and use them to their best advantage - to share, to learn, to progress - our paramount objective must still be to meet and exchange ideas in person, although when that will be feasible is impossible to predict.

This issue opens with an extensive article by Professor Julian Rushton on Elgar's early notations for *The Black Knight*, based on the keynote address he gave to the British Library audience at the study day on 25 November 2019. Looking through the bibliography of Ian Parrott's *Elgar*, a lecture given by Diana McVeagh in 1955 to the Elgar Society in Malvern came to our notice. Fortunately, Andrew Dalton unearthed a copy and, after consultation with Diana, we are delighted to re-publish her talk, which will be new for the majority of members.

In addition to her writing on Elgar, Diana is also known for her work on Gerald Finzi and her latest book, *Gerald Finzi's Letters, 1915-1956* which will be published in May 2021 by Boydell & Brewer Ltd, collects over 1600 letters to and from Finzi. Pen & Sword Books has recently published *Edward Elgar: Music, Life and Landscape* by Christopher Grogan. We will review this in the next issue of the *Journal*.

Robert Kay, proprietor of Acuta Music, has made a special study of the music Elgar wrote for the 1928 play *Beau Brummel* by Bertram P. Mathews of which the *Minuet* appears to be the sole surviving portion. Robert now provides a summary of all the material which exists and suggests a 'lead' respecting the possible fate of the manuscript score.

For the present, CDs continue to pour out although with recording sessions being put into abeyance during lockdown and after, there will come a time when the stream will slow. A major reissue to mark the fiftieth anniversary of Barbirolli's death in July, is Warner Classics' 109 CD box set containing all of Sir John's recordings from 1928 to 1970 with HMV, Pye and EMI. Here is a rich array of a lifetime's work. Barbirolli drew wondrous interpretations of Elgar from his orchestras and his genius shone in Vaughan Williams, Brahms, Mahler, Bruckner, Strauss, Wagner, Nielsen, Sibelius, Puccini, Berlioz, Ravel, Debussy, Tchaikovsky, Haydn, Beethoven and Mozart

along with many other composers. Devoted Elgarians will doubtless already have many of his recordings on their shelves, but in spite of duplication this set contains treasures and, if you can afford the outlay, you will be amply rewarded, as Andrew Neill demonstrates in his review.

We continue to owe a debt to Lani Spahr who has found hidden gems in the American radio archives and the latest *Elgar from America* CD from SOMM, reviewed by Arthur Reynolds, has *Cockaigne* and the Violin Concerto with Yehudi Menuhin conducted by Sargent, and an *Introduction and Allegro* with Toscanini, A CD of organ arrangements by Jonathan Hope, including one of *In the South* is reviewed by Relf Clark, himself an organist, together with a review of a recital by Timothy Parsons from Exeter Cathedral including the *Imperial March*. A number of recordings of the Violin Concerto have appeared in recent months, and there is another by the Albanian-born Alda Dizdari, also reviewed by Relf Clark, with her audio book reviewed by Andrew Dalton. The Cello Concerto, the centenary of which was celebrated in 2019, is an essential piece for cellists and Stuart Freed reviews new recordings made by Dai Mayata and Inbal Segey. A new recording of the Violin Sonata with Jennifer Pike and Martin Roscoe is considered by Steven Halls along with Vaughan Williams' Violin Sonata dating from 1954 and the ever popular *The Lark Ascending*: in addition he has listened to the first of a series of four prospective recordings from the RVW Society, setting down folksongs arranged by the composer. A number of new *Sea Pictures* recordings have appeared recently and David Morris considers Kathryn Rudge's new interpretation coupled with *The Music Makers*, comparing it with some other classic recordings.

Falstaff and *Sea Pictures* under Barenboim from Decca are given a rapturous review by Barry Collett, who sadly died in September. Barry was a stalwart member of the Society: he joined as a life member in 1963 and was a regular contributor to the Society's publications since 1974. His contribution to Elgar's music and research is considered in the obituary published in the current edition of the *News* but it is right to acknowledge that Barry was appointed an Honorary Life member of the Society and, in recognition of his work as a fine ambassador for Elgar, received the Elgar Society medal. His multifarious Elgarian and other musical activities were outstanding, and within the Society, there is little doubt he will be greatly missed. His regular reviews for the *Journal* were a model of how these should be - accurate, succinct and penetrating - and always delivered ahead of time. We send our condolences to Pauline and his family.

It was in December 1950 that the first proactive steps were taken in Malvern to form this Society and from those small beginnings we have continued to grow over the last 70 years: thus to mark this we have included a brief account of those early pioneering days.

Contributions for the next edition should reach us no later than 15 February 2021.

Kevin Mitchell

with the Editorial Team of Andrew Dalton, David Morris and Andrew Neill

'How strange': Elgar's early notations for *The Black Knight*

Julian Rushton¹

Introduction

Elgar told his first biographer: 'there is music in the air, music all around us, the world is full of it—and—you—simply—simply—simply—take as much as you require!'² In practice, of course, writing complex music is hard work, and uses a lot of paper. Elgar's teasing comment reflects what we know from other remarks: that ideas came to him outdoors – walking, cycling, perhaps even playing golf. Numerous entries in Alice Elgar's diaries read simply 'E to links'. Despite his disclaimer ('Golf is a grand game, because you can't think of anything else when playing'),³ might he not, as he walked between shots, be considering more than club selection?

The rich legacy of paper used by Elgar, now mostly in the British Library, includes final or near final versions. But the great bulk of it represents compositional *process* – working documents not intended to be seen by anyone else: publishers, critics, conductors, or programme-note annotators. Such rough workings are usually called 'sketches'; gatherings of them are 'sketchbooks', whether bound by Elgar himself or the handsome volumes of blank staves later ordered from Novello. But in assessing the content and meaning of these notations, a more refined terminology is needed. Sketch studies have long distinguished 'sketch' from 'draft': a draft is relatively extended, marking formal outlines, whereas a sketch is an earlier stage, hammering an idea into shape before entering it into a larger scheme.

With Elgar, and other composers, a word is needed for preliminary notations that precede serious sketching. This I call 'jotting': notating ideas, perhaps while walking or golfing, if not while actually riding a bicycle. A jotting may be a few notes, a melodic shape, perhaps an indication of harmony. But it is short: taken from the air, heard in the reeds by the river, or even coming to him at home. Sketches usually, and drafts always, are directed towards finishing a particular work, whereas a jotting is a memorandum for which an immediate purpose isn't always apparent. Jottings

1 This essay originated as a keynote address for the British Library study day (25 November 2019). My thanks to Richard Chesser, Christopher Scobie, and Loukia Drosopoulou of the British Library for the invitation, access to MSS, and providing images. I also thank Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore for looking over this essay and for his helpful comments, and John Norris for supplying when the library was inaccessible copies of some of the pages discussed.

2 Robert J. Buckley, *Sir Edward Elgar* (in the series 'Living Masters of Music'; London: John Lane: The Bodley Head, 1905), 32. As this was an oral communication – [...] replaces a description of Elgar's gesture of 'capture' – the punctuation must be Buckley's.

3 *Ibid.*, 41–2.

for an identifiable project later abandoned were often redeployed for something new. Elgar used all these types of preliminary working before making fair copies for other eyes to see, and for performance and publication.

Early jottings

Elgar's choral ballad *The Black Knight* can be followed on paper from jottings made when he was only 21, via sketches and drafts to completion. Elgar conducted the premiere in Worcester on 18 April 1893. The work is dedicated to the organist Hugh Blair, who had encouraged him to complete it, and ensured that it would be performed (albeit not, like *Froissart* in 1890, at a Three Choirs Festival).⁴ Novello had recently rejected Elgar's *Serenade for Strings*, declaring such things hard to sell. But they commanded the market for choral works, and accepted *The Black Knight*. They didn't lose by it; the work was sufficiently popular for a second edition of the vocal score to be required in 1898, although the pecuniary benefit to the composer was small.⁵ The full score was eventually engraved in 1905, by which time Elgar was knighted, and famous.

On the face of it, this might suggest a fifteen-year gestation (1878–93). But that would be the wrong conclusion, although early notations have been identified as 'sketches' for *The Black Knight*.⁶ But they are jottings, and if they had an immediate purpose it wasn't for a choral work that would, at the time, have had no chance of being performed.

In 1879–9 Elgar sketched, drafted, and jotted on pages that he bound roughly in brown paper, signing and dating the covers. In a sketchbook dated 'October 1878' individual jottings are not usually dated, but one has a tenuous connection to *The Black Knight*.⁷ It is on the upper staves of a page in which the lowest staves are used upside down. It seems to be labelled 'Marcia', and the metre and metronome mark suggest a quick march. The harmonisation is distressingly crude. Ex. 1 shows the opening; the music continues for a few increasingly scrappy bars, then breaks off.

MUSIC EXAMPLE 1

Marcia

Nothing like this appears in *The Black Knight* except the first five notes, in a different metre, and the subsequent rise in pitch.

4 Kevin Allen, 'Hugh Blair: Worcester's Forgotten Organist', *Elgar Society Journal* 21/4 (April 2019), 3–17.

5 See John Drysdale, *Elgar's Earnings* (Woodbridge: the Boydell Press, 2013), 81–2.

6 Christopher Kent, *Edward Elgar: A Guide to Research* (New York: Garland, 1993), 161–2 (also *Edward Elgar: A Thematic Catalogue and Research Guide* (London: Routledge, 2012).

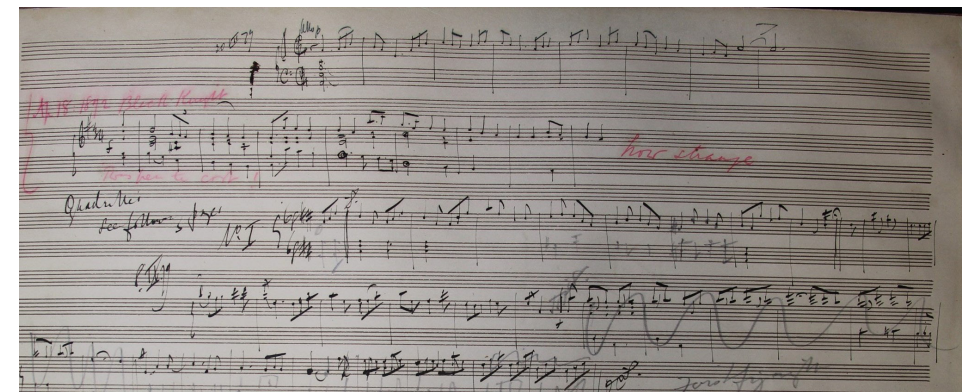
7 British Library Add. Ms. 63148, f.24 verso.

A similar sketchbook, also bound in brown paper, is dated 1879 (Ex. 2 shows the complete jotting).⁸ The first five notes (cf. Ex. 1) are now in 3/4, with the first note an upbeat, so the second falls on the first beat; the rise in pitch after the opening fall is differently handled. This is almost exactly the opening of *The Black Knight*, even to the harmony (note the C sharp in the first whole bar). The added words are in red ink (see Fig. 1).⁹

MUSIC EXAMPLE 2

Ap 18 1892 Black Knight

Fig. 1 BL Add MS 63149 f. 8v, reproduced by permission of the British Library Board; the jotting in the 1879 sketchbook, closely resembling the opening of *The Black Knight*.



8 British Library Add. Ms. 63149, f. 8 verso.

9 All figures are reproduced by kind permission of the British Library Board; my thanks to Christopher Scobie for arranging this.

In *The Black Knight* itself there are refinements of phrasing and articulation (the first note becomes a quaver followed by a quaver rest), of rhythm (dotted notes, bars 4–5, are smoothed), and of harmony.

This is the main theme of the first movement; I shall refer to it as ‘Pentecost’. It recurs at the end of the fourth movement, transformed in character, just as the opening returns in certain symphonies – including both of Elgar’s. With some justification, Elgar later claimed *The Black Knight* as ‘a sort of symphony’ – not a cantata, as ‘the orchestra is too important’.¹⁰ The reprinted vocal score (1898) repeats this claim, describing it as ‘a Symphony for Chorus and Orchestra’ rather than a choral ballad. In fact, *The Black Knight* is indubitably a choral ballad (like those of Stanford, known to Elgar as an orchestral violinist). However, there is no reason why such a work cannot be presented in a quasi-symphonic form. The outcome is a strikingly original conception that foretells Elgar’s use of recurring themes in later choral music, both sacred and secular.¹¹

Ex. 2 is on the fourth and fifth staves of the page, under music in 6/8 that soon peters out; immediately below is a blank line, then a new piece labelled ‘Quadrille’, which may help us understand Ex. 2. Early in 1879 Elgar began working for the Powick asylum. In December 1878 he had composed a Minuet for its peculiar instrumental ensemble. This may have been a test piece, and Ex. 2 could have become another Minuet; but this old-fashioned dance wasn’t what the asylum required. When Elgar was appointed, he wrote Quadrilles, Lancers, and Polkas, and he left Ex. 2 on the back-burner. Incidentally the Quadrille jotted underneath was never finished.¹²

We may be sure that Elgar wrote the words and date in red ink much later, because while 18 April was indeed the day of the first performance, it was in 1893. Robert Anderson suggests that ‘how strange’ was added on 18 April 1892 because (he suggests) it was then that Elgar began ‘concentrated work’ (the date coincidentally a year before the premiere). But he had unearthed that jotting in 1889, when (obviously) he wouldn’t have written ‘1892’ (see below). I conclude that there were two concentrated periods of work, in 1889 and 1892 (the later stages are beyond the scope of this article).¹³

Elgar must have turned to his 1879 sketchbook for ideas no later than 1889, and returned again, as was his wont (there is no knowing when), to rifle his bundles of sketches and unconsummated drafts for a new work (there is no knowing which). He recognised this jotting as one already used, and labelled it accordingly. But why ‘how strange’? Perhaps he found it surprising that he had jotted this important theme fully ten years before starting work on his choral ballad. There is no sign that he was thinking of setting Longfellow’s translation of Uhland’s *Der schwarze Ritter* as early as 1879.

The jotting remained dormant until, in 1889, Elgar married a woman of a literary bent, with an interest in German culture. I suggest Alice may have proposed this ballad, in a translation by a famous poet, to set for the then flourishing choral societies, which wouldn’t want a German text

10 Letter to August Jaeger, 1 March 1898. Jerrold Northrop Moore (ed.), *Elgar and his Publishers. Letters of a Creative Life* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), vol. 1, 67.

11 On recurring themes, this may be of interest to readers of German: Florian Csizmadia, *Leitmotivik und verwandte Techniken in den Chorwerken von Edward Elgar* (Berlin: Verlag Dr. Köster, 2017).

12 Elgar Complete Edition Vol. 22 (*Music for Powick Asylum*, ed. Andrew Lyle); the Minuet is the first item, and the incomplete Quadrille is on p. 333.

13 The fourth movement was delivered to Novello on 23 December 1892 for engraving while Elgar did the orchestration (his usual procedure with choral works). Robert Anderson, in *Elgar in Manuscript* (London: British Library, 1990), 23-4.

but might be tempted by a setting of Longfellow. If so, the work’s publication history shows that she was right. The newly married couple had moved to London, in an attempt to establish Elgar on a wider musical scene; now, even with no immediate prospect of performance, to compose a substantial choral piece seemed a risk worth taking. My supposition is that Elgar, interrupted by a commission (*Froissart*) for the 1890 Worcester Festival, set aside his symphonic ballad, resumed it in 1892 with the dual encouragement of Alice and, crucially, Blair’s offer to arrange a performance. A fair copy of the vocal score could then be sent to Novello (which had accepted *Froissart*) for engraving while he worked on the orchestration.

Between 1889 and 1892, among other work, Elgar finished his *Serenade* and sold it to a German publisher; and he heard his large-scale overture, *Froissart*, a work of symphonic proportions, which must have boosted his confidence in handling a full orchestra. In *The Black Knight* the orchestra is indeed important, and is used with dramatic imagination, resourcefulness, and close attention to the poem.¹⁴ The ballad tells us of springtime, when an unnamed court celebrates Pentecost with jousting, a ball, and a feast. In Elgar’s scheme, the first movement evokes spring; the jousting begins, and the young prince wins (or, being a prince, is allowed to win) every time. In the second movement, he is violently unhorsed by a stranger, the Black Knight, who declines to identify himself. Chivalry prevents the court expelling this unwelcome guest, and obliges the princess to dance with him (third movement); she and her flowers wilt. At the feast (finale), the king’s children die, apparently from poisoned wine handed to them by the Black Knight who, it transpires, is Death itself.

British Library Add Ms 47900A, ff. 39–56

Some of the papers donated in 1949 to the British Museum by Elgar’s daughter, and now in the British Library, are handsomely bound into a massive tome, with miscellaneous contents, including much *Black Knight* material: no mere jottings, but real sketching, and drafting, with an end in view. I consider these seem to be the earliest efforts towards this project. In a bundle of papers beginning at folio 39 (see fig. 2), Elgar set out boldly to write a vocal score in ink: two staves for chorus and two for piano. Using ink rather than pencil suggests confidence; the theme, despite several detailed changes, was not new, for it is ‘Pentecost’. The heading is strange:

The Black Knight (proposed!) Ballad for Chorus and Orchestra
Words by Longfellow. Music by Edward Elgar
if he can

Despite the tiny writing for ‘if he can’, happily, he could. But this sketch *cum* draft, also containing jottings, is far from complete. Only the first three movements are represented, and inky confidence didn’t endure, as most of the document is in the more provisional medium of pencil. However, that whole pages are crossed out means no more than that the music had been rewritten elsewhere for further drafting prior to a fair copy – probably in 1892.

14 Novello advertised for hire orchestral parts for a reduced ensemble, a necessary precaution but decidedly not what Elgar would have preferred.

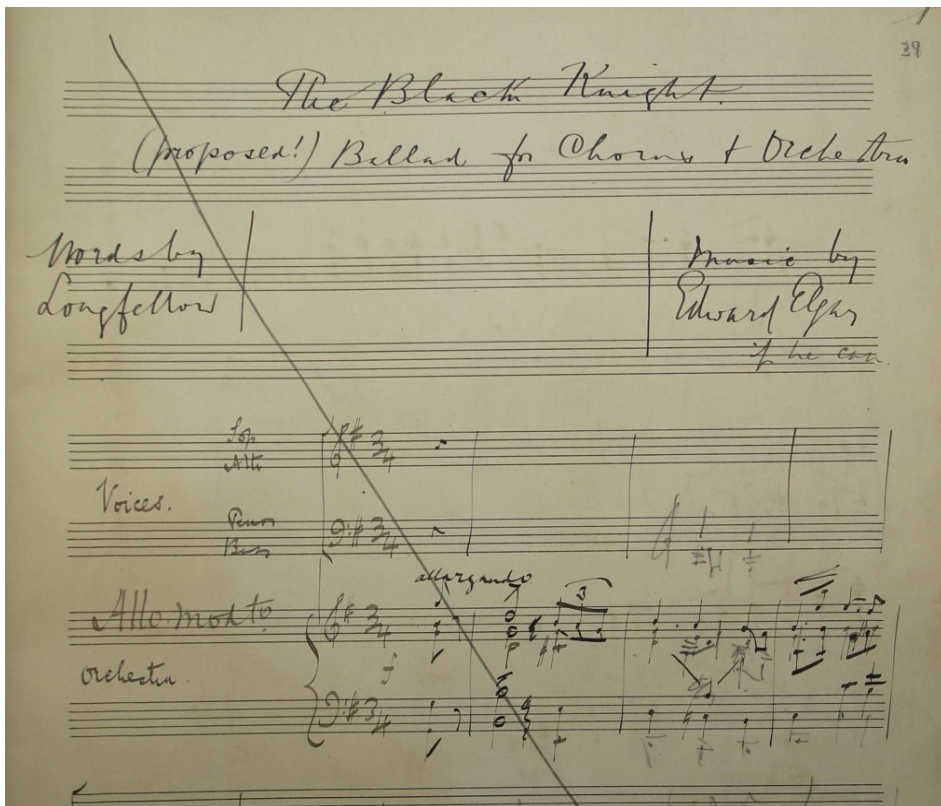


Fig. 2 BL Add. MS 47900A, f. 39r (cropped), reproduced by permission of the British Library Board; first page of sketches probably from 1889.

The first movement soon peters out. Then comes the opening of the second movement (f.41r). The orchestral introduction – chivalric, diatonic music but for one scary diminished seventh – is written firmly in ink, suggesting that Elgar must have jotted or sketched it before starting this page. The back of this sheet (f.41v), with the chorus entry still in ink, quickly becomes sketchy. On the next sheet (f.42r; see fig. 3), much is in pencil, with chorus parts sketched in and orchestral staves mostly left blank. The music is continuous until the Black Knight speaks, refusing to identify himself: ‘Should I speak my name, / You would stand aghast with fear; / I am a prince of mighty sway!’ In the final version, as the chorus repeats his words, motives from the orchestral introduction are fragmented, indicating shock. Soon after this, a motive associated with the Black Knight (Death) wells up in the bass, to be repeated by the chorus; this returns, operatically and

symphonically, in later movements. As he began the second movement, Elgar had apparently not settled on this important *leitmotiv*. It is jotted in pencil, on empty staves near the top of the page (see fig. 3). Diana McVeagh noted its likeness to the *leitmotiv* of Wagner’s villain, Klingsor, in *Parsifal*.¹⁵ The first bar is melodically identical to Wagner’s third bar (Ex. 3).

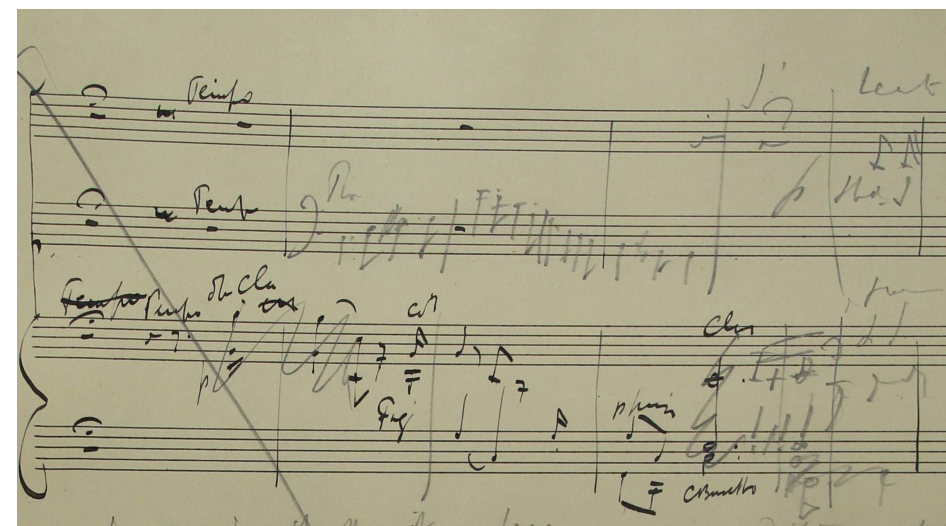


Fig. 3 BL Add. MS 47900A, f. 42r (cropped), reproduced by permission of the British Library Board; draft for the first speech of the Black Knight; pencil notation of ‘Death’ motive.

MUSIC EXAMPLE 3

The Black Knight [II from bar 44]: ‘A Prince of mighty sway’

*transposed for comparison

Another important *leitmotiv* appears when the prince is flung from his horse. This McVeagh calls ‘stricken prince’, but as Elgar used it in the third movement, when the princess wilts, it also applies to her, so it’s ‘stricken children’. When they are about to die, the themes are combined; added to this combination is an idea here labelled theme A (Ex. 4), a gentle, pliable motive (perhaps for the children) that Elgar develops over the central action of the finale along with a more vigorous theme (B, not quoted here) denoting, I surmise, the intervention of the Black Knight.

15 Diana McVeagh, *Elgar the Music Maker* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 18–19.

MUSIC EXAMPLE 4

Theme A

'Stricken Children' motive

Ma - ny a cour - teous thank;

'Death' motive

Theme A (orchestra)

"Oh, that drink [was very cool!]"

There is no sign of themes A and B in these sketches, which continue into the third movement, showing and developing its main themes, but not the finale which apparently didn't take shape until 1892. Nevertheless, another document, dated 1889, makes clear that Elgar already had in mind the return of 'Pentecost' after the children's death.

British Library Add MS 47900A, ff. 58–61

This 8-page document is bound in the same volume, but after the sketches discussed above. The library's covering page (f.57) reads, however: 'Black Knight / Elgar / 1st sketch / & fairly clear / copy but incomplete'. '1st' is probably correct, although jottings later than 1879 might have preceded it. 'Incomplete' is putting it mildly; but there are reasons to believe it was written before all or most of the bundle of sketches discussed above. And while 'fairly clear', it is emphatically *not* a 'clear copy'.

It is a strange document, and the reason for its existence isn't obvious. Elgar seems to have taken four folios (eight pages) of manuscript paper, but not to develop his ideas by sketching. The pages contain what looks like a continuity draft for the whole work, yet there is very little actual staff notation; there are long gaps in continuity, filled by lines taken from the poem but not themselves set to music. These are, however, associated with the musical fragments. A better description of this possibly unique document might be 'continuity jotting'.

The first page (fig. 4) is informative, in comparison to the first page of the previous gathering. It shows a version of 'Pentecost' lacking much of the harmony jotted in 1879, and in a more primitive state than fig. 2. The chorus entry is shown, but only the soprano line, repeating 'Pentecost'. After this comes what looks like a fanfare, nothing like the lovely melody that ensues from bar 17 of the final version. The next jottings (going over the page) are developed in the complete work for the prince's joust. Elgar added a little more over the page, mostly crossed out, and 'Pentecost' reappears (as in final version). The third page, after another crossed-out fragment, reads: 'end in G'; as does the first movement, with no shadow of death.

The Black Knight

Indecisive

It was keen-te 'cool. that

best of places

pentecost that first A

Fig. 4 Add MS 47900A fol. 58r (cropped), reproduced by permission of the British Library Board; first page of the 8-page 'continuity draft' showing 'Pentecost' and the first choral entry.

There is no sign of the opening of the second movement, confidently notated in ink on f.41, a strong suggestion, if not absolute proof, that the Museum bound the documents from 1889 in reverse order. The second movement is represented only by jottings for the Black Knight's joust with the unfortunate prince. The fourth page (f.59v) mostly contains words pertaining to the prince's fall; a dotted rhythm could possibly be interpreted as a hint of the *leitmotiv* ('Death'), but in nothing like its final form. Then, strangely, comes a fragment of 'Pentecost', which has no place hereabouts in the finished work.

The fourth page also shows the opening of the third movement: its first bar, fully harmonised, but hanging in the air and followed by '&c' (et cetera). This idea, it seems safe to say, must have been jotted, even sketched, beforehand; '&c' suggests that anyone reading the page might be expected to recognise it. A fragment below (used in the orchestral introduction) derives from an extended draft in the ten-year-old sketchbook of a 'Suite No. 2' for violin and piano.¹⁶ More than half the next page (f.60r) has only words, from the ballad's fifth stanza, but also notates the accompaniment figure and

16 Much of this could easily be transcribed and played, although I am not aware that it has been.

melody (eventually for oboe) of the exotic dance in which the Knight blights the princess and her flowers; this could be the first time Elgar jotted the ‘measure weird and dark’ required by the ballad, with its modal inflection (G minor but with A flats).

These pages show enough for us to conclude that Elgar was clear about one aspect of his ‘symphony’: themes would recur in later movements. But he may not have been sure of the number of movements, since lines from stanza seven (the first words of the fourth movement, eventually set in A flat major) are followed by more jottings in G minor, including another fragment of the exotic dance. The only other hints of the finale are a few scraps of ideas for the ending, including the return of ‘Pentecost’, and more words: the king’s plea to be gathered by Death with his children, and Death’s contemptuous rejection, the last two lines of the poem:

Spake the grim guest
From his hollow, cavernous breast:
‘Roses in the spring I gather!’

The completed finale is the longest movement, setting four stanzas to the other movements’ two each. This document looks as if Elgar intended to cram six of the ten stanzas into the finale. If so, wiser counsels prevailed. On the seventh page (f.61r), along with more notations of the exotic dance – essentially duplicating earlier ones but placed next to different lines of the poem – is a double bar, implying the end of something. But this *follows* the last words of the prince and princess (stanza eight), with no sign of the eventual music to which they are set (partly seen in Ex. 4). The next music is a fragment of ‘Pentecost’ marked ‘minore’ (minor key; the page lacks key-signatures, but this signifies G minor, and does anticipate part of the final version). Then come words that are not part of the poem (the German words are not Uhland’s and translate ‘ever weaker and weaker’):

&c (deeper & deeper) immer schwacher und schwacher

This I can only assume is intended to convey (to whom?) a sense of dissolution as the tragedy deepens, as if Elgar is saying ‘this is the feeling of the music I have to write’.

From such details I conclude that these eight pages are not a working document in the usual sense of ‘sketch’ or ‘draft’; rather they are a rare kind of jotting, a laconic memorandum of the work’s design from beginning to end. But other than ‘Pentecost’ and the exotic dance, no theme is more than jotted, and important ones are missing. Music at the top of the final page (fig. 5) is placed next to the king’s cry of despair (‘Take me too, the joyless father’) and the last lines of the ballad. But this, again, is the exotic dance; and if Elgar contemplated returning to it near the end, he decided otherwise.

Other fragments on the last two pages were perhaps intended for the king’s outburst (‘Woe! the blessed children both / Tak’st thou in the joy of youth’), as they are in the right key, G minor, though nothing quite like them comes in the finished work. Even ‘Pentecost’, as notated here, differs from the ending, where the joyous evocation of spring is ironically recalled by the Knight himself as he rejects the king’s plea to die with his children. In the final version ‘Pentecost’ is heard on solo woodwind, adjusted to the prevailing metre, 4/4. As it retains the upbeat, however, it is not a reversion to the 1878 jotting (Ex. 5; cf. Ex. 1 and fig. 1). But on f.61v (fig. 5) it is still in the 3/4 metre of the first movement.

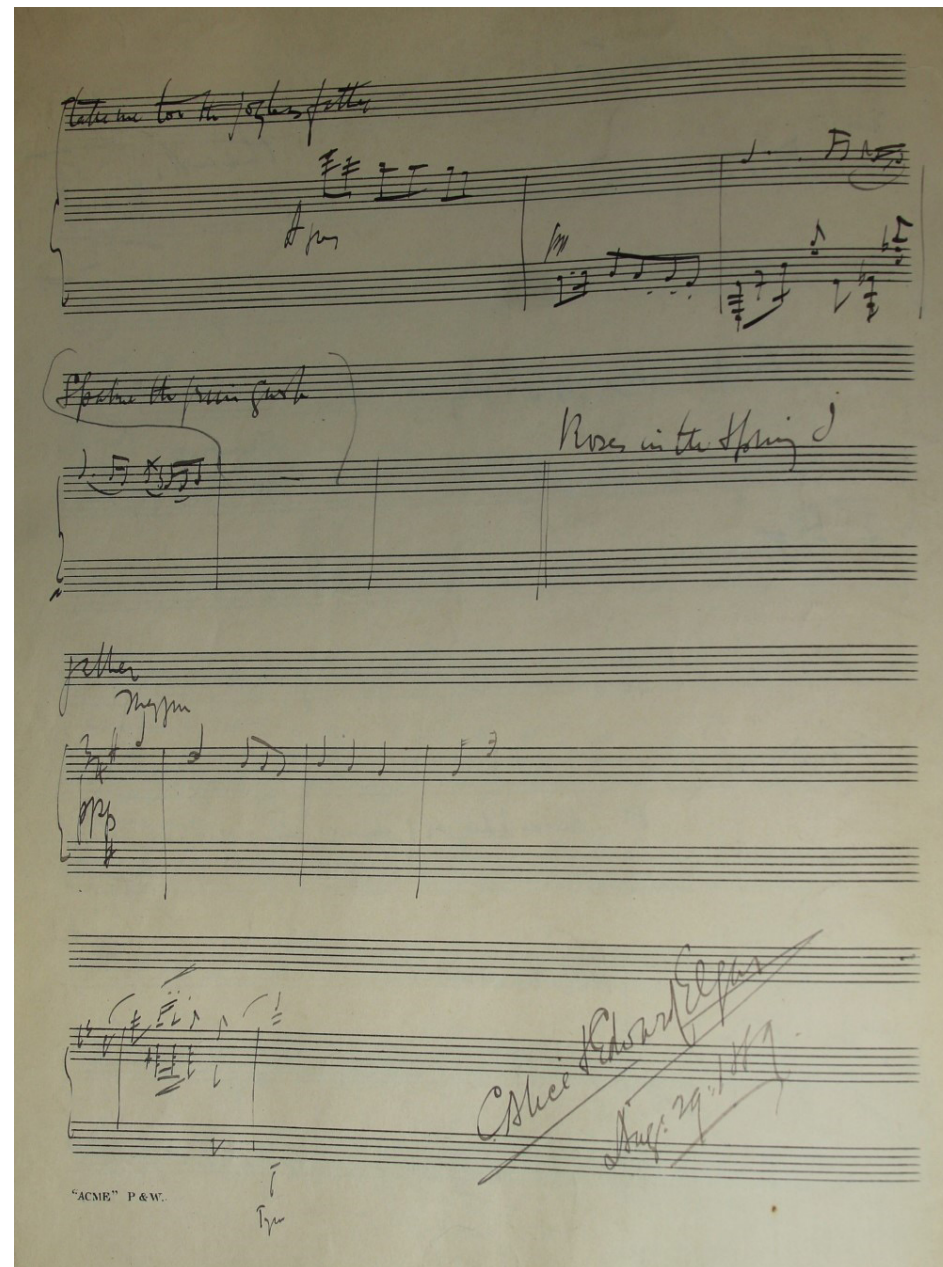


Fig. 5 Add MS 47900A f. 61v (uncropped), reproduced by permission of the British Library Board; final page of the ‘continuity draft’ with signature and date.

Elgar: An Appreciation

Diana McVeagh

[This lecture was given at a meeting of the Elgar Society in Malvern on 7 February 1955 and subsequently published for the Society by Berrow's Newspapers Ltd. That was the year of the publication of the first biographies of Elgar since the end of World War II: Percy Young's *Elgar O.M. and Diana McVeagh's Edward Elgar His Life and Music. Born in 1926, Diana McVeagh is one of the last of the generation who talked to those who remembered Elgar, had heard him conduct and had seen him at events such as the Three Choirs Festival. Although a little of this lecture may seem dated there is much that has a piercing insight and contemporary relevance to our understanding of both Elgar and the place his music has in this country and beyond. Diana, for long a distinguished Vice-President of this Society, has kindly agreed to the re-publishing of this talk from 65 years ago. A few editorial footnotes have been added to assist clarity for the 21st century reader.*

Diana on seeing the lecture after 65 years, wishes to preface its publication as follows:

'Diana does not hold these opinions today, but allows this to be printed as part of reception history. Forgive her youthful sweeping generalisations'.]

Though it is only 21 years since Elgar died there is some justification for attempting to assess his historical position, for by a curious interlocking set of circumstances Elgar has already become a classic. His own creative life well-nigh ended fourteen years before his death, that is 35 years ago now. The nadir of his popularity came, not as commonly happens with creative artists, 25 years after his death but in the 1920s, when a post-war England was out of tune with King Edward's musician-laureate, whose lavishness and exuberance had no topicality. Elgar's complete disregard as a composer for changes of style in other countries during his life-time puts his music at a greater distance from us than in fact it is. It is salutary to remember that Debussy's life was enclosed within his, and that *Pelléas* was produced the year before *The Kingdom*; that Schoenberg's *Five Orchestral Pieces* were first played in this country the year before *Falstaff*; that Elgar's answer to *The Rite of Spring* was the Cello Concerto.

Elgar's musical life was lived on three plateaux: the early plateau of talent, the middle plateau of genius, the final plateau of silence, and his works do not show the progressive development that one finds, for instance, in Wagner or Sibelius. *Gerontius* is a more modern work than the Piano Quintet. Once established, Elgar's style showed singularly little evolution during the twenty years of his productive genius. Then again, the fact that English music after him largely turned into other paths means that his influence is no longer a living force among contemporary composers, but rather lies enclosed within his own period. His nearest contemporaries, Holst and

Vaughan Williams, found the spring of their inspiration in the soil of their own country - folksong - which to Elgar carried no message. His influence can certainly be felt occasionally in the music of Bax, Bliss and Walton. Bax, like Elgar, was a romantic who pushed chromaticism to its most luxurious limits; Bliss's *Music for Strings* was an overt compliment to Elgar as was Walton's *Crown Imperial*. But Elgar's influence on these composers does not go deep, and is mainly apparent when they are facing towards the nineteenth century. Contemporary composers have gone further back than to Elgar. Holst and Vaughan Williams, to folksong which is ageless, Britten to Purcell, Tippett and Rubbra to the Elizabethans. The exact position Elgar holds in the English renaissance¹ is anomalous. Unlike Parry, Stanford and Mackenzie, all liberal-minded educationalists and nursery-men of taste as well as staunch composers, Elgar put his hand to no cultural plough. By his music alone is he remembered, yet his music did not fertilize the new crop; he is like a windbreak between England and the continent, behind the protective shelter of which the English renaissance² grew and flowered.

All these factors - the sixteen barren years, the swift drop in his popularity after the first war, the consistency of his style over twenty years, his lack of stimulus to contemporary composers - all these factors add up to increase the distance at which we see him today. I say 'we' but I mean myself and my generation, for particularly in these parts I tread gently for fear of disturbing ghosts with whom many of you have walked. My justification for daring to address you is my conviction that Elgar's music needs no personal affections to tug at one's judgment, but stands four-square even when for performers and audience alike Elgar is a name and not a memory.

The enduring value of Elgar's music is demonstrated by the unfilchable³ place it holds today in concert and broadcast programmes. *Enigma* is a hardy perennial and Sir Malcolm Sargent has recently testified that it transplants well even to Japan. Scarcely a week goes by without a broadcast of the *Introduction and Allegro*, *Cockaigne* or *The Wand of Youth*. One if not both of the symphonies is in the repertory of every London winter season. *Gerontius* is the only oratorio that seriously rivals *Messiah*: in 1951 every Society wishing to perform in London during the Festival of Britain proposed *Gerontius*. *Gerontius*, *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* are still the backbone of the Three Choirs Festivals, indicating that most happy two-way exchange by which the festivals gave Elgar his opportunity at the beginning of his life, his comfort at the end, and by which he with his compositions resuscitated them when they were at their lowest ebb. When English history finds for itself a unique occasion in celebrating in Westminster Hall its Prime Minister's 80th birthday, it is Elgar who provides the tune. The works of Elgar's which survive are large. Those which look imposing in his catalogue of works are the ones which sound imposing in performance, Elgar wrote no '*Sapphische Ode*', no '*Der Nussbaum*', no '*Fairy Lough*'. He was nothing if not a grand master, grand in scale as in gesture and grand is his challenge to history

What, then, were his historical innovations in his own time and his qualities that are for all time?

First, sheer virtuosity. Never had this country produced a composer able to say exactly what he wanted to so gorgeously. We English have a certain suspicion of virtuosity - VW even admitted once that it was that which put a slight barrier for a short time between him and Elgar's music - and it may be significant that among Elgar's most fervent admirers at the beginning of this century⁴ were

1 i.e. musical renaissance Eds

2 Ibid.

3 i.e. that which cannot be stolen Eds

4 20th Century Eds

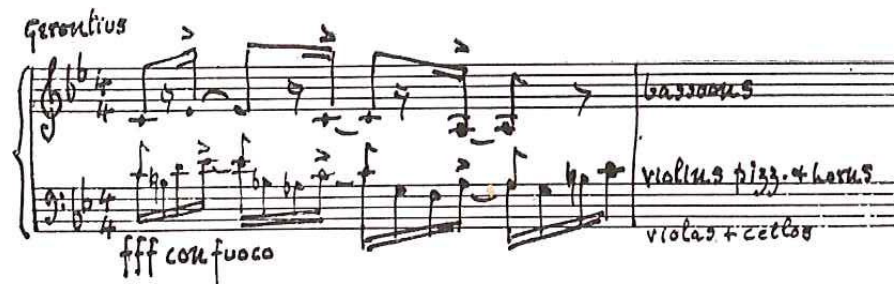
so many from abroad. Certainly his staggering technical skill and his manifest delight in it were different from the extremely competent but more sober Kapellmeister style of his contemporaries. It was an entirely new element in English music, this touch of flamboyance that Elgar himself so admired in Liszt and Meyerbeer; a dangerous element that needed a finer control than he could always give it, yet the concomitant of magnificent vitality.

Fundamentally Elgar was an orchestral composer. *Gerontius* alone would have secured him his place in English music, but his historical importance is greatest in that he is the fount of English orchestral and symphonic music. How much his circumstances compelled him to write cantatas when his heart was with the orchestra became very clear to me when I studied the orchestral scores of *The Black Knight*, *King Olaf* and *Caractacus*. Gradually in them his highly personal style of orchestration evolved, so that the gap between *Caractacus* and *Enigma* - enormous in every other way - is, orchestrally, negligible. This makes the appearance of *Enigma* much more understandable and sheds new light on Elgar's remark about *Caractacus* to Jaeger 'I think it is the best scoring I ever saw, and the worst written'. The peculiar characteristic of Elgar's scoring is that it combines two apparently contradictory qualities; sumptuousness and glitter. I find his special secret to lie in his method of doubling themes at the unison. It is often said that Elgar's scoring is full and complex; complex it certainly is; full, in only a certain sense. Granted it is impossible to take out of an Elgar orchestra one instrument without upsetting the balance, as VW has pointed out. But the vital point in Elgar's method is not so much in what he does as in what he does not. Rarely does he double an instrument by another simply to give it enough power to be heard - his balance is always too carefully adjusted to need that, except of course when the whole orchestra is let loose; neither does he often choose to maintain the same blend of instruments doubling each other for any length of time. He doubles for three main reasons: dynamic eloquence, clarity of rhythm, and colour. Any nineteenth-century composer will increase the number of instruments in use as he increases his dynamics. Elgar does this specifically and consistently to the single line of his melodies, so that only the apex of a tune - the notes highest in pitch or volume, generally both - is doubled. 'B.G.N.' from *Enigma* gives a good example. After two bars' introduction, the cellos and violas have a warm sustained ten-bar tune; six notes only of it are doubled by the oboe, at the climax of pitch and volume in the seventh bar.



Secondly, Elgar doubles for precision and clarity of rhythm. When one instrument carries the melodic line, he will use a heavier instrument to double the long notes, leaving the short ones undoubled and light; or use a brighter and more penetrating instrument to point a syncopation. You will recall the fugue subject from the demons' chorus in *Gerontius*. The first bar contains four groups of four semiquavers, the first and last of each being tied. Cellos and violas present this *fortissimo*, *con fuoco*. At this speed, *allegro*, such syncopation on the darker strings might become

blurred. So the first semiquaver of each group - the accent - is doubled by horns and pizzicato violins, and the last semiquaver - the tied one - is doubled by bassoons. Thus are the conflicting accents of the string tune thrust home by accessory instruments.



As an example of Elgar's doubling for colour I can find none better than the 'down by the river' theme from the scherzo of the First Symphony. Here a theme of sixteen bars is played by the flute. Each note, except an occasional weak quaver or semiquaver, is doubled. This is how:

First	2 notes	violins bowed
Next	2 notes	violas pizz.
"	2 "	violins bowed
"	1 "	violas pizz.
"	2 "	violins bowed
"	5 "	solo violin bowed
"	3 "	violas pizz.
"	4 "	solo violin bowed
"	3 "	violas pizz.
"	12 "	clarinets, 8ve. below
"	3 "	violas pizz.
"	1 "	violins pizz.
"	2 "	violins bowed
Last	5 "	clarinets, 8ve. below

No slavish doubling, that. The effect of the flute carrying the theme, the colour behind it fluctuating between bowed and pizzicato strings, violin and viola, *tutti* and solo, strings and clarinets, and the sustained tonic and dominant pedal for oboe, cor anglais and harp makes this one of the most enchanting passages in all music. Elgar does not of course confine this selective doubling to main themes. In *Cockaigne*, at one point, the violins have a piece of sequential semi-quaver passage work: horns double the first of each group; oboes the downward *arpeggio*, clarinets the upward.

It now becomes clear why a page of Elgar's which looks fussy and crowded in print, with every instrument at work, so often sounds transparent. It is because his tunes never carry the dead weight of other instruments exactly and mechanically doubling the first that his orchestra has its vitality and colour. England *had* no orchestral tradition. Elgar, self-taught, had perforce to borrow from the continent. He took what he wanted, and from the richness of the Wagner-Strauss-Mahler tradition and the brilliance of the Berlioz-Bizet-Ravel tradition he compounded a blend that was strikingly individual and no less strikingly successful

In England, the choral tradition has always been strong and popular. But in the sixties and seventies of the century⁵ oratorios by fitful and overworked talents, feebly drawing on Gounod and Mendelssohn, were glutting the market. Stanford immeasurably raised the standard of the Anglican service but his oratorios are less important than his secular cantatas. Mackenzie did not follow up his lovely *Rose of Sharon* with other works as good. Parry, through the Wesleys, looked back for inspiration to the sturdy Handel, and some of his choral works have yet to be surpassed, but the long string of his oratorios and ethical cantatas weakened as it lengthened. Elgar did not make such a conscious effort as did these men to escape the debilitating atmosphere in which he grew up. Parts of *The Light of Life* succumb to it with no struggle, and so do the cantatas. What Elgar owed to Handel was not evident in his choral writing but, as he himself admitted, in the sonority of his strings. His gift to English oratorio was an orchestra, glowing and rich, illustrating, commenting upon and translating the text to a degree of sensuousness which Parry's puritanism would not have countenanced, in his own works at any rate. Elgar was the first composer successfully to transmit to oratorio the whole conception of Wagner's music-drama: detailed and consistent use of *leitmotiv*, continuity of texture, a chromatically bursting harmonic vocabulary, and an orchestra whose timbre was emotionally as important as the voices, if not more so. Attacking the problem from a new angle, Elgar revived English oratorio. That he should have been the man to do this was an odd quirk of fate. It is very tempting to guess that had he been born in any other country he would have written nothing but orchestral music - and we should have had no *Gerontius*. Since *Gerontius*, works like Holst's *Hymn of Jesus*, Vaughan Williams's *Sancta Civitas* and Walton's *Belshazzar's Feast* have given ample proof that English oratorio, though less prolific than then, has recovered from the malaise of the century⁶. That *Gerontius* is a masterpiece admits of no doubt, but *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* are a little less secure. They more than any other of his works seem dependent on a guiding hand, on the Elgar tradition of performance which is kept alive in these parts and at Croydon⁷. But it is one of the tests of immortality in a piece of music that it will bear several interpretations, if they are honest. This was remarkably demonstrated when Toscanini⁸ conducted *Enigma* over here in 1935. He approached the work with a free mind, unbiased by traditional associations. He made it sound different, but no less great. Luckily we still have people among us who have personal or closely inherited knowledge of how Elgar wanted *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* to sound, but I speculate whether when the time comes, as it must, when these oratorios have to be recreated on their own merits, how well they will stand up to it.

Elgar's method of thematic development is personal and not quite the same as that of the German masters in whose forms he mostly wrote. This was partly the result of a limitation; that he could not with conviction manipulate the motivic development that to the Germans is natural - *Froissart* shows him trying to do so with uncharacteristic results. It was partly the outcome of his rhapsodical poetic mind, and partly the outcome of his astonishing contrapuntal skill and fecundity.

5 19th century Eds

6 Ibid.

7 The oratorios were frequently performed by the Croydon Philharmonic Choir under the direction of its founder, Alan Kirby, who conducted the choir from 1914 to 1957. Elgar conducted the choir with the London Symphony Orchestra in *The Dream of Gerontius* on 10 November 1931 and *The Apostles*, with the same forces on 6 May 1933. Eds

8 Toscanini's 1935 recording of the *Variations* is available in a 4 CD box set from Music and Arts together with works by Beethoven, Brahms, Wagner and others Eds

Out of these three conditions arose a method of developing themes by allowing relationships between them to appear after the listener has accepted them as unconnected, which not only creates unity within the work but by enlarging their potentialities enriches the themes. Continually in his music one comes across fleeting references between themes, slight enough to tease the conscious mind, strong enough to satisfy the subconscious. In the symphonies, it is largely this poetic, allusive type of development that makes them so baffling and inconclusive to a listener who expects the more organic German style. It is in the First Symphony, however, that Elgar shows this method undisguised and in slow motion, where the theme of the *scherzo* is changed before our eyes into that for the slow movement. At its most tenuous it is seen in the Piano Quintet, where, in the strange ghostly development of the last movement, the *motto*-theme, one theme from the first and one from the last movement are placed side by side for an instant, just long enough for the relationship between the three to be discernible. Similarly in the Violin Concerto, two motifs from the first movement and one from the slow movement are stretched out in a continuous stream of melody at a point of climax, and seem to be basically related. The splendid integration of *Falstaff* is largely due to theme after theme being individually presented and later coupled up with another for here, as very often elsewhere, the relationship between themes is revealed to be contrapuntal. Towards the end of the same work there is introduced what seems to be a completely new theme; immediately the main 'Falstaff theme' is heard as a counterpoint to it. In the first movement of the First Symphony there is an apparently new and irrelevant theme in the development; and I do not believe it is possible to tell until the recapitulation that it is a counterpoint, a bass in fact, to the first subject. The M.S. sketch in the British Museum, by the way, makes it fairly clear that Elgar conceived this double theme as a whole, deliberately suppressed the bass in the exposition (using a simpler alternative), brought it in separately in the development, and united the two in the recapitulation. There is a most subtle and characteristic example of this type of development in the *Introduction and Allegro*, the work above all of Elgar's where his poetic thought and his formal presentation of it are indivisible. In the Introduction, after the opening *tutti*, the soloists foreshadow the main theme; as it descends its great curve, the lower strings have as a bass this seemingly unimportant phrase.



The fugal opening of the *Allegro* sets off as it were something quite new, but the solo quartet's first entry is that same phrase, serenely running over the new material, belonging to it as indubitably as to the Introduction. This is what I mean by the kind of development, both allusive and elusive, that is Elgar's own.

Such then were his historical innovations seen, as it were, from behind him in time. Not one is radical, nor do they add up to very much. Rather are they modifications of already existing ideas, ideas which he selected, assimilated and blended. In him met and crossed the German and French styles of orchestration, the Wagnerian operatic and the English oratorio traditions, the Viennese symphonic line and the English rhapsodical mind, to produce music of great individuality yet rooted in tradition. Let us admit that had Elgar never lived there would be no great gap in

the evolution of music. He was no seminal force like Wagner, like Debussy, or like Stravinsky. He smashed no idols; he set up no new gods. He does not qualify to be one of Tovey's I.H.F.s.⁹ For England he removed the danger that her succeeding composers might be aggressively self-conscious of their nationality, but he did not ruffle the main-stream of European music. His music is important for what it is, not for what it does. He was the repository of the traditions and inheritance of an age. One must now discount a good deal of what he wrote. The reversal of taste between the opening of this century¹⁰ and the present day has speeded up the sifting of the chaff from the grain in his output. Occasional music dates more quickly than any, and no-one wants to exhume such things as *The Crown of India*. The pre-Enigma works have a certain historical interest but then they have little else, and the same can be said of the songs with piano and the little salon pieces. But *Enigma* is no less fresh, *Gerontius* no less searching; the *Introduction and Allegro* is no less original and exquisite, the Symphonies no less overmastering, the Violin Concerto no less heart-warming, *Falstaff* no less engrossing, the Cello Concerto no less touching. These are works for the repertory of all time. This is great music.

There must be few people in these islands who could not recall some tune of Elgar's when his name is mentioned, be it 'Like to a Damask Rose', 'Land of Hope and Glory', the Welsh tune from the *Introduction and Allegro*, or 'Softly and Gently'. In a recent broadcast Michael Tippett commented on the increasing gap between composers and their audiences, deprecating the fact that composers depend more and more on a clique which alone can comprehend their message. Elgar addressed himself to the complete public. Some people may have disliked his music; there were few who could have failed to understand it, so adjusted was it to the temper of the age. In fact, it communicates so much that Elgar, besides being a composer for all time, is an interpreter of his period, and has an added value for that. Future historians with any ear for music will learn as much about the golden first decade of this century¹¹ by listening to the music Elgar produced during it as by studying any textbook; far more than they would learn, for instance, about the Vienna of the eighties and nineties¹² by listening to Brahms's symphonies.

But to suggest in any way that Elgar is a period piece is wilfully to misrepresent him. As long as English people live in England his music will be cherished. For whether he sings of Teme or Thames it is with the authentic voice of a people. Greater than this, his music lives because for it he tapped the basic experiences of human life; religious faith in *Gerontius*, a passionate conviction of the indestructibility of mankind in the symphonies, the tranquillity of nature in the *Introduction and Allegro*; and because he evokes an emotion which is utterly his own - that blend of exultation and elegy that, from even the early *Serenade* to the late Piano Quintet, informs his great slow movements.

Diana McVeagh after writing her first book on Elgar continued to write on the composer, and in 2007 published Elgar The Music Maker. She wrote the entries on Elgar and Finzi for the New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians, and the Finzi entry for the Oxford Dictionary of National Biography. In 2005 came her acclaimed Gerald Finzi: His Life and Music and her Gerald Finzi's Letters, 1915-1956 is due to be published in May 2021 by Boydell & Brewer Ltd.

9 Interesting Historical Figures (musical) whose music was little known at the time Eds

10 20th century Eds

11 Ibid.

12 1880s and 1890s Eds

Beau Brummel — a last word (possibly)

Robert Kay

INTRODUCTION

Journal readers¹ will recall the story of Elgar's lost incidental music for the play *Beau Brummel*. First performed in 1928 and staged in both England and South Africa, the music comprised an orchestral full score of considerable length. At some point between 1930 and Elgar's death in 1934 the bulk of the score disappeared without trace. As the music had not been published, this meant that with the loss of the manuscript score the music itself vanished into the ether.

In the years following Elgar's death various myths arose regarding the fate of the MS, most of which have now been proved to be erroneous. Searches made for the music were based on incomplete information and thus proved abortive. The only plausible explanation for the disappearance of the manuscript, based on all the currently available evidence and containing no inherent contradictions, suggests that either Elgar or his representatives saw a commercial opportunity for the music and gave the MS to an editor or arranger who then failed to return it.

The purpose of this article is twofold. Firstly, to give a summary of all the *Beau Brummel* material which still exists. Secondly, to recount one further 'lead' regarding the possible fate of the MS. This lead appears also to have been abortive, but still does not quite rule out the possibility that the complete score might one day rematerialise.

PART I

THE SURVIVING BEAU BRUMMEL MATERIAL — A CONSPECTUS

Although *Beau Brummel* is now considered the major 'lost work' within the Elgar canon, not all of it has been lost. Of the estimated 150-200 pages of original composer's orchestral score MS, fifteen pages do survive. There are also various subsidiary items, comprising the playscript, letters between Elgar and actor-manager Gerald Lawrence (who essentially commissioned the play and its music), newspaper reviews, the original version and the full-orchestra arrangement of the *Minuet*, and Elgar's preliminary musical sketches. Most of these have been appropriately documented. There are also further sketches which on investigation may relate to *Beau Brummel* but have not been formally identified as such.

1 *Elgar Society Journal* for December 2011 (pages 4 to 28), April 2016 (pages 17 to 23) and April 2019 (page 54).

1. The playscript

Although playwright Bertram P. Matthews enjoyed a certain amount of West End success prior to the Great War, none of his plays appears to have been published. *Beau Brummel* was no exception: Elgar was supplied with a copy of the playscript and the actors will have had their own copies, but these were probably duplicated from a typewritten original: nothing was ever printed. Elgar's personal copy of the playscript, which was one of the first two copies to have been produced,² was later lost or discarded and until recently it seemed that not only had the music disappeared, but the play itself – comprising four lengthy Acts – had also vanished.

In 2011, however, what is almost certainly the only remaining original copy of the playscript was discovered in an obscure recess of the British Library. Until 1968 it was necessary for plays to be submitted to the Lord Chamberlain's office for censorship approval prior to production. Surviving copies of these plays were transferred to the British Library in 1981, where they are currently held in a special 'Lord Chamberlain's Plays' [LCP] section and are available for perusal. *Beau Brummel* was among them, although its associated correspondence file was discovered to be empty.

Beau Brummel, held by the BL under reference LCP 1928/34, is in the form of a fairly scrappy document typed partly by Matthews himself and partly by Gerald Lawrence. At present it cannot easily be viewed, as only nineteenth-century LCP plays are available online from the BL. However, anyone interested in the play can download a newly-edited PDF of the entire playscript, together with an editorial introduction by the present writer, from the Acuta Music website.³

2. Correspondence and reviews

The letters written by Gerald Lawrence to Elgar have been held in the Elgar Birthplace archive for many years. These letters provide valuable insights into the genesis of the play, its subsequent modification during the performance runs and the creators' views of the drama itself. Lawrence's letters from South Africa are particularly revealing as to the problems encountered with the local musicians.

The letters from Elgar to Lawrence were believed to have been lost. However, shortly before his death in 1957 Lawrence had given the letters to his daughter (the well-known actress Joyce Carey). On Carey's death in 1993 her entire Estate was left to a theatrical charity, which in 1999 sold the *Beau Brummel* letters to the Elgar Foundation. These letters were then amalgamated with the other items at the Elgar Birthplace. Some deal with fairly mundane matters but Elgar's penultimate letter to Lawrence, dated 7 June 1930, gives the lie to the long-held belief that Lawrence made off with the orchestral score – it is evident from this letter that the score was not at this time in Lawrence's possession.

Details of all the *Beau Brummel* correspondence can be found in the Elgar Birthplace database. The originals themselves have recently been transferred to the British Library, although the Birthplace still possesses scanned copies.

2 Gerald Lawrence to Elgar 30 May 1928: 'Do please keep the script as long as you want it. My other copy is in Birmingham awaiting the verdict of the Managing Director of the Royal Theatre.' (Elgar Birthplace item L 5743).

3 <http://www.acutamusic.co.uk/> which in addition to a freely downloadable PDF of the playscript, with editorial preface, also contains a further downloadable memo giving full details of the *Brummel* performances (dates, venues), some further information about Gerald Lawrence and the South Africa tour, plus dates of all the *Brummel* newspaper reviews both at home and abroad.

There was extensive newspaper coverage of the First Night in Birmingham and a considerable mention in the provincial UK and South African press of the later performances. These reviews make it quite clear that Elgar's music was very extensive and was of high quality.

Most of the newspaper material, UK and overseas, relating to *Beau Brummel* can be found in newspaper hard copy and microfilms held at the British Library, or via the British Newspaper Archive online. Excerpts from these press reviews also feature in the preface to the transcribed playscript PDF mentioned above.

3. The 'Concert' Minuet full score

Shortly before the Birmingham première of *Beau Brummel* Elgar decided to publish one of its musical numbers – the *Minuet* from the end of the first Act – so that it could provide the play with some extra publicity. The *Minuet* was rescored for a larger orchestra for concert performance and immediately entered the repertoire as a respected piece of Elgar light music. As such it kept *Beau Brummel* from being forgotten completely.

This 'Concert' version of the *Minuet* was recorded twice, with the composer conducting. The first recording, on 19 December 1928, was felt by Elgar to be 'too heavy'⁴ but as the intention was to provide the play with some extra exposure during its run the performance was issued anyway. A later recording, more satisfactory in all respects and incorporating a few minor changes to the scoring, was made on 4 November 1929 but was not released until the 1970s.

The autograph score of the full-orchestra *Minuet* is currently held at the British Library under the reference Add.MS 52535.

4. The original 'Stage' Minuet full score

More interesting is the score of the *Minuet* forming part of the lost stage music. The survival of this fragment, comprising fifteen pages of the original score numbered 50 to 64, from Act 1 of the play, is a crucial element in the *Beau Brummel* saga. Without its rediscovery it is most unlikely that any coherent theory regarding *Beau Brummel*'s disappearance could ever have been formulated.

In the late 1920s Elgar was befriended by a local musician, Isaiah Burnell (1871-1959). Letters from Elgar to Burnell reveal that Elgar valued the latter's support highly. After Elgar died, his daughter Carice sent Burnell Elgar's music carrying-case as a keepsake, but Burnell then wrote to Carice stating that he did not possess any examples of Elgar's musical handwriting and would appreciate a piece of music manuscript if one were available.⁵

The *Minuet* fragment must then have been handed to Burnell by Carice as a gift. In 2006, following the death of Burnell's daughter, it was rediscovered among a pile of manuscripts, published items and primitive music-typewriter sheets comprising some of Burnell's own compositions.⁶

4 Elgar Letters Book item 260.

5 See *Elgar Society Journal* April 2016 page 19.

6 The Burnell family actually believed the *Minuet* to have been a composition by Burnell himself (understandable, as the remainder of the pile did indeed consist of Burnell's own works). Elgarians owe the manuscripts expert who examined the Burnell cache, John Wilson of Cheltenham, a debt of gratitude for his having been sufficiently sharp-eyed to single out the *Minuet* fragment as an Elgar item — otherwise (Burnell *per se* not being of particular interest to musicologists or collectors) the whole lot might have been shredded.

The original 'Stage' *Minuet* is scored for a smaller orchestra than the later version and has a different ending. Nevertheless, when the MS fragment was offered for sale, the British Library turned it down⁷ on the grounds that they already possessed the MS of the 'Concert' version. Here the BL missed a trick: at that juncture they did not realise that the two *Minuet* versions were different items and that the reappearance of the 'Stage' fragment was crucial to any attempts to unravel the *Beau Brummel* mystery. After being offered to Elgarians abroad, the 'Stage' fragment was eventually sold to a manuscripts collector in the UK.

Although they failed to purchase the 'Stage' MS the BL did later accept a number of letters from Elgar to Burnell for their archive. These do not contain any information pertinent to *Beau Brummel*. The BL also acquired the Burnell compositions found with the *Brummel* fragment.⁸

5. Preliminary sketches — fully documented

Upon Elgar's death Carice became owner of all his musical manuscripts and when Carice died in 1970 she left these to the British Library. Some manuscripts had been given away by Elgar to third parties, but the bulk of them remained his property and as a result the BL became the world's major repository of Elgar MS materials.

In addition to completed works the British Library Elgar archive also contains a large number of rough sketches, some of which are identified as preliminary work for *Beau Brummel*. Most of these sketches, which range in length from single-bar, single-line scraps to harmonised passages of some length, are contained in BL files ref. Add.MS 49974B and 49974C.

In some sketches themes can be identified as relating to specific characters in *Beau Brummel*: labelled 'with Mortimer', 'Highway [-men]', 'Regent'. There are two quite lengthy (seventeen bars each) passages from Act 4: one identified as the 'Intro' and another extremely chromatic segment which possibly represents Brummel's gradual descent into dementia. Other items can be found in the Elgar Birthplace archive, including one labelled 'Harding' (the play's chief villain).

These various items have been fully documented and transcribed by Christopher Kent and David Lloyd-Jones and the music can be seen in their respective books.⁹ Kent sometimes gives only the first few bars of each sketch: *ECE 21* gives the sketches transcribed in full.

These sketches are, alas, not of sufficient length to be used in performance. In addition many are extremely untidy with numerous crossings-out, alterations and ambiguities. Nevertheless, some carry the blue 'K' (for 'Koppid' (sic)) customarily marked by Elgar on sketches which had been copied into full score – so however chaotic they appear, they were evidently adequate *aides-memoire* for Elgar's purposes.

6. Preliminary sketches — other

In addition to the sketches described in the previous section there exist some items, both in the BL and elsewhere, which could well belong to *Beau Brummel* even though not specifically identified as such.

7 Conversation between the author and BL Manuscripts Department staff, July 2011.

8 Burnell letters and music MSS originally filed in the BL collection under reference Deposit 2012/22.

9 Christopher Kent: *Edward Elgar, A Thematic Catalogue and Research Guide* (London 2013) pages 385 to 387, David Lloyd-Jones (ed.): *Elgar Complete Edition Vol. 21* (London 2012) Appendix.

The first of these should really have been picked up at the time. Percy Young's book *Elgar O.M.* contains a detailed description of the sketches for *The Spanish Lady*. One of these¹⁰ (item 13 in Young's list) is headed 'Bagwig, Groombridge, Bannister (rowdy)'. Young was evidently unaware that these are three characters from *Beau Brummel*. The music probably accompanied their first entry onstage in Act 1 (when they are already the worse for drink).

The point of great interest about this page is, firstly, that by virtue of the heading it can unequivocally be identified as *Brummel* material and, secondly, that it is written on an unusual format of music manuscript paper (eighteen-stave, double sided) which is rarely seen in Elgar sketches, but is of the type of paper used for most of the pages of the surviving 'Stage' *Minuet* fragment. In addition, the top of the page has been cut away so any title is missing. It is almost as if Elgar had wished to conceal the music's origins, as he did with certain sketches for Symphony No.3.¹¹

This eighteen-stave MS paper – with some of the sheets lacking their top edges – appears in a few other *Spanish Lady* sketches so one might presume these also to be *Brummel* material, recycled. There is in the *Spanish Lady* file an extensive (fifteen bars) theme for solo 'cello entitled 'G. Lawrence Brummel motif suggested', so Lawrence himself might in this case have been the composer (he was a violinist and minor composer in his own right). Finally, three pages of sketches¹² – also with tops removed – are written on the same format of pre-printed (with instrument names) MS paper as is used for certain pages of the *Minuet* 'Stage' score fragment.

Isaiah Burnell was not the only Elgar admirer to whom Carice sent memorial keepsakes, and the Elgar Birthplace archive contains many letters of thanks from the recipients. One was Mary Coke of Holkham, Norfolk. Her father, the 4th Earl of Leicester, had originally written to Elgar in 1933¹³ on behalf of his daughter, asking for a signed photograph. There is no indication as to whether this request was ever followed up, but after Elgar's death Carice sent Mary¹⁴ a fair copy, in Elgar's hand, of one of the *Beau Brummel* sketch items now found in the British Library — a sixteen-bar sketch headed 'Regent' whose pompous march tune doubtless accompanied the portly Regent's first appearance on stage.¹⁵

This *Brummel* fragment was left on Mary Coke's death to her first-cousin-once-removed, Edward Coke, 7th Earl of Leicester. He later gave the manuscript to the pianist Julius Drake, who was a personal friend – but not before composer Robert Walker (of 'Elgar Piano Concerto' fame) had made an arrangement of these sixteen bars for piano and strings.¹⁶

10 BL file Add.MS 71128 folio 21.

11 *Arthur* material transcribed verbatim onto fresh MS paper and labelled 'Sym. III'.

12 Add.MS 71129 folios 152-154. Folios 86 and 87, on 12-stave MS paper, are also missing their tops: they seem to be a continuation of the 'Mortimer' theme featured in the 'official' sketches.

13 Lord Coke to Elgar 19 April 1933 Elgar birthplace ref. L 4279.

14 Letter of thanks from 'Coke' (4th Earl) to Carice 12 Aug. [1934] Elgar Birthplace ref. L 10450.

15 BL item Add.MS 49974B folio 15. In the key of C (folio 17 contains the identical music in E flat).

16 Letter to the author from Edward, 7th Earl of Leicester, 7 June 2013.

7. Impressions That Remain

So *Beau Brummel* has not entirely vanished. The playscript exists, can be downloaded and can be perused by interested parties who – if they wish also to sample the newspaper reviews – can get a reasonable idea of the way Elgar’s music interacted with and enhanced the drama. The *Minuet* survives, and the additional sketches, although fragmentary and unperformable, bear out the newspaper reporters’ opinion that the music was resourceful and varied. The dyed-in-the-wool *Beau Brummel* tragic could, if he so wished, go to the Opera House, Tunbridge Wells (now a pub, but with the original interior sumptuously restored) and, drink in hand, imagine himself to be Bertram P. Matthews in 1929, seeing his own play for the first (and last) time in his local theatre.¹⁷

The only pity is that circumstances have denied to Elgarians the experience of seeing the play accompanied by its music.

PART II

A NEW SUGGESTION AS TO BEAU BRUMMEL’S DISAPPEARANCE

Following *Beau Brummel*’s stage run in 1928-9 and Gerald Lawrence’s subsequent failure to secure a West End run, the play and its music dropped completely from sight. Later reference books mentioned the first performance in Birmingham and the fact that the music had been well received, but none expressed curiosity that the music had subsequently vanished. Elgarians held to the theory that Lawrence had kept the full score for his own purposes. But this theory was based on nothing more than surmise and prejudice.

The first person to have realised that the absence of *Beau Brummel* was worth investigating was Jerrold Northrop Moore, who made a serious attempt in the early 1970s to locate the music. Unfortunately, not realising that the play subsequently went on tour, Moore concentrated solely on Birmingham, so his attempts were doomed to failure. But at least Moore appreciated that there was more to *Beau Brummel* than the *Minuet*.

There matters rested until 2006, when the reappearance of the ‘Stage’ *Minuet* fragment reignited the whole question of the continuing absence of *Beau Brummel*. This event discredited the long-held view that Gerald Lawrence had dishonestly made off with the musical materials. Further research revealed that it was most unlikely that Lawrence had ever been in possession of the full score at all. So the possibility arose that Elgar himself had handed over the score to a third party, but had carelessly omitted to document the fact.

The initial theory

The verifiable facts about *Beau Brummel* are as follows:

- The music consisted of much more than the *Minuet* alone, and in all four Acts of the play was sufficiently memorable to have received specific mention in newspaper reviews,
- Based on the pagination of the *Minuet* fragment, the manuscript orchestral full score may have been as much as 200 pages long,
- Of these (say) 200 pages, all but fifteen (which contain the *Minuet*, but nothing else) have vanished without trace,

¹⁷ Matthews’ presence at the Opera House was noted in the *Kent & Sussex Courier* newspaper review (1 February 1929) of the Tunbridge Wells First Night.

- In mid-1930 Elgar was not in physical possession of the orchestral score MS, which appears to have remained in the hands of the proofreader of the orchestral parts used in the original stage performances,
- The *Minuet* pages were given, after Elgar’s death, by Carice to Isaiah Burnell who had requested a memorial keepsake.

These facts lead to certain conclusions:

- (i) Although Elgar did not have the score in 1930 it must subsequently have been returned to him (otherwise the *Minuet* fragment could not have been in Carice’s possession).
- (ii) Carice would not have deliberately broken up a complete score. At the time she gave the *Minuet* fragment to Burnell it must have been the only part of the original MS remaining in her possession (otherwise she would have made efforts to track down the remaining pages and re-combine them).
- (iii) Carice must have known what had happened to the rest of the score and been aware that of all the *Beau Brummel* music, the *Minuet* alone had no further usefulness, having already been published.

It would not have been necessary to separate out the *Minuet* fragment if Elgar had given the manuscript away as a personal gift to a friend or admirer. The separation of the *Minuet* implies firstly, that the manuscript was given away for a commercial purpose (such as publication) rather than for personal reasons; secondly, that this action must have occurred after Elgar had severed his connection with Elkin’s, the publishers of the *Minuet* (Elkin’s would have been quite happy to incorporate the *Minuet*, their publishing property, into a new and potentially profitable context). This severance occurred in mid-1930.

‘Commercial Purpose’

Although the various arrangements of the *Minuet* immediately achieved wide popularity, Elgar had always intended to make further use of the *Beau Brummel* music. At the time of the *Minuet*’s publication he had mentioned the possibility of a *Beau Brummel Suite* to his then publishers Elkin’s.¹⁸ But nothing was done, and in July 1930 Elgar signed a new exclusive publishing contract with Keith Prowse Ltd. and Elkin’s chance was lost.

In the April 2016 *Elgar Society Journal* it was suggested that if the *Beau Brummel* MS had indeed been loaned for commercial use, the most likely possibility was that it had been given to Keith Prowse Ltd., for them to do what Elkin’s had not: compile a Suite out of the remaining music.

There are, however, certain objections to this theory. A *Beau Brummel Suite* would have sounded incomplete without the *Minuet*, its best-known component. The staff at Keith Prowse were efficient at documenting their dealings with Elgar – yet no written evidence exists as to whether they ever negotiated regarding *Beau Brummel*. Finally, if Keith Prowse had been handed the *Beau Brummel* MS, there is a reasonable chance that they would have published it.¹⁹

¹⁸ W. Elkin to Elgar 15 November 1928: ‘I hope later on you will let us have the Suite which you said you would make.’ Quoted in Moore, *Elgar And his Publishers* (Oxford 1987) Vol. 2 page 857.

¹⁹ Being incidental music and thus in essence ‘light music’ *Brummel* would have been a much better selling proposition than *The Severn Suite*, which Prowse did admittedly fail to publish. See *Elgar Society Journal* December 2013 page 19 footnote 42.

So the question arises as to whether there could, based on existing evidence, have been any other reason why the *Beau Brummel* MS might have been handed over. One possibility immediately springs to mind.

In early October 1933 Elgar was commissioned by a film company called Sound City²⁰ to write music for a film entitled *Colonel Blood*. A contract was signed and an initial fee of £100 paid. Unfortunately a few days later Elgar entered hospital, where his terminal illness was diagnosed. Elgar never wrote any more music and the film score project was never followed up.

A film score is as plausible a ‘commercial purpose’ for the *Beau Brummel* music as would have been the compilation of a *Suite*. But when Elgar realised that his state of health precluded further composition he was left in an awkward position regarding the fee. In fact one could imagine the following deathbed scenario:

- CARICE (*concerned*) Father, what are we going to do about this film score? Sound City has paid you a commissioning fee and if you cannot write the music we will have to repay it. £100 is a lot of money.
- ELGAR (*resigned*) Sorry, Chuck, I don’t see myself being able to write any music in the near future. If Sound City needs the score finished urgently we will just have to ask them to engage another composer.
- CARICE (*intense*) But Father, we also have been paid £1000 by the BBC for your new symphony, and that is nowhere near completion. If you cannot finish that either I don’t see how we can afford to repay these amounts.
- ELGAR (*hoists himself painfully on one elbow*) I don’t know about the BBC, but here is what we’ll do with Sound City. Pass me the *Beau Brummel* score from that shelf (*CARICE does so. ELGAR leafs through it*). Take out pages 50 to 64. Those contain the *Minuet* and Sound City cannot use that music – it belongs to Elkin’s. Send the rest of the score to Sound City and ask them whether they will let us off the £100 if they can use the *Beau Brummel* music in *Colonel Blood*.

CARICE removes pages 50 to 64, containing the Minuet, from the stage score and puts them back on the shelf. She sends the rest of the score to Keith Prowse and it is then passed on to Sound City, which agrees not to pursue repayment of the £100. The score is then given to a film composer named Colin Wark for a decision as to whether any of its music can be used in Colonel Blood. In the event, Wark concludes that the Beau Brummel music is not suitable and is subsequently engaged by Sound City to write the Colonel Blood score himself.

Pages 50 to 64 remain on the shelf until mid-1934, when Isaiah Burnell writes Carice a letter containing a heavy hint that he would like a manuscript souvenir of Elgar. Carice, knowing that the Minuet has already been published and so the MS containing it is of no further use, also that the remainder of the Beau Brummel score has gone to Sound City, gives Burnell pages 50 to 64. Subsequently Sound City omits to return the rest of the Brummel score to Keith Prowse and Carice forgets to ask for it back. Pages 50 to 64 resurface in 2006.

20 See Moore *op. cit.* page 917. ‘Sound City’ was the trading name of Sound Film Producing and Recording Studios, based at Shepperton. Keith Prowse’s letter to Elgar only mentions ‘The Film Company’ without naming Sound City explicitly. This letter also contains the suggestive phrase ‘the use of this music for this film’ (rather than *the music*) as if the music referred to might have been already composed.

Psychology and money

The foregoing dialogue between Elgar and Carice is of course entirely fanciful, but it proposes a realistic alternative suggestion as to how and why *Beau Brummel* could have vanished. The question is whether the Sound City theory is any more credible than that of Keith Prowse having received the score and failing to publish it.

Firstly, the personnel at Keith Prowse were punctilious in their dealings with Elgar. For KP not to have acknowledged receipt of a manuscript for publication seems uncharacteristic. On the other hand, if Sound City had been given the MS, Keith Prowse would have acted only as intermediaries and the onus would have been on Sound City to document matters.

Secondly, Elgar may indeed have been in a position of some financial embarrassment. His Will was proved in the relatively modest amount of £13,000 gross, £9,000 net – implying £4,000-worth of immediately identifiable debts of which the £1,100 mentioned above would have formed a significant portion (Estate Duty amounted to only £457).²¹ If the £9,000 remaining net assets had then consisted primarily of Elgar’s house and possessions plus the Probate value of his manuscripts and of his future royalty expectations, it is not unlikely that Elgar was by that stage, in cash terms, insolvent. Elgar’s house was put up for sale almost immediately after his demise,²² presumably to generate cash to meet his Estate’s debt obligations. Ironically, shortly afterwards the Symphony No.3 problem was resolved without any money changing hands.²³

To put oneself into the position of Carice at this time, if Keith Prowse had been given the *Beau Brummel* MS with a view to publication, that would have represented an additional source of future income. In this case Carice would have been anxious to ensure that this project was completed and there would surely be letters in the file to document this. On the other hand, if Sound City had been sent *Beau Brummel* and agreed to waive repayment of their £100 fee, Carice may well have been reluctant to rock the boat by demanding the MS back. She may not even have realised that Sound City had only bought rights to the music, not to the physical (paper) manuscript itself.²⁴

Colonel Blood and Colin Wark

Online searches do not reveal any video material (or for that matter, stills) from *Colonel Blood*, and it would initially appear to have joined the many films of its era for which there is only indirect evidence such as dictionary entries and plot summaries. But *Colonel Blood* does survive in

21 See Brian Harvey, *Elgar’s Will: further enigmas* in the July 2010 issue of *Elgar Society Journal*.

22 Letter from Carice to Ernest Newman 28 May 1934, mentioning that Marl Bank was for sale (Elgar Birthplace ref. L 9832).

23 The full fee for Symphony No.3 was agreed with the BBC at £2,000, half up-front and half on completion (draft contract 9 November 1932). Before Elgar died (BBC Director-General memo 2 March 1934) he had apparently already agreed to return the £1,000 advance, but his solicitors Field, Roscoe & Co. later argued that Elgar’s death had ‘completely determined’ the contract and so no repayment was appropriate (letter to BBC 29 June 1934, BBC agree 20 July). Carice did, however, then donate the Symphony No.3 sketches to the BBC anyway (memo 20 July 1934) on condition that they were never published (!). (BBC Written Archives, Caversham)

24 The film contract (see Moore *op. cit.* page 917) only conferred on Sound City the right to use Elgar’s music in *Colonel Blood*. Any manuscript would have remained at all times the legal property of the composer even if rights to exploitation of the music contained in that manuscript had been assigned elsewhere.

fragmentary form. The British Film Institute holds various copies of the film material but these are all in exceptionally poor condition with only about 40 minutes of the total duration of 98 minutes, all from the first reel of the film, being viewable at all. However, within those 40 minutes the soundtrack (including music) is clearly audible.

Like Bertram P. Matthews' *Beau Brummel*, *Colonel Blood* was based on the exploits of a real historical character. Col. Thomas Blood (1618-1680) was an Irish militiaman and revolutionary who in 1671 attempted to steal the English Crown Jewels from the Tower of London. Unlike Matthews' Brummel, however, Blood came off the winner in his dealings with the Royal Family: his charm was sufficient to persuade King Charles II to grant him a Royal Pardon.

There are certain parallels between *Beau Brummel* and *Colonel Blood* – in *Brummel* the leading character ingratiates himself with a member of the Royal Family (the Prince Regent, later King George IV) and then later falls out of favour with disastrous consequences – in *Colonel Blood* the disaster happens first (Blood's crime and arrest) and the ingratiation later (with consequences equivalently pleasant). Both are set in historical times when a certain amount of courtliness was not inappropriate (Blood is portrayed in the film as being gallant as well as a scoundrel: Brummel's gallantry and unselfishness ultimately contribute to his downfall). So the idea of the *Brummel* music being suitable for *Colonel Blood* is not totally far-fetched.

Colonel Blood was released in late 1934 with a musical soundtrack credited in the opening titles to Colin Wark and Charles Cowlrick. Some further information regarding *Colonel Blood* and its full cast and personnel, in some cases also mentioning the Elgar connection, can be found on various film-buff websites including IMDb and BFI.

The man who ultimately composed the *Colonel Blood* score, Colin Wark, was extremely active in the 1930s as composer and musical director for a number of film companies. Wark died prematurely in 1939 at the age of 41. Again, some information about his career (including the fact that he married Vi Kearney, a dancer who appears in one of the films for which he directed the music²⁵) can be found online. The British Library sheet music collection contains several Wark compositions, some in the form of arrangements for orchestra by Charles Cowlrick. So it is likely that for *Colonel Blood* Wark composed the music and Cowlrick acted as orchestrator.

A promising cul-de-sac

As explained in Part I of this article, *Beau Brummel* has not disappeared entirely. Various sketch fragments remain and while these consist mainly of scraps comprising only a few bars each, they nevertheless contain identifiable themes even if these are too brief ever to be salvageable for performance.

If *Colonel Blood* had indeed been the reason why the *Beau Brummel* score had been handed over, one way to check this would be to ascertain if there were any echoes of the British Library sketch themes in the film soundtrack. If these were present the theory would be proved conclusively – although their absence would not necessarily disprove it. So to check the theory it was necessary to view the surviving fragments of the film²⁶ and then to follow the music soundtrack carefully with

25 Review 15 August 2006 on the IMDb website by Colin Wark's son David of the film *Say It With Flowers* (1934). Kearney's performance can be viewed on YouTube. Online genealogy sites give Colin Wark's spouse as Florence V. Stubbs: the middle name of Violet presumably suggested part of Kearney's stage name.

26 Digitised version of the useable portions of *Colonel Blood* viewed by the author at the British Film Institute, 11 February 2020.

BL sketch transcriptions in hand.

Unfortunately, when one hears *Colonel Blood*, at no point is there a recognisable quote from the surviving *Beau Brummel* material. There is in any case not a great deal of music: a martial title theme which recurs several times in the opening scenes, a sinister ostinato which accompanies Blood's stealthy attempts to make off with the jewels, a bit of pipe-and-tabor (not from *Falstaff!*) in a pub and some rather indistinct crowd music near the end of the reel, at the point at which Blood is consigned to prison. As only the first film reel is now viewable, one cannot know what music accompanied Blood's later dealings with the King and his eventual pardon. Wark's music, although entirely conventional, is slightly more modernistic as regards sound and harmony than one might have expected from Elgar.

It would therefore seem that the investigation of *Colonel Blood* in connection with the *Beau Brummel* mystery results in a dead-end. It does not appear that the *Brummel* music was used in *Colonel Blood*, and no direct evidence exists even that the *Brummel* MS was ever handed to Sound City.

But this is not necessarily the last word on the matter. Merely to identify Sound City as a possible recipient of the *Brummel* score does open up a new line of enquiry.

The question of ownership

It must be reluctantly acknowledged that if the *Brummel* MS was given to Sound City, it is now virtually certain to have been lost or thrown away. Film music is essentially ephemeral – it is only relevant to the film it accompanies – and many film score MSS, even by leading composers such as Britten, Vaughan Williams, Rawsthorne etc., no longer exist. Even if the MS had been returned to an office shelf the normal bureaucratic processes of office clear-out or company takeover would have put its further existence at risk – as indeed happened with *The Severn Suite*.²⁷

The only lifeline would be if the *Beau Brummel* score had been passed to an independent individual for further work: for example if Colin Wark had been given the *Beau Brummel* score for evaluation and decided that the music was not suitable, but then failed to return the MS to Sound City. In such a case the MS might have remained with Wark or Cowlrick or another of Sound City's musical contacts. Similarly if the MS had been handed to Keith Prowse Ltd. for editing into a Suite, the chances for its survival today might be slightly better if the score had been handed over to a freelance editor.

But if the remainder of the *Beau Brummel* orchestral MS full score does still survive, and if it turns up in the hands of an individual, the irony is that it will almost certainly not be that person's legal property. Even were the score found to be residing in the Sound City archives the question of ownership would be debatable. There is no suggestion here of any criminal intent, but just as the orchestral score of *The Severn Suite* turned up in 2010 in the hands of descendants of an employee of Keith Prowse Ltd. – a man who had no personal connection with Elgar and therefore could not be argued to have been gifted the MS – so the *Beau Brummel* MS would in similar circumstances be the legal property not of its possessor, but of Elgar's heirs and assigns. Who in this case would be, as was successfully contended in the case of *The Severn Suite*, the British Library. Only when the *Minuet* fifteen-page fragment was personally gifted to its subsequent owner by Carice herself, following Elgar's death, did legal ownership of this manuscript fragment transfer to its grateful recipient.

27 See *Elgar Society Journal* December 2013 page 19.

CONCLUSION

Every rationalist subscribes to the principle of cause and effect. With the disappearance of *Beau Brummel* it is important to keep this principle actively in mind.

Beau Brummel has vanished (the effect) and some person or persons did something, in the real world, which precipitated this (the cause). If one could imagine witnessing the fateful moment on that day when action was taken which unknowingly consigned *Beau Brummel* to oblivion, then it would be seen that whoever took that action (Elgar? Carice? Keith Prowse? Sound City?) did so for reasons and motives which seemed at that moment to have been eminently sensible and logical. If one approaches the available facts with sufficient rigour and eliminates any theories which give rise to contradictions, one may possibly arrive at some idea as to how those well-intentioned actions, reasons and motives conspired to produce a most undesirable result.

As set out in earlier issues of this *Journal*, one can put forward a number of theories as to what happened, but most of these founder after consideration of the full facts. The only explanation for the disappearance of the MS full score (as opposed to the copied orchestral parts used in the theatre, which Gerald Lawrence must have jettisoned at some point) which stands up, without contradictions, to logical scrutiny based on all the known facts, is the 'commercial purpose'. The foregoing paragraphs put up an additional suggestion as to what this 'commercial purpose' might have been.

The author is not insisting dogmatically that Sound City must have been the recipient of the *Beau Brummel* score. But on due reflection he sees this as a more likely scenario than Keith Prowse being given the MS for editing into a Suite, failing to publish the music (or, for that matter, even acknowledging its receipt) and then contriving to lose it. The Sound City option – even allowing for the fact that the *Brummel* music was not ultimately used in *Colonel Blood* – is another perfectly *bona fide* 'commercial purpose' but also has the necessary qualities of improvisation, incompleteness and unofficial action taken at a time right at the end of Elgar's life, when his family must have been in considerable confusion and distress. In such circumstances errors and omissions by parties known or unknown would have been more likely to occur. The massive blunder of losing the *Beau Brummel* manuscript was one of these.

Whether the *Beau Brummel* MS ultimately ended up in the hands of any individual (employee or editor) and by some incredible stroke of good fortune may still survive today, must remain an open question – one which does not yawn wide but which is, in the author's opinion, still slightly ajar.

Acknowledgements to Christopher Bennett (Elgar Birthplace) and Kathleen Dickson (British Film Institute) for helpful assistance.

Robert Kay is a proprietor of Acuta Music, which publishes orchestral and instrumental music from Elgar's final compositional period (including both versions of the Beau Brummel Minuet). In his Elgar Society Journal articles of December 2011 and April 2016 Robert set out all the hitherto unknown facts about the Beau Brummel play and its lost music and put forward suggested explanations as to the fate of Elgar's manuscript. With this present article Robert now feels that the argument has probably been taken as far as is possible, based on existing evidence.

BOOK REVIEW

GRANVILLE BANTOCK (1868-1946)

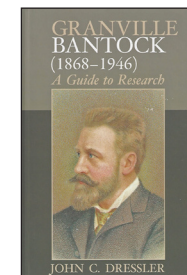
A Guide to research

John C. Dressler

John Dressler is Professor of Music at Murray State University in Kentucky. Yet again we in Britain are indebted to an American academic for shining light into one of our musical recesses with the completion of this book, which is published by Clemson University, South Carolina. Professor Dressler pays a charming tribute to the late Stewart Craggs whose *Edward Elgar – A Source Book* remains invaluable. Dressler dedicates the book to both Craggs and Lewis Foreman, who probably knows more about Bantock than anyone. Sir Granville Bantock was, of course, a friend and supporter of Elgar and it was Bantock who came to Elgar's rescue after his increasing difficulties with his position as Peyton Professor at Birmingham. Bantock was appointed Principal of the Birmingham School of Music in 1908, later becoming a Professor there. In 1911, Bantock's newly revised tone poem *Dante and Beatrice* concluded the concert which saw the premiere of Elgar's E flat Symphony.

Bantock was a phenomenon: the number of his original compositions is vast, as this book demonstrates, as are the arrangements of music by others, his correspondence and ephemera. That his music is so little performed is another phenomenon, which this book does not attempt to answer for it is *A Guide to Research*. It is not a critical biography, more a catalogue raisonné, and will be of interest to all those interested in the byways of British musical life. Those seeking out those byways during Elgar's lifetime will find that this invaluable book is divided into three distinct sections with a Biographical Sketch and substantial index. The amount of music composed by Bantock that remains unpublished is extraordinary and rather sad as is the amount of music subsequently lost. The sections are: 1. Works and Performance, 2. Discography, 3. Select Bibliography. Part One is further divided into many sub-sections such as Large Choral Works with or without Orchestra, Stage Works and Incidental Music etc. Part 2 includes all commercial recordings of Bantock from acoustics, through those valuable Paxton recordings made at a time when Bantock's music was possibly at an even lower ebb than it is now, to the Hyperion releases and beyond. Part 3 includes sections on Bantock's writings, files at the Jerwood Library and BBC and a list of Obituaries of Bantock.

Perhaps the problem (and I believe there is a problem) with Bantock lies in the enormous amount of music he composed. He seems to have lacked discrimination (he was no Duparc or Sibelius) but Lewis Foreman points out in his comprehensive notes for the Lyrita release of *Omar Khayyám* that Bantock had an unique compositional style as reported in an interview for *Pall Mall Magazine* in October 1912: '...the truth is that I compose to please myself. The impulse to create music is upon me and I write to satisfy my impulse. When I have written the work, I have done with it. I do not



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want to hear it. What I do desire on the completion of a work, is to begin to enjoy myself by writing something else'. This is what he was and the way he composed. Those works that have stayed the course, such as his Overture *Pierrot of the Minute* and tone poem *Fifine at the Fair* demonstrate Bantock's flair and imagination at its best. On the other hand his two unaccompanied choral symphonies *Atalanta in Calydon* and *Vanity of Vanities*, although extraordinary achievements, in my view suffer from his inability to be self-critical and end up sounding prolix and rather overstay their welcome.

When Hyperion began issuing their splendid recordings of Bantock's orchestral music, conducted by Vernon Handley, his advocacy led to some live performances such as the *Hebridean* and *Celtic* Symphonies; notwithstanding the Wagnerian orchestral demands that required six harps for the latter work. The sound, as they 'charge' into the limelight, is vividly compelling. A brilliant orchestrator, perhaps as brilliant as Wagner or Richard Strauss, Bantock seems to have none of the melodic invention or imagination of these great composers or rather his compositional method meant he did not revise his music and tighten it up, cut passages and generally consider how the completed work 'would go'. His advocacy of Sibelius must have led him to consider the great symphonist's compositional methods and Sibelius's revision of his Fifth Symphony alone in 1916 is an example to anyone who has self-doubts. Perhaps Bantock had no such qualms, as the interview above suggests!

Works by Bantock that remain in the mind, such as the *Hebridean* and *Celtic* Symphonies contain substantial re-workings of folk tunes. As Handley's recordings of Bantock's orchestral music emerged I hoped to rekindle the excitement that engulfed me when I first encountered Elgar and his music and that of so many other composers who have, since, become part of my life. Sadly this was to no avail. I can recall Handley trying to convince me of the merits of *Omar Kahyyám*, the two recordings of which I find I possess. Neither have done anything to redeem what I consider their inherent dullness and lack of invention. There are moments that attract but it is no doubt a reflection on my poor taste that I find this a work largely of great tedium. I sit waiting for something magical to surprise me, something really memorable to occur but I remain disappointed. I say this with the greatest respect to the memory of my old friend Michael Pope whose advocacy, whilst at the BBC, eventually enabled what many consider to be Bantock's 'masterpiece' to be broadcast. In his notes for the Lyrita release, Lewis Foreman rightly pays tribute to Michael and his Herculean efforts to enable listeners to hear *Omar Kahyyám* on 26 March 1979.

One of the greatest contributions Bantock made to music was his championship of the music of Sibelius, who dedicated his Third Symphony to him. In a small way, this dedication will always keep Bantock's name before the public and perhaps stimulate the performance of some of his music that has remained undisturbed for so long. This well-researched book will, at least, enable all those who wish to right a wrong to discover what works might be performed and which will not bankrupt the performers in the process!

Andrew Neill

CD REVIEWS

Sir John Barbirolli; The Complete Warner Recordings

Sir John Barbirolli, CH (1899-1970)

'I think he must be the finest conductor in the world'

When the news of the death of Sir John Barbirolli reached Berlin, the headline in that City's most prominent newspaper read: 'The hearts of the Berlin Philharmonic and the public beat for him'. Some years earlier the great Italian maestro Carlo Maria Giulini wrote to Barbirolli at the end of a ten-day period working with the Hallé Orchestra: 'Rarely have I had occasion to work in an atmosphere where the levels of courtesy, professionalism and humanity have reached such heights. This is due to you – to your constant intense and inspiring work of years and years; and it has been wonderful to me to see this all for myself'.² As Helge Grunewald, a former Artistic Director of the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra made clear at a meeting mentioned later in this review, it was Barbirolli's determination to promote the symphonies of Gustav Mahler that went some way to overcome the anti-Semitism inherent in parts of the orchestra, still scarred by the years of Nazi rule and the prohibition on the performing of music by Jewish composers. Giulini's letter hints at the unique relationship that orchestra and conductor established and why Barbirolli was loved and respected by virtually all who worked with him, notably the Berliners.

In October 1911 the eleven-year-old cellist John Barbirolli with his sister Rosa as pianist made his first recording (Auguste van Biene's *Broken Melody*) for the Edison Bell company. He made his first recording for HMV in January 1928 (Haydn's 'London' Symphony) and his final sessions took place two weeks before he died on 29 July 1970. I begin this review of a mighty set of compact discs by focusing on three tracks that are recordings now over or nearly 90 years old but which show the young conductor already the master of his trade. Two are of Elgar's music (from *Caractacus*) and one is from Wagner's *Die Meistersinger von Nürnberg*. Although they are of Barbirolli conducting, they also represent singing from a distant past but singing of the highest quality. One of the singers was Australian and the others Austrian, British, Danish and German. Somehow, despite three commercial recordings

1 Michael Kennedy, *Barbirolli Conductor Laureate* (London: MacGibbon & Kee, 1971), 233. Kennedy wrote: 'That tough nut Paul Beard (leader of the BBCSO) said to me afterwards (a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius*): "God! What a performance. You don't realise what a tonic he is to us. I never, in my position, especially after all these years, make any quick conclusions, but I think he must be the finest conductor in the world..."'

2 Letter from 1968 quoted by Raymond Holden in the booklet accompanying the box of CDs.



Warner Classics
9029 53860-8

109 Compact Discs

and broadcasts of other performances no singer, in my opinion, has surpassed Peter Dawson in his singing of the role of Caractacus even in what are only two brief excerpts made in the Small Queen's Hall in September 1928. Then there is the astonishing array of singers gathered in London in May 1931 to perform the quintet from the third act of Wagner's masterpiece. They may have been equalled but never surpassed and although it would be ridiculous to suggest that these eleven minutes of music are worth the price of this set, those who know these recordings will understand my enthusiasm.

Dawson in his performance of 'O My Warriors' manages to sound both defeated and heroic. His diction is an example to any young singer of today and it emphasises Elgar's extraordinary ability to orchestrate a mood despite the absence of the chorus in the two excerpts. The so-called 'Sword Song' is very different. It is preceded by a belligerent statement of pagan faith by the Arch-Druid before Caractacus sings of his hope for victory over the forces of Rome. Dawson brings to this a subtlety which the score does not imply and makes it an exciting statement, albeit out of context when recorded. Dawson moves from the role of the Arch-Druid to Caractacus without faltering, colouring his voice slightly to reflect the change of character.³ The conducting of the 28-year-old Barbirolli is exemplary, moving the music forward and bringing a sense of pathos to both excerpts.

As for the Wagner (made with the London Symphony Orchestra in May 1931), I came across this for the first time when, in 1970, EMI issued a memorial double LP set to commemorate Barbirolli's life.⁴ Michael Kennedy calls this recording 'one of the classics of the gramophone' and indeed it is. As '*Selig, wie die Sonne*' begins, Elisabeth Schumann's Eva embraces the listener even as she looks ahead to life without the comforting presence of Hans Sachs, here portrayed by the great baritone Friedrich Schorr. Gladys Parr was Magdalene, Lauritz Melchior Walther and Ben Williams David. Barbirolli builds and controls the tension to the climaxes at '*vollem Kreis*' and '*höchsten Preis*' and allows Wagner's orchestra to subside into a conclusion that avoids contrivance and does not sound like a 'bleeding chunk'. This is a demonstration of Barbirolli's mastery as the story of the recording shows the control (and domination) that the 31-year-old conductor had over his illustrious singers. Again and again Melchior missed his entry, and over time, Schumann became increasingly hoarse. Eventually Barbirolli conducted with his left hand held in front of his mouth. Melchior was told to wait until the hand was removed before singing. It worked. The same CD contains other tracks with Melchior and Schorr, the former performing (in German) excerpts from Meyerbeer and Verdi operas. Staying in the '78' era I should mention the recordings from 1936 of the Beethoven and Brahms Violin Concertos with Fritz Kreisler as soloist and the young London Philharmonic Orchestra at its pre-war best with the oboe of Léon Goossens adding a touch of magic to the Brahms. There is an obvious

3 In 1997 when John Knowles and I discussed the tracks that would make up the first volume of *Elgar's Interpreters on Record* (Dutton CDAX 8019) we were in no doubt that the Dawson recordings would be at the heart of the CD.

4 'Glorious John' - £2.25 for the two LPs (22 tracks). This is nearly £25 in 2020.

rapprochement between Barbirolli and 'my dear old friend' Kreisler, the former going on to call Kreisler 'perhaps the most universally beloved artist of my time'.⁵ I have always felt that the Brahms recording gives us a glimpse of Kreisler's Elgar.

It is a testament to Barbirolli's skill that other great violinists such as Mischa Elman and Jascha Heifetz were happy to work with this youthful conductor as in his recordings of the Tchaikovsky Concerto made in 1932 and 1935 respectively. Other great names abound from the 1930s: Robert Casadesu, Alfred Cortot, Edwin Fischer, Arthur Rubinstein and great singers too: Florence Austral, Fyodor Chaliapin, Richard Crooks, Beniamino Gigli, Lily Pons, Ina Souez and more. Many discs stand out, such as those recordings made with Dame Janet Baker: Berlioz's *Les Nuits d'été*, Ravel's *Shéhérazade* and Mahler's five *Rückert Lieder* all with the New Philharmonia Orchestra. However, there were earlier Hallé sessions which included *Kindertotenlieder* and *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* and, from the *Rückert Lieder*, a separate '*Ich bin der Welt abhanden gekommen*'. Somehow Dame Janet, Barbirolli and his orchestra obtained a stillness and introspection in this recording which is nothing short of a miracle. It is seven minutes of the greatest artistry.

I never attended a Barbirolli concert. I arrived in London in 1970 eager to spend my meagre salary on tickets in the city's concert halls; but I was too late. I caught Georg Szell but was as shocked as anyone when news of Sir John's death was announced one day before Szell's! My loss was nothing compared to that of our country and its musical life. However, in a way I did experience Barbirolli live. Sometime in the 1960s the BBC broadcast a television performance of him conducting a concert with what I presume was the Hallé. The broadcast ended with the only music I can recall, a suite from Strauss's *Der Rosenkavalier*. From then I became a devotee of Strauss's music and the magnetic conducting of Barbirolli. Few cameras were employed for the broadcast but one showed Barbirolli from the left side. There he sat on a high stool his expressive left hand moulding the music, the thumb bending back towards his wrist. What a natural Strauss conductor he was, and in this set of CDs there is a profound *Metamorphosen*, a glorious *Rosenkavalier Suite* from 1946 and a suite of dances from the same opera recorded twenty years later. The Hallé would become a finer orchestra but there is something fresh in this recording which I find very attractive. Perhaps of greater importance is a recording from 1955 of Clemens Krauss's 'Symphonic Fragments' from *Die Liebe der Danae*. This is a complicated opera, but Barbirolli shows what fine music is within. I do not believe Krauss recorded his suite which suggests this was the first recording of this delectable music.

What would we give to have several complete recordings of Puccini, Strauss, Verdi and Wagner operas from the baton of this miracle-worker? Frida Leider's '*Mild und leise*' from *Tristan und Isolde* is but one example

5 From a short film (on YouTube) of Barbirolli talking about his experience as a guest on BBC TV's *This is Your Life* in 1957. Later he appeared on a (UK) ABC programme, *The Eamonn Andrews Show* on 8 May 1966, when he described his early challenges on coming to the Hallé in 1943.

of mutual understanding. ‘Wow’, I said to myself!⁶ It is easy, with the benefit of hindsight, to criticise EMI and Decca for their post-war obsession with bringing overseas conductors to London to make recordings. However, my case rests! Barbirolli’s relationship with overseas orchestras was exceptional. His recorded legacy does not reflect the regard in which he was and is still held although, as Michael Kennedy suggests in his biography of Barbirolli, working with the Wiener Philharmoniker was a particular challenge for him to impose ‘his’ version of the Brahms symphonies on the players. Regrettably, EMI recorded little of Barbirolli conducting overseas orchestras but what we have includes the glorious *Madama Butterfly* with the Rome Opera Orchestra and Chorus, Debussy with the Orchestre de Paris, the four Brahms Symphonies in Vienna and the justly renowned Ninth Symphony of Mahler with the Berlin Philharmonic. Daniel Barenboim (in a 1970 *Daily Telegraph* tribute) wrote: ‘They adored him, and the Berlin Philharmonic is an orchestra that really knows’.

In addition to all this there are recordings of Barbirolli arrangements of Bach, Corelli, Mozart, Pergolesi, Purcell and others: the sort of thing that is out of fashion today. He made recordings with the oboe player Evelyn Rothwell (Lady Barbirolli) and music by little known composers like Johann Hill, plus pieces I did not know such as Carl Loewe’s *Fridericus Rex*. In other words there are surprises and novelties throughout this set. There is a delightful *Bachianas Brasileiras* no 4 (Villa-Lobos) and charming *Les Patineurs* (Waldteufel) from 1954 and 1957 respectively and I loved the ballet music from *William Tell* (1958). One of the joys of this set is that you can now hear those Pye Golden Guinea recordings in better sound than was possible with the old LP pressings. There is the first recording of Arnold Bax’s Third Symphony and Michael Heming’s *Threnody for a soldier killed in action* as well as d’Erlanger’s *Midnight Rose* and Cottrau’s *Santa Lucia* sung by Gigli. This is not a mindless pot-pourri of recordings, for the CDs have been put together with great thought. However, you do get everything Barbirolli recorded with Pye, whose classical music catalogue was sold to EMI in 1989, and the various companies that came to make up what became EMI, and which is now Warner Classics.

Barbirolli was a natural conductor of Delius’s music, as these discs show. Beecham may have overshadowed him as an interpreter of Delius, but this does not detract from Barbirolli’s mastery of the composer’s idiom. His first Delius recording (*The Walk to the Paradise Garden*) was made in 1945 in the Houldsworth Hall in Manchester and the last in 1968 and 1970. By then the Hallé was transported to London to make recordings, those final sessions taking place in the Kingsway Hall. I remember buying the LP from the 1968 sessions from which I would highlight a beautifully realised *La Calinda*. The July 1970 recording sessions covered *Brigg Fair* and a superbly played and recorded

6 The microphone layout favoured *Leider* in 1931 but, instinctively, Barbirolli increased the volume so that orchestra and soloist become equals for the final bars of the *Liebestod*.

performance of *Appalachia*. These emerged, notwithstanding the occurrence of one of Barbirolli’s cardiac episodes. Despite collapsing he ignored medical advice and refused to go home and rest. Two weeks later he died.

Space does not permit me to comment on what I have always felt were indispensable recordings so this short (personal) list will have to suffice: Berlioz: *Les Nuits d’été* (Baker); Beethoven: ‘Emperor’ Concerto (Katz), Violin Concerto (Kreisler), Symphony No 3 ‘Eroica’ (BBCSO); Brahms: Violin Concerto (Kreisler), Piano Concertos (Barenboim), Symphony No 3 (Vienna); Debussy: *La Mer*; Dvořák: Wind Serenade; Handel: arias (Walter Widdop); Mahler: *Kindertotenlieder*, *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen*, *Rückert Lieder* (Baker), Symphonies 5 & 9; Puccini: *Madama Butterfly*, *Turandot* (excerpts with Eva Turner - astonishing); Ravel: *Shéhérazade* (Baker); Richard Strauss (as above) & *Ein Heldenleben*; Tchaikovsky: *Francesca da Rimini* (white hot), Serenade in C major, ‘*Pathétique*’ Symphony; Sibelius: the final recordings of the Symphonies (the 5th - seemingly hewn from rock - and 7th – compelling, intense and unyielding), *Pohjola’s Daughter*; Suppé: Overtures (sonically brilliant for their time); Vaughan Williams: *London*, Fifth (1944) and Eighth Symphonies, *Tallis Fantasia*; Verdi: *Otello*; Wagner Overtures (and as above).

Barbirolli was, of course, a great and insightful conductor of Elgar’s music. There are (in addition to the *Caractacus* excerpts) two recordings of both Symphonies, five of the *Introduction and Allegro*, three *Cockaignes*, three *Enigmas* and many more works (no Violin Concerto) and, of course, two famous contrasted recordings of the Cello Concerto with Navarra and Du Pré, and *The Dream of Gerontius* which, despite a number of flaws, retains its iconic status for obvious reasons. All the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* are there which would not be my first choice (try Handley or Elder), both Symphonies with the Hallé and, of course, Janet Baker’s *Sea Pictures*. A recording of part two of *The Dream of Gerontius* from a live performance given in Manchester Town Hall in 1951 is of particular interest. The cast is superb: Marjorie Thomas, Parry Jones (then 60) and Marian Nowakowski. Thomas gives a wonderfully clear, sensitive, accurate, sympathetic performance. Nowakowski is imperious and caring at the same time. God would have no option but to listen to this pleading! Jones, rightly slightly detached, is also sensitive to the words and his dialogue with Thomas is as subtle and good as any I have heard. Michael Kennedy refers to a performance under Barbirolli the previous year (BBCSO) with Jones which he considered ‘the greatest account of the work I expect to hear’.⁷ Thomas takes the ‘high’ options with no sign of strain. For me, she was a revelation; one of the great Angels in my book. Overall there are the dominant hands of Barbirolli. From the beginning (alas only of part two) the attention to tempi and dynamics betrays the master behind the performance. It is an urgent one, brooking no nonsense. The Hallé chorus is first class (a superb semi-chorus) as is the orchestra. This is a thrilling and important find and despite an obvious downside had

7 Kennedy, 233.

me on the edge of my seat. I presume this was recorded on acetate discs and there are one or two hiatuses as well as three bars missing after Cue 55. The chorus seems recessed at first but is then brought into clearer focus after the Demons (wonderfully nasal) and the dynamic range is greater than I expected. However, after the great chorus *'Praise to the Holiest'*, the surfaces deteriorate considerably. Somehow the engineers have managed to separate the music from the 'crackle', but this change is very obvious. Despite that, this performance has everything: great singing, drive, tension, intimacy and finally heart-easing release. It is a wonder! Let us hope that somewhere, somehow, part one is discovered one day.

In 1965 the BBC 'Monitor' film portrait of Barbirolli concluded with the music he said would be the last he would wish to hear: the final bars of Elgar's E flat Symphony. The film provides a lesson for anyone interested in how music is made and how it can be felt. In complete control of what he wanted (therefore slightly detached) we can see Barbirolli's conducting but also feel his devotion to the music. That is why any Elgarian should have at least one of Barbirolli's recordings of this symphony in their collection; ideally that from 1954, with the Hallé.⁸

CD109 John Barbirolli – A Memoir. This contains fascinating insights from those who worked with and under Barbirolli. It includes a conversation between Barbirolli and EMI producer Ronald Kinloch Anderson (sadly not a natural interviewer). Here we are given insights into conducting, notably, Elgar and Mahler and there is a brief excerpt of a rehearsal of Sibelius's *Pohjola's Daughter*. He pays affectionate tribute to such as W H Reed, Fred Gaisberg and Elgar himself. However, the highlight is the presentation of the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society to 'Glorious John' by Ralph Vaughan Williams on 13 December 1950 in the Royal Albert Hall. RVW's characteristic speech is amusing, thoughtful and penetrating. He paid tribute to the Hallé which had just performed his Sixth Symphony, utilised a wonderful biblical allusion and quoted Wagner's observation that: 'it was the business of the conductor to find out where the melody lay. And I think part of Sir John's magic lies in the fact that he can always spot the melody in however unpromising the circumstances!'⁹ My one criticism of the disc is that applause is allowed to run at too great a length and there are long excerpts of the recordings which are used as examples and these are included in the set! Judicious editing would have allowed the inclusion of that wonderful conversation with Eamonn Andrews from 1966.

This set of CDs could not have been produced without the assistance of many individuals and, in a preface to the accompanying booklet, John Tolansky rightly pays tribute to the indefatigable Malcolm Walker. There is another member of the Society whose contribution (along with many others

8 The Monitor film is easily seen on YouTube.

9 The other works performed were Rossini's Overture *La gazza ladra*, the Intermezzo from Delius's *Fennimore and Gerda* and Sibelius's Second Symphony.

including Paul Brooks of the Barbirolli Society) was invaluable. That is, of course, David Jones, Secretary and Vice-Chairman of our North West Branch. I would suggest there are few who have a greater knowledge of 'JB' than David and his filling in of details and the provision of material enabled this set to be produced in its comprehensive glory. It turns out that David was the only person who could supply copies of some of the rarer discs reissued here. Without David, the completeness of the set would have been impossible. There is an invaluable essay by Professor Raymond Holden who gets to the heart of what made Barbirolli a great musician: 'Tempo was also central to his approach and, while some commentators might have raised an eyebrow at his often-broad speeds, he never allowed tension to wane or architecture suffer'. Barbirolli was a rare mixture of a clear-headed musician who prepared his scores meticulously and a man of emotion who lived for what he produced on the podium. That is why his performances and recordings were and are special. It is unlikely that all recordings in this box will be to every listener's taste but there is no doubting Barbirolli's commitment to every note and its place in the score. **CD108** contains recordings of Barbirolli rehearsing the music of Berlioz, Delius, Grainger, Haydn, Sibelius and Tchaikovsky, demonstrating Barbirolli's wonderful ear and a clear understanding of the architecture of what he was conducting as well as his affection for his players.

One of the enjoyable things about a set this size is the opportunity to dip in and extract a disc at random. One such I selected is based on a 'Viennese Prom Concert' recorded in 1966. It opens with the *'Blue Danube'* and I was hooked. This is the sort of thing Willi Boskovsky was recording then and it was his discs we were buying. However, here was the Hallé transported to the Kingsway Hall and giving Vienna a run for its money. Barbirolli and his orchestra revel in those subtle hesitations and 'schwung' which is second nature to the Viennese. The rest is superb too with Barbirolli's compelling thirteen-minute waltz sequence from *Der Rosenkavalier* possibly being part of the BBC broadcast I watched 54 years ago and which coincided with the recording sessions.

I have no idea whether or not Barbirolli was our 'greatest' conductor. There are those reading this who have no doubt about this but it is, essentially, a matter of opinion. Tastes change over time (as mine have done) and some of Barbirolli's phrasing and tempi would not be 'in fashion' today. Personally, I think that matters not a jot for what matters is whether, in listening to these recordings, you come away with a greater appreciation and understanding of the music, that you are moved, stimulated and want to come back for more. You realise what a superb Dvořák conductor Barbirolli was and how attuned he was to make the darkness of Verdi's music balance his obvious love of Verdi's melodies. There is life-enhancing Grieg, passionate Ravel, beautifully realised Haydn and thrilling Tchaikovsky but no Bruckner.¹⁰ Barbirolli's detailed preparation did not produce sterility - it allowed a great freedom in the music, which is rare. This quality was recognised by great artists such as

10 Barbirolli's last concert in London was with the Hallé. It ended with Bruckner's Eighth Symphony.

Fritz Kreisler who, 24 years Barbirolli's senior, had performed with many of the 'great' conductors of his time.

There are great recordings made before World War II with the London Philharmonic and after the War with other London orchestras, mainly the Philharmonia (later the New Philharmonia) and London Symphony but the Hallé is at the heart of this set. Whether or not it was the greatest orchestra in terms of depth of sound and virtuosity is neither here nor there, for Barbirolli made the Hallé a great orchestra as commentators on the final CD make clear: he created a Hallé sound based on hard work, attention to detail and a precise understanding of how orchestral players worked together. You can hear this on many of these discs. Barbirolli became part of the warp and weft of this orchestra and of Manchester too. His *Times* obituary made the point that 'Orchestral musicians accepted a degree of slavery when they worked for him, but they did so with affection and admiration' and for those who stayed the course they came to love him as they were left in no doubt as to exactly what he wanted. As he said of his orchestra, in his acceptance speech when presented with the Gold Medal of the RPS, 'we are rather bound up together'. More than that it was a love that was shared with the fortunate concert-goers of Manchester.

Those, like me, who never attended a Barbirolli concert can only be forever grateful to Warner Classics and those who contributed so much to this set. Even if you prefer other interpretations or find that modern performance style has overtaken some of these recordings, there is no doubt that Barbirolli was one of the great conductors: the evidence is indisputable. Mahler once said that: 'The art of conducting is that of being able to play the notes that are not there' and it seems to me that this was part of Barbirolli's genius: he understood Mahler's comment instinctively. This is evident when Barbirolli conducted a rehearsal of RVW's Eighth Symphony where he made a slight pause after each variation in the first movement. Responding to a suggestion that he should mark the score accordingly, RVW replied: 'No. Everyone else will make them too long. John does them just right – and how can I indicate what he does?'¹¹ Some of these recordings are priceless and they have never cost less – £1.38 per CD! The amount of music he recorded for Pye between 1957 and 1960 is astonishing as are some of the sleeve designs reproduced in the set. That for Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony takes a great deal of beating!

On each CD sleeve the recording information requires a magnifying glass to read and there are a number of errors. For example the Gounod *Petite Symphonie* coupled with the Dvořák Wind Serenade in wonderful idiomatic performances on **Disc 33** has two tracks numbered six and, surely, it is either Georg Frideric Händel or George Frederick Handel not George Frideric Handel?

Readers of this will be aware of what recordings can do. They can make reputations and they can unmake them. Barbirolli once said that 'Elgar, Vaughan Williams and Sibelius are immortal ... you can't destroy immortality!'¹² Recordings have made many an artist immortal too, among

11 Kennedy, 244.

12 In conversation with Ronald Kinloch Anderson, 1960 (CD109).

them the Londoner who went to Manchester and made it his musical home. A few years ago, with some friends from the Society, I met Helge Grönwald in the Philharmonie in Berlin (see paragraph one). Few players or administrators were then around who remembered Barbirolli conducting Berlin's great orchestra, but Helge recalled how special those occasions were. A warm smile lit up his face as he remembered 'Sir John' and his music making, infectious musical personality and ability to allow the players the freedom to play whilst giving him 'his' performance. He told of retired members of the orchestra, with tears in their eyes, recalling 'Die Barbirolli Saisons'. Such was 'Glorious John' who, in great humility, quoted Hans Sachs at the end of his speech when receiving the RPS Gold Medal: 'Friends, words, light to you, bow me to earth. Your praise is far beyond my worth'. These recordings, lovingly collated and produced, prove the opposite. Rarely for a conductor 'JB' is revered today as much as he was in 1970. That is not just because of his music making (just listen to his Elgar, Sibelius and Vaughan Williams) - it is because of who and what he was.

It will be obvious to anyone who has read this far that what I have written is more than just a review of a series of recordings. It is a tribute to a great musician and man who worked himself to death in the cause of music and who died 50 years ago. David Ll. Jones's *Sir John Barbirolli A Career On Record* published by the Barbirolli Society is an invaluable guide - I am particularly grateful to David as I am to Joyce Kennedy, Paul Brooks, Geoff Scargill and Malcolm Walker for their advice and help in filling in gaps in my knowledge of 'JB' and the Hallé.

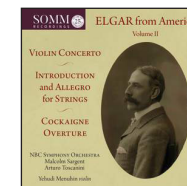
Andrew Neill

Elgar from America : Volume II
Cockaigne (In London Town) Concert-Overture Op.40
NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent

Introduction and Allegro for Strings Op.47
NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Arturo Toscanini
Quartet members: Mischa Mischakoff, Edwin Bachman, *violins*
Carlton Cooley, *viola*, Frank Miller, *cello*

Violin Concerto in B minor Op.61
NBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Malcolm Sargent
Yehudi Menuhin, violin

The mass migration of musicians from war-torn Europe to the USA brought a bracing vibrancy to the musical life of New York City during the first half of the 1940s. At the beginning of the decade, Arturo Toscanini was at the helm of the NBC Symphony Orchestra, while John Barbirolli served as his successor at the New York Philharmonic (officially the Philharmonic-



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Symphony Society of New York). Since both maestros included Elgar's music in their repertoire, it is not surprising that recorded radio performances of the composer's works broadcast from Radio City's renowned Studio 8H should yield rich rewards. Three of those recordings, two of which have never been heard on CD (Toscanini's recording has previously been issued on CD on the Swiss Relief label) now superbly audio-restored by producer Lani Spahr, form the contents of *Elgar from America: Volume II*.

In New York at the time, Elgar's music was not without its opponents. Audience opinion was strongly influenced by concert reviews from the acid pen of Olin Downes, the formidable music critic of the *New York Times* from 1924 until Downes' death in 1955. Of Elgar's music he wrote, 'it reflects the complacency and stodginess of the era of the antimacassar and pork-pie bonnets; it is affected by the poor taste and the swollen orchestral manner of the post-romantics'.

The basis of Downes' discontent may have had more to do with his intense dislike of Barbirolli and his grudge against the New York Philharmonic. Downes viciously opposed Barbirolli's appointment and was outraged when the orchestra management responded by sacking him as commentator of their prestigious Sunday Concerts. Evidence that Downes' animus was aimed at the conductor not the composer is suggested by the positive review Downes gave Malcom Sargent's broadcast performance of *Cockaigne* with the NBC Symphony, the first item on this disc.

By February 1945, the winding down of the war offered Sargent the chance to cross the Atlantic in order to conduct four broadcast concerts with the NBC Symphony. *Cockaigne* opened the programme of the first concert. Downes' review praised the composer, the composition and Sargent's account: 'A properly lusty and rhythmical performance was accorded the overture. Mr. Sargent had unmistakable orchestral control. He made no attempt at a new reading, which in any case would have been inappropriate with such a well-known work and such an English classic as Elgar the composer already has become'. Sargent drives the music forward with an exhilarating propulsion that to me amounted to a reading I had not heard before.

A week after the *Cockaigne* session, Sargent was back in Studio 8H to conduct Toscanini's players in Elgar's Violin Concerto. The soloist was the 29-year-old Yehudi Menuhin, who happened to be in New York on his way to Europe to participate in a series of concerts for Allied soldiers, and later, with Benjamin Britten, to play for the survivors of several concentration camps. Purists may decry this performance because of the cuts Sargent was obliged to make to the second and third movements in order to meet the allotted time frame. Lani points out that there is Elgar-sanctioned precedent for the big cut in the finale. The acoustic recording of both Marie Hall and Albert Sammons make the identical cut from rehearsal cue 78 to 92. Nonetheless, anyone who has thrilled to Menuhin's child-prodigy playing should relish this opportunity to hear the mature Menuhin's instrumental mastery, particularly his astonishing ability to sustain a lyrical vein consistently while retaining a firm hold on the work's structural outline.

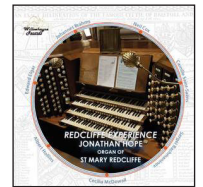
If Barbirolli and the N.Y. Phil were to be disparaged by Downes in 1940, Toscanini and his NBC Symphony could do no wrong. The maestro performed but never commercially recorded Elgar's *Introduction and Allegro for Strings*. What we hear on this disc is a broadcast on April 20, 1940 - the only time Toscanini conducted the piece with the NBC Symphony. He brings to the work his signature barely-bridled energy that masterfully blends and contrasts the glowing harmonies of the solo quartet with the sweeping grandeur produced by the orchestral string section. If you love this work, you will want to hear Toscanini's rousing rendition.

Altogether, in my opinion, a must-have addition to any serious Elgarian CD library.

Arthur Reynolds

Redcliffe Experience

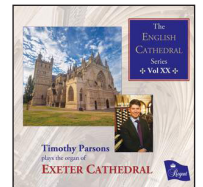
Transcriptions of works by Brahms, Elgar, Rachmaninov and Saint-Saëns and organ works by Neil Cox, Alfred Hollins and Cecilia McDowell played on the organ at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol
Jonathan Hope (organ)



Willowhayne
Records
WHR 059

The English Cathedral Series, Volume XX

Works by Brahms, Durufé, Elgar, Mendelssohn, Messiaen and others played on the organ of Exeter Cathedral
Timothy Parsons (organ)



Regent
REGCD523

Dr Johnson was unenthusiastic about women preachers. He thought that questions about the quality of their preaching were pushed to one side by the very fact that they were doing it at all, and he likened it to the spectacle of a dog walking on its hind legs. The great lexicographer sometimes comes to mind when one learns of organists' latest exploits in the field of transcription, for some of the works they select seem so firmly wedded to the medium they were originally intended for as to be incapable of being played on anything else. But no one is likely to think of his famous remark where Jonathan Hope (b.1988) is concerned, for Mr Hope is one of the outstanding organists of his generation. The Elgar work he includes in this recording is the overture *In the South*, and no one familiar with Hope's virtuosic handling of the organ at Gloucester Cathedral, where since 2014 he has held the post of Assistant Director of Music, will be at all surprised by the apparent ease with which he translates Elgar's quintessentially orchestral textures into the terms of manuals, pedals, stops, pistons and swell-boxes. Transcriptions of the work for piano solo and piano duet were made by A. Schmid and published by Novello in 1904, but the only previous attempt at an organ transcription was

that of Herbert Brewer, who confined himself to *Canto popolare*. Hope's transcription is therefore the first, or at any rate the first to enter the public arena, and his task in performing it is greatly facilitated by the Romantic character of the magnificent organ at St Mary Redcliffe, Bristol, which dates from 1912 and is widely, and rightly, regarded as Harrison & Harrison's masterpiece. It is a fine, colourful performance and one which conveys a remarkably large fraction of the spirit and the letter. The use of the huge unenclosed chorus reeds, to give due prominence to crucial thematic material, is not always entirely happy, however, and the quieter, enclosed colours occasionally sound somewhat muffled (and there is a tendency for the quiet passages to drag). The Brahms work is the *Tragic Overture*, Op.81 in another of Mr Hope's arrangements; at times it sounds like a very good sonata movement by Rheinberger (which, for the avoidance of doubt, is praise).

A recording warmly recommended to Elgar devotees with an interest in the symphonic organ.

The Exeter Cathedral CD includes one Elgar work, the *Imperial March*, Op.32 in G.C. Martin's well-known transcription. Timothy Parsons plays it with spirit, but although he adheres to the prescribed crotchet = 84, there is not quite enough swagger; and the tiny hesitation at the end of bar 8 (and at the same place in the recapitulation) is a mild irritation (the management of the instrument should not interfere with the pulse, especially in a march).

With a nod in the direction of the history of the cathedral's music, Parsons has included a voluntary by Matthew Locke and S.S. Wesley's lovely F sharp minor *Larghetto*, but good though it is to have a cathedral organ compilation which does not consist almost entirely of lollipops, the inclusion of two works by contemporary composers, and Vierne's slightly silly *Carillon de Westminster*, is rendered somewhat regrettable by the absence of any work by J.S. Bach (a criticism one could level at the Bristol CD). Again, though, a recording warmly recommended to those whose interests embrace both Elgar and organ music.

Relf Clark



Mellos Records
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Elgar: Violin Concerto in B minor, Op.61

Alda Dizdari (violin)

Musica Viva Orchestra / Alexander Walker¹

Historians will be able to report that in 2020 the three issues of this publication between them contained a total of four reviews of new recordings of Elgar's Violin Concerto. Whether this is a spike, an Indian summer, the shape of things to come, or none of these things, remains to be seen. It is certainly

1 We understand that negotiations are in hand to enable the recording to be made available as a digital download from the usual sites, but readers who wish to purchase the CD may do so at:
<https://shop.aldadizdari.co.uk/products/elgar-violin-concerto-sacd> Eds

remarkable. Remarkable, too, is this new recording, which is available not only as a Super Audio CD and in Vinyl but also as an SACD accompanied by the three-CD audiobook reviewed elsewhere in this edition. The last of these versions has been submitted for review, and one is immediately struck by the fact that the four discs are presented with liner material featuring in several places the rather disconcerting exhortation 'Kiss me again'; but this proves to be the title of the audiobook, which is the Albanian soloist's memoir of 'Elgar in Unusual Places'.

Not for the first time does the soloist in a concerto seem to occupy a position more prominent than that of the work's creator, and it will not be the last, for composers must ruefully accept that they are not the stars of such shows, and that audiences on these occasions are, on the whole, more interested in virtuoso display than in the personal matters that lie behind the notes. When in November 1920 the young Heifetz played the Violin Concerto at a Philharmonic concert, Elgar in a letter to the Windflower conceded that it was 'a tremendous display', but he felt that it was 'not exactly our own Concerto'. His point was presumably that Heifetz, who was then still a teenager, was too young to reach to the heart of the work. The packaging of the present recording suggests a performance illustrating much more than technical mastery. Although herself young, the soloist has clearly acquired a very close and very personal relationship with the work, one which might almost be described as obsessive. Such closeness is not without its potential dangers, however, for it may lead performers to be carried away by emotions of their own, and to forget from time to time that a score is a set of instructions, not a set of suggestions. This is a point underlined in the case of the Violin Concerto by Elgar's consultations with W.H. Reed during its composition, which are surely evidence of an overwhelming anxiety to capture the work in perfect focus; and the score itself is of course crowded with detailed instructions to the performers.

None of the above should cause alarm to those who guard the sacred flame. This is certainly the Violin Concerto as we know it. But playing the notes in an accurate and musical way is not quite enough; and if Elgar devotees feel that this performance does 'not exactly' give them 'their' concerto, one reason may be that the detailed instructions referred to above are not always observed. In bar 122 of the first movement, for example, the soloist has only a few beats in which to drop from *fortissimo*, which Elgar expressly prescribes at bar 118, to *piano*, which he writes at the beginning of bar 123; and just half a bar later he calls for *pianissimo*. At the same time, the soloist must observe the directions *più tranquillo*, *dolce*, and *rit.* If this passage, as played in the present recording, were given for dictation, it is doubtful whether anyone would write down all of these things. It is the same with the orchestra. In bars 2 and 4 of the slow movement, clarinets and bassoons enter on the third beat with a chord marked *pianissimo*. Because the string passages in bars 1 and 3 are marked *piano*, and both of them end with a *diminuendo*, there should be something palpably remote about those woodwind chords; but they are played in this recording at a dynamic level closer to *mezzo-forte*, which in turn robs

bar 5 - which is expressly so marked - of some of the drama inherent in the sudden transition to D flat major. Dynamics are again a problem when, later in the same movement, Elgar reaches the modal sanctuary between cues 47 and 49. The echo effects which are so clear in his own recording of the work are here more or less imperceptible, and the four-two chords do not receive the prescribed emphasis. But the lack of attention to dynamics is a symptom of a general failure to create an atmosphere of rapt contemplation, and one is not greatly surprised on reviewing the liner notes to see that the movement is dispatched in only 10.42, which is more than two minutes less than the time Elgar and Menuhin took in 1932. Other reasons for one's reservations are not quite so easy to demonstrate. Do the soloist's semiquavers in bars 175-186 of the first movement sound fiery and animated or merely neat and accurate? Opinions may differ. The same question arises in connected with the similar passages elsewhere in the same movement, which seem to lack some of the edge-of-the-seat character one expects here. Again, though, opinions may differ.

It is perhaps unfair to dwell in this way on short extracts from a long and demanding concerto, but the cumulative effect of these matters is to take away some of the sense that this is a work which embodies enigmas beyond the reach of contrapuntists and code-breakers. Producing a good professional recording of the Violin Concerto, which is undoubtedly what this amounts to, is of course a difficult and exacting undertaking, and all concerned are to be congratulated for it. It is heartening indeed that Dizdari has taken to the work in this way; and it must be profoundly gratifying to evangelists that the performance was recorded in Moscow. But for devotees of Elgar, and especially those whose chief interests are such things as subdominant relationships and biographical minutiae, it may not be entirely ideal.

Relf Clark

Kiss Me Again – A Memoir of Elgar in Unusual Places

Read by Alda Dizdari

Alda Dizdari's recording of the Elgar Violin Concerto with the Musica Viva Orchestra under Alexander Walker is reviewed above by Relf Clark, and is available not only as a single SACD and a vinyl LP, but also in a special edition which includes a further three CDs of the soloist reading from her own memoir. This charts the time from her discovery of the concerto and her mission to perform it in her native Albania, through to its final fulfillment. Dizdari began to learn the violin in Tirana, capital of Albania, and furthered her studies in Romania, the USA and finally at The Guildhall School of Music and Drama in London. Alongside her solo career she now also teaches, both at The Guildhall and at The Purcell School. In 2015 whilst living in London she came across a copy of Albert Sammons' 1929 recording of the Elgar concerto with Sir Henry Wood, and by an extraordinary coincidence, that

same day discovered Wood's own piano score with copious markings by the conductor. This was to be the start of what she describes as a love affair with Elgar and his concerto, and she immersed herself not only in the music but also in its background, her reading including W.H. Reed's biography and the Windflower correspondence.

The main narrative takes us through the highs and lows involved in arranging seven performances in different cities, beginning with an initial run-through in Oxford in 2015 with an amateur orchestra, through to the first performance of the concerto in Tirana and thence five further performances in Romania. It is disappointing but perhaps not surprising to note that when she approached the British Council and the British Embassy in Tirana for assistance, none was forthcoming. Each performance presented its own challenges, with orchestras generally enthusiastic but unfamiliar with the idiom of Elgar's music and one conductor frankly uninterested in the work, but Dizdari's energy and passion seems always to have won through.

The journey was for her was both literal and emotional, confronting places and people from her early years. She writes movingly of the sadness she felt on finding her native city Tirana still drab and grey, 25 years after the fall of communism, in stark contrast with the vibrancy and style of the Romanian cities of Timisoara and Sibiu. Alongside the main musical narrative, we gain added insight into the writer's personality through her musings on food, family, vintage clothes, literature, art and architecture, as well as the physiology of playing the violin.

The recording was made out of doors during lockdown, and the occasional burst of birdsong adds a pleasing background to the sound tapestry. Her story is an inspirational one, and Dizdari reads in an easy, relaxed style. I much enjoyed the almost four hours spent in her company.

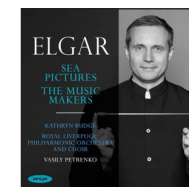
Andrew Dalton

Elgar: *Sea Pictures* Op.37 and *The Music Makers* Op.69

Kathryn Rudge (mezzo)

Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra & RLP Choir, Vasily Petrenko

For many Elgarians there is one artist indelibly associated with these two works, Dame Janet Baker. With Barbirolli in *Sea Pictures* and Boult in *The Music Makers*, she commands the field. Those members who attended the late Michael Kennedy's discussion with Dame Janet at the Society's 50th anniversary weekend in Worcester in 2001 will remember his comment after playing some of her *Music Makers* recording to the effect that we would never hear the like of her voice again. However, there is always room for new recordings and interpretations and although *Sea Pictures* has been recorded more frequently than *The Music Makers*, there are a number of recent issues coupling both works. Dame Sarah Connolly, well supported by splendid



Onyx ONYX4206

Bournemouth forces under Simon Wright, is truly magnificent and comes very close to the Baker pinnacle. I confess to a liking for the dramatic and very well recorded Hickox performances with the LSO and Chorus on top form, now on Warner, although I acknowledge the timbre of Dame Felicity Palmer's voice in these roles is an acquired taste. There have been many well-received recordings of *Sea Pictures* coupled with other works (Bernadette Greevy's comes particularly to mind, and it is good to see some recent recordings by singers from abroad) but to my mind no recording of these two works, together or individually, has until now come close to those of Dames Janet and Sarah.

Kathryn Rudge was born in Liverpool in 1986. She was a BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist (2015-17), English National Opera Harewood Artist, YCAT Artist and she is an Associate Artist of the Royal Northern College of Music where she studied voice with Susan Roper (2004-11). She is the recipient of numerous awards including the Joyce and Michael Kennedy Award for the Singing of Richard Strauss. She now has (in less unusual times) a busy schedule of concert and operatic work.

So what of this new recording by an almost entirely Liverpoolian team of Katherine Rudge, the RLPO and Choir under their Russian conductor Vasily Petrenko? I had high hopes of Miss Rudge after hearing her in *Gerontius* at Oxford last December, and these are more than fulfilled here. She possesses a superb voice, which she uses with great intelligence. Her diction is virtually faultless, and she clearly has both the music and the words in her head and heart. The RLPO plays with élan throughout, sensitive and majestic as needed, and the RLP Choir is on top form. The recording *per se*, made in Philharmonic Hall, is excellent with great clarity and range. Petrenko conducts with considerable flair and feeling for the pieces, and provides excellent, supple, support throughout. The only disappointment is that there is no organ included, but this is a minor quibble in the context of the performances as a whole.

This issue is a delight, and a performance I know I will return to in the future. If ultimately it does not supplant the recordings by Baker and Connolly, one has to remember that this young lady is at a relatively early stage in her career and to be in third place (for that is where I would place her) to those great singers, in a very competitive field, is a massive achievement. All Elgarians should hear, indeed purchase, this recording which is very highly recommended. We will I am sure hear even greater things from Katie Rudge in the future.

The digital download also contains a performance (which I have not heard) of *Pomp & Circumstance March No 1*. Strangely, it is not included on the CD.

David Morris

Elgar: *Sea Pictures* Op.37

Falstaff Op.68

Elina Garanca (mezzo)

Staatskapelle Berlin /Daniel Barenboim

How times change. I well remember when Barbirolli's classic recording of the Cello Concerto with Jacqueline du Pré and *Sea Pictures* with Janet Baker was released in 1965 an eminent critic dismissed *Sea Pictures* as a piece of 'faded Victoriana'. Well, in the last few months we have had three new CDs of the work, all with international involvement. I reviewed the lovely performance on Erato in the April 2020 *Journal*, with Marie-Nicole Lemieux (mezzo) and the Orchestre National Bordeaux Aquitaine. Then a version on Onyx with Liverpool forces under the Russian Vasily Petrenko, and now this new version from Berlin. Proof be, if any was still needed, of Elgar's growing reacceptance into the European mainstream.

Elina Garanca is a young Latvian mezzo with a wide following on the continent, especially for her singing of opera. Her performance is deeply committed and beautifully delivered, her voice rich and warm in the lower reaches, down to low G, while the top notes gleam with ringing tone and absolute assurance. Her diction is impeccable, every word clearly heard, and the tempo for each song well judged. At first I thought the final song (*The Swimmer*), taken at a steadier than usual tempo, was going to be too slow, but it allows so much detail and warmth of expression to surface that I was totally disarmed. Barenboim and the orchestra surround the voice with swirling, ever changing watery colours which is a delight.

I yield to no-one in my admiration for what Barenboim has done for Elgar, especially on the continent, but I have occasionally been disturbed by his Furtwangler-like tendency to indulge in 'flexible rhythmic phrasing' – or to those of us in the Toscanini/Solti/Boult camp, 'mauling the rhythm about'. No trace of that here, and *Falstaff* emerges as the brilliantly written masterpiece that it is. I must at this point mention the Staatskapelle Berlin, an orchestra which now must rival its neighbour the Berlin Philharmonic – indeed, as an Elgar orchestra it far surpasses it. I thought I knew the score fairly well, but I lost count of the number of times my ear was caught by some orchestral colour – a chuckle from the bassoons, a viola counter-melody, a cor anglais phrase, a growl from the double basses. It would be tedious to report everything, or the number of times I had to go the full score to check, but of course it was all there, everything crystal clear in Decca's spacious yet full-bodied recording. Even Elgar's important percussion writing is clearly audible, which it hasn't always been in some recent recordings. It was, incidentally, recorded live at performances in Berlin at the end of 2019, but there is no trace of audience noise.

The full title of the work is *Falstaff: Symphonic Study in C minor*. Barenboim has noted the word *Symphonic*, and what emerges is a glorious symphonic sweep from beginning to end, tightly knit and brilliantly organised,



Decca 485 0968

rather than a succession of colourful interludes. The swagger of the marching armies, Falstaff's colossal boasting, and snoring, the bustle at the tavern and round the crowds in Westminster as the king approaches, Henry's cruel rejection of Falstaff; all is captured in vivid detail and glowing orchestral colours. Not to mention the two peaceful interludes, the (un-named) solo violin (presumably the orchestra's leader) playing with such lovely feeling – very moving.

I listened to several recordings of the work before committing pen to paper, including Barbirolli's and Boult's classic recordings but, good as they are, I think I can say that this is the finest recorded performance that I have heard. And what a work it is! No wonder Elgar had such affection for it, particularly as no-one else seemed to like it much! An absolute masterpiece of orchestral technique, and here stunningly played and conducted. It should, I feel, be in every Elgarian's collection.

Barry Collett

The above review is the last by that great Elgarian, the late Barry Collett, the close of a long stream of distinguished contributions that have graced these pages for many years. A full appreciation of Barry will be found in the Elgar Society News. Eds

It has come to our attention that some early pressings of the CD have a small editing error at 2'38" into Falstaff and half a bar is missing. Decca Classics has informed us that corrected stock should be available in mid-December. Any member who has a faulty copy and wishes to exchange it should contact Universal's Customer Service at StoreSupport@umusic.com



Elgar: Violin Sonata in E minor Op.82
Vaughan Williams: Violin Sonata in A minor
The Lark Ascending (original version)
 Jennifer Pike (violin)
 Martin Roscoe (piano)

Chandos
 CHAN20156

Since winning as a child prodigy the BBC Young Musician of the Year Award in 2002, Jennifer Pike has matured into a deeply insightful musician, reflected in her extraordinarily eclectic and wide-ranging discography. This recording teams her with Martin Roscoe, a chamber musician of the highest rank and well versed in partnering both youthful and more mature artists. In bringing these two together, Chandos has done us a fine service and has provided me with my new joint favourite version of the Elgar, happily sharing shelf space with much-loved recordings by Loraine McAslan and John Blakely, Hugh Bean and David Parkhouse, Marat Bisengaliev and Benjamin Frith.

What strikes the listener as early as the first movement's second subject, when the artists broaden the tempo into a beautiful and rhapsodic contemplation of the material, is the controlled yet relaxed musicality of the duo. Equally controlled and exciting are the returns to the original speed. This movement at 9'04" is almost a full minute slower than Parkhouse/Bean and Bisengaliev/Frith but sacrifices no musical tension and sets the scene for the more conventional (though equally lovely) length of the second movement's meditation.

The final movement is the only one where, to my ears, the dwelling on the beauty rather than the musical argument threatens the dramatic tension, yet the length is almost identical to the Bean/Parkhouse version but nearly half a minute slower than Bisengaliev/Frith. I was reminded of the criticism of H.C. Colles when, a few days after an early public performance of the Brinkwells Chamber music, he wrote 'An immediate effect of listening to Sir Edward Elgar's opp. 82, 83, and 84 in succession is to give one a new sympathy with the modern revolt against beauty of line and colour. A stab of crude ugliness would be a relief from that overwhelming sense of beauty'. I have never subscribed to his view but this latest interpretation's own 'overwhelming sense of beauty' in its last movement is its only fault, if fault it is.

The companion works on this recording (equally well served by the Chandos engineers and acoustics of Potton Hall) were both new to me. RVW's Sonata is a late work from 1954 and is as substantial as the Elgar late work. There is no trace of English Pastoral in the first two movements, the scherzo movement being described by James Day as 'sounding like Bartók and Shostakovich...capering about on Leith Hill'. The unexpected modal inflections of the final movement's theme (and variations) are unsurprising when one learns it came from the withdrawn Piano Quintet of 1903. Towards the end, there is a reminiscence of that time that provides an ideal scene-setting for the final recording on this CD, the original version for piano and violin of *The Lark Ascending*, begun in 1914 and premiered a century ago in 1920, preceding the well-known orchestral version by a year.

These works by RVW are as beautifully played as the Elgar and complete a simply delightful recording, opening my eyes and ears in the process. An excellent early idea for a Christmas present.

Steven Halls



Avie
AV2419

Elgar: Cello Concerto in E minor Op.85

Clyne: *Dance for cello and orchestra*

Inbal Segev (cello)

London Philharmonic Orchestra, Marin Alsop

Another month, another recording of Elgar's Cello Concerto! This time it comes from Israeli-born cellist Inbal Segev in collaboration with the London Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Marin Alsop: and what a recording it is too, displaying nuanced musicianship from the soloist and the most sensitive accompaniment from conductor and orchestra.

Throughout the recording, Segev produces the most ravishing sound from her 1673 Ruggieri instrument, displaying both subtlety of tone and, when required, power, without sacrificing any of the tonal colours available to her. The ability to play in such a manner is displayed to great advantage in the first movement where both soloist and orchestra capture the ebb and flow of the music beautifully, with the soloist seemingly unencumbered by the tendency to overdo the vibrato. This is nuanced playing that allows the emotion of the music to shine through without slipping into the syrupy.

With the transition from the first to the second movement accomplished, there are some real fireworks on display in the *allegro molto*. Here the articulation is exceptional and the precision displayed by all concerned can only be achieved through a clear understanding of what this music is about and the conductor's ability to control the pace whilst remaining faithful to the dynamic intent of the composer.

In the *adagio* the true beauty of the cellist's tone can be heard. This is enhanced by some exceptional phrasing, bringing out the full emotional pull of the piece. Once again, the accompaniment intensifies the emotional intent, resulting in a very satisfying listen. For me, this slow movement is the 'jewel in the crown', bringing to the fore the pathos and sense of longing for an earlier time.

The final movement of this concerto requires both power and delicacy. Once again, this recording does not disappoint. Some subtle and innovative phrasing, that is always in keeping with the sweep of the music, make this a very satisfying listen, bringing to a close what is for me a thoroughly absorbing recording of what is undoubtedly a well-worn classic.

It is, to say the least, unusual to find Elgar's Cello Concerto used as a 'filler' on a CD. I am not sure that this was the intent here, but Anna Clyne's *Dance for cello and orchestra*, precedes the concerto and, on the face of it seems to be a curious pairing. However, in her description of this five movement work, the composer, a cellist herself, explains that Elgar's E minor Concerto was firmly in her mind when composing *Dance*. The two works are separated by exactly a century and whilst they inhabit very different sound worlds, there are parallels to be drawn between them and, to my ear, the pairing is a refreshing change from the usual 'fillers' for the Concerto.

This disc comes highly recommended.

Stuart Freed

Elgar: Cello Concerto Op.85

Vaughan Williams/Matthews: *Dark Pastoral*

Dai Miyata (cello)

BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, Thomas Dausgaard

If there is anyone who still believes that there is no top class orchestral playing in Britain outside of the M25, they should most certainly buy this disc. The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra proves beyond any doubt that it is capable of producing truly international standards of playing that stand comparison with the best on offer internationally: and in Thomas Dausgaard they have a conductor of vision who allows the orchestra to shine in *tutti* passages and provide masterly accompaniment when called upon to do so.

Dai Miyata's is the second recording of Elgar's Cello Concerto that I have received for review within a month and, as a performance there could not be a greater contrast. Here the soloist has resisted the temptation to focus upon the emotional tug of the piece and to provide us with a cooler approach that, I must admit, I find to be a welcome change to most interpretations. This is, of course, a matter of taste and I appreciate that it is not something that will appeal to many listeners, for whom this work requires the heart to be worn firmly on the sleeve.

This less emotional view is obvious from the opening cello chords. One does not get the feeling of the soloist 'digging in', as has become customary, certainly since the du Pré/Barbirolli landmark recording. This sets the tone for the whole disc and proves that there are countless ways of approaching this music, all of which are equally valid.

Whilst Miyata's tone may not be as full as other cellists in this concerto, the second movement *allegro molto* gives him the opportunity to display his formidable technique. The timing is very similar to Elgar's own recording with Beatrice Harrison and, to my ear, has a purposeful sense of forward movement.

The *adagio* would have benefitted from more forward placing of the soloist. At times I found that the cello became lost in the orchestral textures with the result that the listener has to strain to hear exactly what is being played.

In the final movement one is able to hear just how good the orchestral playing is on this recording. The accuracy is to be admired and the support for the soloist enables him to 'let rip' with some fine precision playing of his own. The result is that when a change of pace is required, it does not jar, but seems to flow naturally.

When Elgar presented this work to the British public, he broke the mould of the romantic concerto: four movements instead of three, no significant development of themes and just two bars of *cadenza*. In doing so, he showed that he was a complete master of the form, but not a slave to its traditions.

Dark Pastoral is David Matthews' completion and orchestration of the slow movement of an unfinished concerto for cello written by Ralph Vaughan

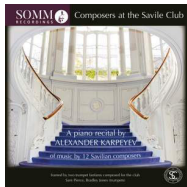


MDG 650218

Williams and intended for Casals. The completion has been done with Matthews' customary skill and mastery of style, maintaining a hint of the RVW sound world and folk-like style. The end result is a silky smooth eleven minute work that will repay repeated listening.

This may not be the first choice of many for the concerto, but if you are looking for an alternative to the norm, it is worth a listen. However, a disc that comes in at under forty minutes, leads one to have hoped for a more generous offering at full price.

Stuart Freed



Somm Recordings
SOMMCD 0601

Composers at the Savile Club

Piano works by Alwyn, Malcolm Arnold, Balfour Gardiner, Arthur Benjamin, Chagrin, Elgar, Howells, Stanford (arr. Grainger), Parry, Quilter, Virgil Thomson and Walton
Alexander Karpeyev (piano)
Sam Pierce, Bradley Jones (trumpets)

All the works included in this recording are by composers who belonged to the Savile Club. One has to be a fairly alert Elgarian in order to know that Elgar was of this company, for references to his membership are, or seem to be, rare. Percy Young mentions the club on page 195 of *Elgar O.M.* Elgar himself mentions it in his diary entry for 27 March 1920, on which date he lunched there in order to 'soothe' Alice, whose last illness had entered its final stages. According to the notes that accompany this charming compilation, Elgar was a member of the club from 1919 to 1928, which accords both with the diary entry and with his tenancy of the flat at 37 St James's Place, which spanned the period 1921-9.

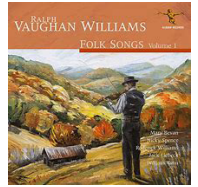
The Elgar works included here are *In Smyrna*, a product of the Mediterranean cruise in 1905, and *Serenade*, which was written in 1932 and published by Keith Prowse in 1933 (and which was no doubt prised out of the elderly composer by his contractual obligations to the publisher). Clearly, this is not a recording with the widest appeal imaginable. Those likely to buy it are going to be club members, Elgar devotees whose collection lacks the two works, fans of one or more of the other composers, and those with an interest in the byways of piano music; but the playing is commendable, the piano (in the Duke's Hall of the RAM) is a fine specimen (no details are given), and there are many delightful surprises, not least of them Quilter's *In a Gondola*, one of his *Two Impressions*, Op.19.

Fanfares for two trumpets, written for the Savile by Julian Anderson and Malcolm Arnold respectively, begin and end the CD, and the liner notes are carefully written and well worth reading.

Relf Clark

Ralph Vaughan Williams: Folk Songs Volume 1

Mary Bevan (soprano) Nicky Spence (tenor)
Roderick Williams (baritone)
Chorus: Helen Ashby, Kate Ashby, Cara Curran, Benedict Hymas, James Arthur, Nicholas Ashby
William Vann (piano) Jack Liebeck (violin)



Albion Records
ALBCD 042

Released in October 2020, this is the first of a four-part labour of love by the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society and Albion Records to record all 80 of the folk songs in English that RVW arranged for voice and piano or violin. We are told that 57 of the 80 songs have never been recorded and that fifteen of the 23 tracks on this first album are world premieres. Not all the songs were collected by RVW himself, indeed the fourteen *Folk Songs from Sussex* were all collected by Percy Merrick from the Lodsworth farmer, Henry Hills. Completing the CD are *Six English Folk Songs* and three *Sea Songs from The Motherland Song Book* (vol.4).

We in the Elgar Society know well the agonising over decisions whether to record all of the Elgar Complete Edition, not to mention arrangements for whatever forces that are not truly Elgar's. On top of that 'complete-ist' desire is the very real possibility that the quality may be very variable. You must add to that my belief and concern that the recording and transcribing of folk song were and are of the utmost musicological and historical importance but that arrangements transforming and smoothing folk-song into art song, to be sung by classically trained singers, can rob this glorious heritage of its community roots and its idiosyncratic uniqueness (hinted at in the excellent Introduction). Finally, a whole CD devoted to song is always at risk of inducing weariness in the listener, although the presence here of three different singers, piano, violin and the occasional small chorus should mitigate that.

So it was with curiosity, eagerness and a touch of apprehension that I started listening, committed to accepting it on its own terms as an art song recital.

I loved it, dear readers. *The Folk Songs from Sussex* (1912) were a delight: varied, moving, witty, expressively sung (even though I'd personally prefer less vibrato), subtly accompanied, with the standout track being *How Cold the Wind doth Blow*, employing two voices, piano and violin.

The *Six English Folk Songs* hail from 1935 although I didn't expect nor did I perceive any stylistic difference between these and the earlier collection. The skilful accompaniments belie the belief that English folk song should be unaccompanied and lend much-needed variety to the verses. However, I am not sure rustic accents, authentic or otherwise, sit well with the art song ethos.

According to the notes, *The Motherland Song Book* was an 'Official Publication of the League of the Arts for National and Civic Ceremony', it came out in the second decade of the century and RVW wanted the volumes to represent the best of English Sea Song. The chorus comes into its own in two of the three songs, heretically giving me the impression that the

natural setting for these would be the pageants that appeared regularly in E.F. Benson's *Mapp & Lucia* series – and I don't mean that as a criticism!

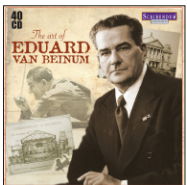
The recording is beautifully produced, with the notes containing a prologue to the series, an introduction and the words to each song, biographies of the artists and even an inducement to further research. If the subsequent ones, due to appear at six-monthly intervals, match the delights of this one, we can hope for riches indeed. But I have one last request – may we hear just one example of the original versions, whose ribald texts were thought 'not suitable for publication'? The attractiveness of 'Lovely Joan' might even be enhanced!

Steven Halls

Other Recent Releases



Frederick Ashton's ballet *Enigma Variations*, with designs by Julia Trevelyan Oman was created in 1968 and until now there has been no commercial recording. This very welcome DVD from The Royal Ballet, recorded at Covent Garden in October and November 2019, brings a new dimension to Elgar's orchestral masterpiece, and the use of Elgar's original ending adds an additional *cachet*. The excellent notes by former Royal Ballet dancer Patricia Linton shrewdly remind us that 'Elgar's – or is it Ashton's – characters have deep feelings, but they are restrained, dignified, constrained by a sense of propriety, of duty, of fidelity. The genius of Ashton, and of Elgar too, is that they can convey this world in such a way that we are caught up in it and feel it deeply ... without condescension or mockery'. *Concerto* with music by Shostakovich and *Raymonda Act III* by Glazunov complete this highly recommended issue. (OPUS ARTE OA1312D: Blue Ray OABD7272D)

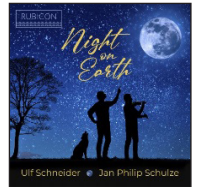


The art of Eduard van Beinum, conductor of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw Orchestra from 1945 to 1959, is celebrated in a 40 CD set from Scribendum, which includes his recordings of *Cockaigne* and the two *Wand of Youth* Suites: SCRIBENDUM SC823

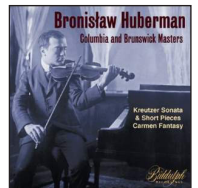


Russian Pianist, Sofja Gulbadamova has recorded a recital which includes Elgar's *Une Idylle* op.4, No 1 and the *Serenade* in E minor for Strings arranged for piano: HAENSSLER HC20047

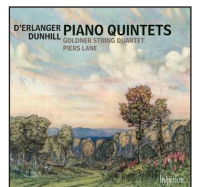
A recital by Ulf Schneider, violin and Jan Philip Schulze, piano called *Night on Earth*, brings together a number of nocturnes, including *Chanson de Nuit* op.15 no.1: RUBICON RCD1065



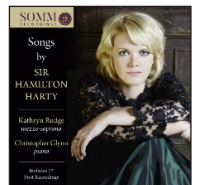
An historical issue with Bronislaw Huberman and Ignacy Friedman, *Columbia and Brunswick Masters* includes *La Capricieuse* along with Beethoven's *Kreutzer* Sonata: BIDDULPH LAB1025



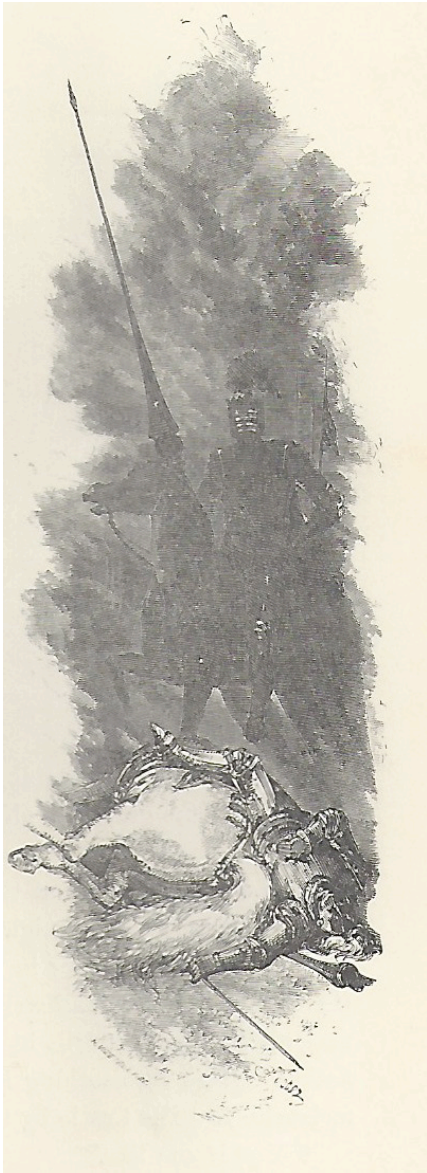
Thomas Dunhill (1877-1946) corresponded with Elgar before meeting him for the first time at the Worcester Three Choirs Festival in 1905, where the young musician was made very welcome and given every encouragement. Dunhill wrote a biography of Elgar published in 1938. His highly attractive Piano Quintet in C minor from 1904 is given a masterly performance by the Goldner Quartet with Piers Lane. Dunhill's chamber music was described in Cobbett's *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* as 'companionable, healthy, and English as the South Downs on a sunny day' and this appealing verdict together with this recording will win Dunhill new admirers. It is coupled with D'Erlanger's equally captivating Piano Quintet from 1901. If you wish to explore the byways of English chamber music this will not disappoint: HYPERION CDA68296



Hamilton Harty, another friend and champion to Elgar, more known as a conductor than a composer is the subject of a new CD from SOMM: 23 of his songs have been recorded by Kathryn Rudge and Christopher Glynn on SOMM CD0616



Kevin Mitchell



The other illustrations for *The Black Knight* by Myles Birkett Foster (see page 1).



70 YEARS AGO ...

The first known mention of forming a Society came from the composer himself, in a perhaps jocular aside to Jaeger on 24 January 1901 when he suggested: 'Why not form an Elgar society for the furtherance of the master's works'.¹

Then in a tribute to Elgar after his death Basil Maine wrote: 'An organised revival was necessary to make the English of today aware of William Byrd's and Henry Purcell's greatness. I look to the formation during the coming months of an Elgar Society to keep fresh the interpretations of the music and to keep before us the true greatness of Edward Elgar'.²

Ernest Read followed this by writing to *The Musical Times*: 'Elgar is almost the last of the line of a group of English musicians who formed the renaissance of English music ... and for this reason it has for some time past been in the minds of certain admirers of Elgar to perpetuate his memory by the founding of an Elgar Society ... It is a matter of regret that Sir Edward Elgar died before seeing the proposed Society launched, but I believe he had some slight knowledge of its inception'.³ Read envisaged the formation of a choir and orchestra in London to hold a festival of Elgar's works in the 1934/35 concert season, but this idea was not realised, and no Society came into existence at that time.

In the nineteen thirties the annual drama festival created by Barry Jackson, with Shaw at its centre, and with Elgar as the latter's satellite up to 1933, gave Malvern a world-wide reputation, but this failed to be sustained after the Second World War. However, an Elgar Festival under the direction of Julius Harrison took place in Malvern in 1947. Music was at the forefront of the event with major works including the *Variations*, *The Dream of Gerontius*, the A flat symphony and Cello Concerto having pride of place. Although it was envisaged that a second festival would follow in 1948, this did not happen until 1950, when A.T. (Bertie) Shaw, Frank Greatwich and Dorothy Bell were appointed directors of Elgar Festivals Ltd, with Bertie as Chairman.

The festival was a success as Sir Adrian Boult brought the London Symphony Orchestra to Malvern where they performed the *Variations*, *In the South*, *Introduction and Allegro*, *Falstaff* and the Cello Concerto, and whilst there it appears that Sir Adrian suggested forming an Elgar Society, an idea which had already been incubating in the minds of the festival organisers. The idea was picked up by Hugh Ottaway who wrote:

All who are sensitive to the pull of places will know the benefit of studying a man's work in his own country. This is particularly valuable in Elgar's case for his music is tinged with so many local references and associations. He transcended his native heath, becoming at heart the 'gentleman of Worcestershire'. The formation of the Elgar Society will be a great step forward. One envisages such a body not only as a means of securing a regular festival, but also a patron of Elgar research. A really active society could do much to promote that positive reevaluation of the composer's works which is undoubtedly due.

In the midst of the festival the *Birmingham Gazette*, having been forewarned of what was planned, reported on 29 September that 'When Sir Adrian Boult, a trustee of Elgar's birthplace at

1 Jerrold Northrop Moore (ed), *Elgar and His Publishers: Letters of a Lifetime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 272.

2 Basil Maine, 'Sir Edward Elgar', *World-Radio*, 2 March, 1934, reprinted in *The Elgar Society Journal*, Volume 1, Number 1 (January 1979), 13.

3 *The Musical Times*, 1 April 1934.

Broadheath, addresses a luncheon of celebrities attending the Elgar Festival at Malvern today, he will refer to the formation of an Elgar Society to guarantee that the Festival shall be held annually'.⁴ The intention was to request members to pay an annual subscription to provide regular income, which was to replace the system of guarantees that was to expire at the end of the 1950 festival.

Years later Frank Greatwich recalled: 'What the 1950 festival did was to bring to a focal point our thoughts on founding an Elgar Society. We were given much encouragement by Sir Adrian and soon after the festival in September, a provisional committee was appointed to draft a constitution for submission to a general meeting to bring the Society into existence'.⁵

The meeting to appoint a provisional committee took place at Warwick House Restaurant, Malvern on 5 December 1950. The proposal to form an Elgar Society was formally proposed by Miss Kathleen Pearn of Stockport and was seconded by Mr P.J. McDonald of Malvern. John Tompkins was appointed to chair the provisional committee and the *Malvern Gazette* of 8 December duly reported the meeting with the headline INAUGURATION OF THE ELGAR SOCIETY.⁶

In addition to the Chairman the provisional committee consisted of Mrs Mary Cartland,⁷ Mrs A.T. Shaw, the editor of the *Malvern Gazette* Miss Joyce King, Mr Spencer Noble, Mr Wyndham Croome, the Priory organist Mr Durham Holl, and Mr Reg Marsh was appointed Secretary.

The second meeting was held on 29 January 1951 at the County Hotel, Malvern. The work of the provisional committee was discussed and, on its recommendation, A.T. Shaw proposed, and seconded by F. Greatwich, that the Society should be formed to honour the memory of Sir Edward Elgar. A further motion followed proposed by Mrs Shaw and seconded by Mrs G. Mitchell (a director of Elgar Festivals Ltd) that it be named 'The Elgar Society'.

Sir Adrian Boulton was elected President and Mr John Tompkins was confirmed as the first Chairman, who looking to the future said: 'While the Society's home for the moment is in Malvern, it is hoped that the Society will develop on a national basis'. Five categories of membership were created, and the subscriptions confirmed as follows:

Adult membership	five shillings [25p]
Junior membership (under 18)	one shilling [5p]
Family membership	ten shillings and six pence [52p]
Life membership	five guineas [£5.25]
Corporate membership	ten shillings and six pence [52p]

By June 1951 it was reported that there were 193 adult members, two junior members (who were they?) 27 family members and eight life members.

The first committee comprised the members of the provisional committee together with Miss

4 *Birmingham Gazette*, Friday 29 September, 1950, 4.

5 Frank Greatwich, 'The Elgar Society-The Early Years', *The Elgar Society Journal*, Volume 2, Number 2 (May 1981), 10.

6 A photograph taken at the meeting of Miss Kathleen Pearn, Mr A.T. (Bertie) Shaw and Mr J.V.H. Tompkins, subsequently appeared in the *Malvern Gazette*, and is reproduced in Michael Trott, editor, *Half-Century, The Elgar Society, 1951-2001* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Enterprises. 2001), 19.

7 Mother of Barbara Cartland the novelist and her brother Ronald Cartland MP, who made his reputation in the House of Commons on 2 August 1939, by resisting Neville Chamberlain's proposal to adjourn the House until October. His denunciation of Chamberlain included the memorable phrase, 'We are in a situation that within a month we may be going to fight – and we may be going to die'. Chamberlain obtained his adjournment: Cartland was killed when retreating to Dunkirk on 30 May 1940.

V. Cooke, Miss K. Pearn, Dr R.A. Smith, Mr (later Sir) David Willcocks, Bertie Shaw and Frank Greatwich. The main purpose of the Society was to keep the Elgar Festivals in Malvern running and to support Elgar Festivals Ltd and the Festival Committee. However, it proved impractical to have three distinct bodies and when after a year John Tompkins had to resign as Chairman for business reasons, it made sense for the organisations to merge under one Chairman. Thus, Bertie Shaw became the second Chairman of the Elgar Society and he remained in that office until 1976.

In March 1951 it was reported that Dr Ralph Vaughan Williams, Sir Ivor Atkins, Sir Percy Hull, Julius Harrison and Admiral Sir William Tennant (Lord-Lieutenant of Worcestershire) had agreed to become Vice-Presidents and in April 1951 Mrs Elgar Blake became an Honorary Member.

With acknowledgment to the article by Frank Greatwich, 'The Elgar Society - The Early Years' *The Elgar Society Journal*, Volume 2, Number 2 (May 1981) and to Michael Trott editor, *Half-Century: The Elgar Society, 1951-2001*, (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2001)

I am grateful to both Chris Bennett and Mike Bennett who located documents for me.

Kevin Mitchell

100 YEARS AGO ...

With the revived Worcester Three Choirs Festival in prospect, Elgar wrote to Ivor Atkins from Ridgehurst on 1 August that he and Carice hoped to stay ‘very quietly and *invisibly* in the Precincts ... but do not tell anyone of this as I do not want to visit or be visited, alas!’ They returned to Brinkwells on 3 August and having previously lunched with Adrian Boult, who had also been invited by the Speyers to Ridgehurst, Elgar wrote to the conductor on 5 August proposing him for membership of the Athenaeum, but reported: ‘I am lonely now & do not see music in the old way & cannot believe I shall complete any new work – sketches I still make but there is no inducement to finish anything; - ambition I have none’. Boult was about to undertake a European tour to include Munich, and Elgar wrote again on 22 August asking if he would give his greetings to Strauss and assure him of his ‘continued admiration &, if he will, friendship’. To a request for the possibility of new music Elgar replied: ‘it is kind of you to think of new compositions but I cannot bear the thought of music’. He had written in a similar vein on 6 August to Lady Stuart of Wortley that ‘I hear nothing of anyone[.] I do not write, at all – in fact I have ‘gone out’ - & like it’.

In August Lady Stuart had written cryptically concerning some roses she had picked on 26 June on her way to Ludlow. Elgar sought clarification on 15 August: ‘I do not in the least understand about June 26th & roses (you might tell me) we received none – did you send some? or what?’

It appears that the flowers had come from the vicinity of Elgar’s birthplace at Broadheath. An undated note from Elgar may relate to this event: ‘So you have been to B.- I fear you did not find the cottage – it is near the clump of Scotch firs – I can smell them now – in the hot sun. Oh! How cruel that I was not there – there’s *nothing between* that infancy & *now* and I want to see it ... I knew you wd like the heath – I could have shewn you such lovely lanes’.

Elgar was soon to return to Worcestershire himself but before doing so he and Carice left Brinkwells on 30 August to stay at the Langham Hotel, Severn House being shut up. They attended the London rehearsals for the Worcester Festival at the Morley Hall, Hanover Square on 31 August and 1 and 2 September, then travelled to Worcester on 3 September before the Festival commenced, ‘so as to keep a fatherly eye on it all’. His *Sursum Corda* was included in the Grand Opening Service on 5 September. He conducted *The Music Makers* on 7 September and *The Dream of Gerontius* the following day, with the *Introduction and Allegro* in the Public Hall the same evening. Wulstan Atkins visited Elgar in his lodgings on 9 September, Wulstan’s father and Billy Reed being his only previous visitors. He was pleased with the performances of his works and ‘seemed more like his normal self and admitted that the Festival had done him good’. The main event of that day was the *St Matthew Passion* in the collaborative edition he had undertaken with Atkins in 1911, which was preceded by Elgar’s arrangement of two Bach chorales, played by the LSO brass, four times from the Cathedral tower, ‘*O Mench bewein dein sunde Gross*’ in the morning and ‘*O Haupt voll Blut und Wunden tab*’ in the afternoon. For the *Passion* two separate organs were erected, one on each side of the orchestral platform: this particular arrangement had only been carried out on few prior occasions, thereby replicating the original performance in St. Thomas’s, Leipzig. That evening Elgar conducted ‘*For the Fallen*’ in the Cathedral, after Vaughan Williams had given the premiere of his *Four Hymns* for tenor solo and orchestra. On the Festival’s final day he and Carice remained to hear the *Messiah*, followed by a concluding service at the Cathedral war memorial to commemorate the war dead and, after congratulating Atkins on the success of the performances, the excellent chorus and the playing of the LSO – which included the twenty-year-old cellist John Barbirolli – he went to stay with the Berkeleys at Spetchley Park, writing to the Windflower on

12 September that ‘the [*St Matthew*] *Passion* went very well, on the whole ... It is wonderful here ... I fish but catch nothing’. Wulstan Atkins noted that: ‘The Festival had evidently helped him enormously’.

Travelling on to his sister Pollie at Stoke Prior Elgar wrote to Ivor Atkins on 18 September: ‘I cannot tell you how I loved the week – the Cathedral – the weather, and all of it. Thank you for a mighty effort & bless you’. But he concluded he was tired of life and had ‘nothing to work for now, alas!’ Atkins replied to thank him for his help in ‘the grand revival’ and that Elgar was a ‘very anchor’. On 21 September he recopied part of an old unfinished Trio from 1886 into a sketchbook, but nothing flowed from that. He appears to have spent a few days at The Hut, where he ‘had a quiet time with Frank’, marking his score of the *Variations* with crosses beside the initials of those who had died, starting with ‘C.A.E’ and ending with ‘E.D.U.’, before he and Carice sailed from Harwich to Rotterdam, arriving in Amsterdam on 2 October for a conducting tour, which included a steamer excursion to the Zuider Zee on 5 October. The scores and parts of his music were flown over by aeroplane. On the tour Elgar conducted several concerts with the Mingleberg Orchestra. He and Carice moved to Brussels on 11 October and Elgar returned to London on 24 October. He hired a car for three months on 28 October and dined with Frank Schuster, Arnold Bennett, Lady Maud Warrender and Dr Henry Head, the neurologist, on 31 October. He attended the Literary Society dinner at the Café Royal on 1 November and two days later he spoke at a banquet given for Landon Ronald at the Connaught Rooms.

On 5 November Elgar and Carice travelled to Brinkwells in the hired car, to close the cottage, leaving on 7 November. On the 10th he conducted *Falstaff*, the Cello Concerto with Salmond, and the Second Symphony, at the inaugural concert of the City of Birmingham Orchestra, which was followed by a reception given by the Lord Mayor. During the afternoon rehearsal Elgar spotted a vacant seat in the orchestra and, in recalling his life as a young violinist, thought ‘it was the one in which I used to sit. I almost expected to see myself come on with the fiddle!’ They both spent some time at Stoke before returning to London on 15 November and the next day he went to Hayes for a recording session. First, Beatrice Harrison had to finish her recording of the Cello Concerto by playing the adagio successfully, which was achieved. Then the Theme and the first eight of the *Variations* were set down with varying degrees of success.

On 20 November Elgar attended Boult’s rehearsal at Kingsway Hall of the Second Symphony with the newly formed British Symphony Orchestra, writing afterwards: ‘I was delighted with the ‘making’ of your orchestra and the attention & interest of the members was first class – a fine band of men’. Heifetz was invited to tea at Severn House on 22 November and Elgar once again, recalling his early days as a violinist, wrote out at Heifetz’s request, an ‘Exercise for the third finger’ which emanated from his days of study with Pollitzer in London in 1877. The next day he went to ‘a masculine dinner’ at Arnold Bennett’s home, 12B George St Hanover Square where he again found Dr Henry Head, together with Barrie and Siegfried Sassoon. On 25 November he attended a Philharmonic Concert, conducted by Albert Coates where Heifetz played the Violin Concerto. Writing to the Windflower on 27 November he commented that ‘it was a tremendous display – not exactly our own Concerto ... I have not forgotten the days at H’ford when ‘it’ was made – but there is nothing in it all somehow & I am sad’. He dined with Landon Ronald on 28 November.

Kevin Mitchell

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