

# The Elgar Society JOURNAL



J A N U A R Y

1980

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## EAST MIDLANDS BRANCH.

At a meeting of members held in Leicester, and attended by Michael Pope, Andrew Neill, Trevor Fenemore-Jones, and the Editor, on December 1st, it was agreed to reconstitute the Branch. A steering committee was elected consisting of Raymond Monk (Chairman), Derek Mear (Treasurer), and Malcolm Smitham, 5 Riddon Drive, Hinckley, Leicester (Secretary), & three other members. They will run the Branch until a general meeting of members can be held. A new programme will be announced to all members in the area as soon as possible

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# The Elgar Society Journal

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## EDITORIAL

Vol.1, no.4

Another New Year has arrived, and the Society wishes all its members a Happy 1980. The last year has gone by at breakneck speed it seems, with Festivals, recitals, concerts, and yet another excellent year at the Birthplace Museum, proving (if it needed proof) the great interest in Elgar and his music. Now 1980 has dawned, and you can read on other pages of the two big Elgar Festivals planned. One, the result of much West Country enthusiasm; the other, an impressive series of concerts in the capital, with some of the finest artists of the present day performing to benefit the Birthplace Appeal Fund. Both events deserve maximum support from all Elgarians.

It is something of a 'hardy annual' for me to remind readers of the need to keep us informed of concerts and recitals which contain Elgar items. We have no magic way of knowing when and where such concerts occur (even big London concerts in a major concert-hall have been known to escape us), so please write and let us know when anything interesting to Elgarians is to take place in your locality. Keep writing to us too on any subjects musical on which you feel strongly. We cannot always print letters in full, but we do welcome correspondence.

Finally, readers will notice a change in the layout of this issue of the JOURNAL. Previous issues have been set on an IBM 'Executive', but the Society has now purchased a Sperry-Remington which uses 'golf-ball' type-faces. This enables us to vary the appearance of the page, and will, we hope, be easier to read and more attractive to look at.

RONALD TAYLOR  
Editor

## News Items

THE MALVERN FESTIVAL will be held again in 1980, this year from 19th May to 8th June. No details have been received so far, but we suggest that readers write to the Festival Box Office, Malvern, Worcs. for all details.

MICHAEL KENNEDY'S One-Day School, organised jointly by the University of Bristol and the South West branch of the Elgar Society, has already had to move to a larger room owing to the number of applications. The new venue is the University Reception Room, Wills Memorial Building, Queens Road, Bristol. The fee is £1.50 and there is still time to apply, but hurry! Contact Ian Cartwright at 02755 2621 for details.

COPIES ARE STILL AVAILABLE of Yehudi Menuhin's Lecture to the London branch in 1976. Several hundred copies of the printed version of the Lecture have been sold, and newer members may like to be reminded that Mr. Menuhin's address was an appraisal, not only of Elgar, but of England and the English. Price 35p. incl. postage, from the Hon. Secretary, London Branch, Killiegray, 7 Batchworth Lane, Northwood, Middx.

A FURTHER PUBLICATION FROM THE LONDON BRANCH should be available by the time this JOURNAL is in member's hands. This will be a revised and expanded version of Geoffrey Hodgkins' excellent talk on Elgar's Religious Character. As much of what is written has not hitherto appeared in any biography, it is anticipated that there will be a brisk demand for copies. Price 65p. incl. postage, from the London branch Secretary, at the address given in the previous item.

THE ELGAR STATUE APPEAL FUND is now over half way to its target of £25,000. Mr. Potts is well advanced with work on the statue--readers may have seen a picture of the sculptor at work which appeared in *The Times* on the day that that newspaper resumed publication. A site has been selected in consultation with Worcester City Council, and it is planned to unveil the statue at the Three Choirs Festival in 1981. To enable the organisers to meet that date however, it is necessary to reach their target as soon as possible. Members are asked to contribute now to THE ELGAR STATUE APPEAL, c/o Barclay's Bank, 54 High Street, Worcester. Receipts will not be sent, but a list of donors will be published later.

NOVELLO'S HAVE NOW PUBLISHED an Elgar Piano Album at £1.65. This includes *Imperial March*, *the Two Chansons*, etc. The part-songs *From the Greek Anthology* are also available, for the male voice, at £1.15. Also issued are Four Part-Songs, also at £1.15. These consist of *O Happy Eyes*, *My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land*, *Love*, and *Spanish Serenade*. All are welcome additions to Elgar's music in print.

THE DEATH has occurred of Mrs. Norah Parker, at the age of 94. She was the sister of the poet John Masefield, and a violin pupil of Elgar.

## DUTCH CHOIR SING "GERONTIUS"

An unusual, if not unique, performance of THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS was given before a large audience at Kidbrooke Concert Hall in South-East London on October 13th last. The occasion was truly international, for the local Sidcup Symphony Orchestra had invited the Nederlandse Haendelvereniging (the Dutch Handel Society Chorus of 120 voices) to sing Elgar's masterpiece with them. The concert celebrated the International Year of the Child, and the proceeds went to the Vietnam Boat Children Fund. The performance was conducted by Jack P. Loorij, the Dutch Handel Society's founder and conductor, who was knighted by Queen Juliana. The soloists were also Dutch: Jard Van Nes (mezzo-soprano), Hein Meens (tenor), and Wout Oosterkamp (bass-baritone). A number of Elgar Society members attended the concert and one of us (Geoffrey Hodgkins) sang among the tenors - coping valiantly with the Dutch national anthem, sung, of course, in Dutch. The loud and prolonged applause at the end of the concert was testimony to the very fine talents of our visitors from the Netherlands.

After the concert, we chatted with Mr. Loorij, himself a keen Elgarian. He told us of his plans to hold a festival of Elgar's choral music in Holland in 1980. Fuller information is promised us in time for the May edition of the JOURNAL. Mr. Loorij is also advising the members of the International Committee of the Society, about the level of interest in Elgar in Holland. He has promised to actively promote the life and works of the composer in his country.

IAN LACE.

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THE FIRST PERFORMANCE OF ELGAR'S *FIRST SYMPHONY* was recalled in an article by the late Robin Legge, which appeared in the "*Gramophone*" for May 1931. We quote from the article by kind permission of the editor.

"I myself heard it twice on the opening day, so to speak, for I heard a full and complete rehearsal in the afternoon, and after the evening performance I found my way into the artists' room, where I discovered old Papa Hans Richter and Sir Edward Elgar hugging each other like a couple of bears and gaily waltzing round a table in the middle of the room! It was a gay and giddy evening!"

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## Elgar Festival ---- Hereford 1980

Following the success of the Festival at Tewkesbury Abbey the organisers of that event have decided to be even more ambitious for their next venture. Organised under the name of the Philomusica of Gloucester, Festival President Lady Hull, a programme of events has been arranged running from May 17th to May 31st.

The Festival Conductor will be James Cowley, and the guest conductors will include: Clifford Harker, Harold Briggs, Godfrey Ridout, Eric Woodward, and Daniel Morgan Jones. The programmes will be given by the Philomusica Elgar Festival Orchestra and Chorus, Hereford and Worcester County Youth Orchestra, Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra, Rutland Sinfonia, Sale Chamber Orchestra, Richey Quartet, The Ledbury Singers, The Hereford Carollers, and Roy Massey, organist of Hereford Cathedral.

A leaflet giving the provisional programme is now available from: James Walkley, Craeg-Lea, 86 Wells Road, Malvern, Worcs.

A Souvenir programme book will be available in April. At the time of writing vacancies exist in the Festival Chorus, and in the String Section only of the Orchestra. Collections and donations given during the Festival will be given to the Hereford Cathedral Restoration Fund, Church funds of Ledbury Parish Church, All Saints Parish Church, Hereford, and the Elgar Birthplace Appeal.

A number of performances will be given which are of special interest, including two first performances of new works. Among the Elgar items are:

THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS, THE MUSIC MAKERS,  
THE CORONATION ODE, VIOLIN CONCERTO (soloist  
Ralph Holmes), FALSTAFF, FROISSART OVERTURE,  
CARACTACUS, THE LIGHT OF LIFE, Excerpts from  
THE STARLIGHT EXPRESS, SPIRIT OF ENGLAND,  
SEA PICTURES, CELLO CONCERTO (Soloist Nicola Thomas)  
PIANO QUINTET, and the STRING QUARTET

Among the lecturers presenting special talks during the Festival are: Dr. Jerrold Northrop Moore, E. Wulstan Atkins, Derek Forss, John Pike, Julian Oxley.

An ambitious programme which should strain the hotel facilities of Hereford to the limit! We wish the organisers every success, and hope that members will extend their active support to this courageous West Country venture.

## Elgar Foundation & Birthplace News

As reported in the press in November, the Elgar Foundation, through the Elgar Birthplace Trust, has purchased a house near to the Birthplace Museum. This house can be used to provide living accommodation for the Curator, and will mean that those rooms at the Birthplace not now open to the public can be brought into use for display purposes. This is a development which will be welcomed by all Elgar enthusiasts. This purchase has used up a large proportion of available funds, and makes the need to contribute generously to the Birthplace Appeal Fund all the more important. The target is £150,000 and donations should be addressed to the Fund at 8 College Yard, Worcester.

More details are now available of the great choral feast in London in June and July. As we go to press details of ticket prices and availability are not to hand, but details can be obtained from MISS ANNE SODEN, 11 Darley Mead Court, Hampton Lane, Solihull, B91 2QA, after March 1st. Please enclose a s.a.e.

### At the ROYAL ALBERT HALL

- 12th JUNE, THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS, with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra & Chorus, conductor: Norman Del Mar  
With: Dame Janet Baker, Kenneth Bowen, Michael Rippon
- 16th JUNE, THE APOSTLES, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, and Worcester Festival Choral Society, conductor: Donald Hunt  
With: Linda Esther Gray, Anne Collins, Neil Jenkins, John Noble, David Thomas, John Tomlinson
- 15th JULY THE LIGHT OF LIFE, & SPIRIT OF ENGLAND, with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus, conductor: Sir Charles Groves  
With: Margaret Marshall, Helen Watts, Robin Leggate, John Shirley-Quirk

### At the ROYAL FESTIVAL HALL

- 11th JULY THE KINGDOM, with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, & Croydon Philharmonic Choir, conductor: James Gaddern  
With: Sheila Armstrong, Alfreda Hodgson, Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Michael Rippon

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The Birthplace has had 1,159 visitors in the three months since August, totalling 5,800 for the year. Among visitors of note were Lady Hull, Prof. Peter Dennison of Australia, and Peter Jones, of Keele University. Recent gifts have included collections of programmes, photographs, and records, all of which are most gratefully acknowledged. Phone calls have kept Jack and Vivienne McKenzie busy, including requests as to which tobacco Elgar smoked, and the offer of Elgar's piano. (Did he really own so many?) This year at long last the Curator had a holiday! A team of helpers took charge in Jack's absence, and lost Vivienne's pencil. Apart from that they did well.



*Photographs of Cowen and Elgar taken early this century*



# THE GRAMOPHONE AND THE SINGER ----- Cowen & Elgar

by HERMAN KLEIN

[This article was first published in "The Gramophone", March, 1932, and is reprinted here by kind permission of the editor of that journal.]

To my great regret I was unable to be present at the dinner of the Musicians' Club, which honoured the 80th birthday of Sir Frederic Cowen. But, although prevented on that notable occasion from paying a personal tribute to one who was during long years a close and intimate friend, my thoughts were nevertheless with him and busily bringing up all the while a host of pleasant recollections. I seem to have been hearing and writing about Frederic Cowen all my life. He and his compositions (the early ones) were popular long before I took up my critical pen. He has never ceased work in one direction or another; and here he is, still active and vigorous, besides being the same inveterate punster that he was when I first came across him in the late 'seventies.

To me this seems the more wonderful because, properly regarded, Sir Frederic Cowen's splendid capacity for holding his own is less in the nature of a survival than a revival. For, truth to tell, it struck me when I came back from New York in 1909 that he had begun slightly to lose his hold on the suffrages and affections of the music loving public. Younger men had come into prominence. There were plenty of newcomers at that particular epoch who "knew not Joseph"; and fashions as well as passions in the musical world of that period were running high. It was the custom to depreciate with huge doses of undisguised scorn everything that did not glorify the school of the moment. The hundred Cowen successes that had followed the *ROSE MAIDEN* of the youth of eighteen; all the other cantatas and oratorios, the symphonies and operas, the orchestral pieces and the high-class songs, that had aroused our admiration and hopes a couple of decades previously - these seemed to be sliding into the limbo of things neglected or forgotten. Then suddenly the *descensus Averni* was stayed. Mr. Cowen's marriage to a charming woman rejuvenated him. The triumph of his fine cantata *THE VEIL* at the Cardiff Festival of 1910 made people open their eyes. The knighthood which came in the following year acted as an encouragement and an incentive to renewed effort. By the time the Great War was on us, Sir Frederic was himself again, and doing good work as conductor and teacher at the Guildhall School into the bargain.

Now I look upon this as what we call in cricket an "amazing recovery". Certainly you will find few instances to be compared with it in the annals of music or, indeed, any other art. The miracle will only be complete, however, when the present generation and the next have fully realised (and recognized) Frederic Cowen's true standing as a composer. They can afford, if they please, to leave aside the question of his doughty deeds as a conductor, who was directing the Prom-

enade Concerts at Covent Garden when Henry Wood was a boy of eleven; who was conductor of the Philharmonic Society, of the Scottish Orchestra, the Cardiff and the Handel Festivals for many years; and who took out the English Orchestra that played at the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition of 1888-9. Conductors, like singers and players, of the Victorian era left behind them no enduring traces of their talents. Not so the composers. Their works remain; and such as are worth rehearsing can always be revived. Some of Cowen's finest lyrical efforts may have been wasted upon operas like *THORGRIM*, *SIGNA*, and *HAROLD* because of their dull, spineless librettos (the curse of the British music-drama!) but the same same obstacle will not prevent our choral societies from performing with advantage to themselves and their audiences such fine cantatas as *THE SLEEPING BEAUTY*, *ST. JOHN'S EVE*, *RUTH* (an oratorio), *THE VEIL*, *THE WATER-LILY*, and *JOHN GILPIN*, or even the early but clever *ST. URSULA*. I predict also renewed life for the *SCANDINAVIAN* and the *WELSH* symphonies, two masterful works practically unknown to this generation. These and many other orchestral compositions from the same pen will be heard long after the craze for "contemporary" ugliness has decayed and sunk into well-merited oblivion.

The justification for this prophecy was stated by Sir Frederic Cowen himself, at his birthday banquet, when he contended that "melody was the basis of all music". He had an especial right to utter that word of truth, being himself one of the most prolific creators of beautiful melody that this country (to put it modestly) has ever possessed. It may be melody that varies in type and quality. It began putting on new colour and flavour in *ST. URSULA* when the young composer returned in 1880 from his Scandinavian tour with Trebelli. But, alike then and since, it was always melody that you could instantly recognize as "Cowenesque" - stamped, that is to say, with an individuality of character that you could no less readily perceive than if it were Sullivanese or Elgarian; melody which constitutes the very essence of that personal touch that distinguishes one musician (or one painter) from another. And perhaps the Cowenesque has had this particular advantage over the others - that it is the kind of melody most exquisitely adjusted to the idiosyncracies and needs of the human voice - in a word, it is the most *singable*.

It was eminently fitting that Sir Edward Elgar should have been entrusted, at the function I am referring to, with the duty of proposing the health of his octogenarian friend. This enabled him to recall the fact, of which few people were aware, that when he had entered the London musical world in 1884, "an utterly unknown person," Fred Cowen was the only one of the reigning conductors who had complied with his request that they should "look over his compositions." That, he said, was the beginning of over 45 years of unbroken friendship, and he went on to seal the bond with the warmest tribute to Sir Frederic's outstanding gifts as a conductor that has been uttered by any living musician. The public expression of gratitude from such a source was peculiarly welcome, tardy though it might appear to be. Perhaps - who knows? - Sir Edward was inwardly comparing the long years that it

had taken his old friend to obtain a coveted distinction at the hands of Royalty with his own unprecedentedly rapid rise to fame and all imaginable social honours. As a rule those disparities are not easy to explain, and to make the attempt in the present instance would involve too long a history. Let it suffice to say that, whereas Sir Frederic Cowen belonged to the Victorian era, Sir Edward Elgar had the good fortune to blossom in the Edwardian.

I have thought it right in this article to sing at some length the praises of the Victorian because I feel that my readers ought to appreciate now - as well as or even better than later on - the estimate held of him by one who has known him for the best part of his career. To do the same with the Edwardian would be superfluous, though I have known him, too, ever since I heard his first oratorio, *THE LIGHT OF LIFE*, produced at the Worcester Festival of 1896; for no English musician has ever, in his lifetime, had so much written about him or his music, and the story is far too familiar for repetition here and now. Neither would any detailed comparisons between the Victorian and the Edwardian serve a useful purpose. That is a task that writers of a later day will be much better able to perform, especially after the verdict of posterity shall have been ascertained and registered. Meanwhile the advantage rests, as it naturally must, with the more modern composer, whose style, whose idioms, whose very mannerisms, have formed part and parcel of the musical growth of the twentieth century. But the good music, the "beautiful melody", be it Cowenesque or Elgarian, produced in all ages has its equal right to immortality, and we may be sure that that claim can never fail sooner or later to assert itself.

Sir Edward Elgar's frank expression of gratitude was, like his presence at this feast, a notable sign of the times. Musicians too commonly forget what they owe to those who have helped them to obtain a footing on the first rung of the ladder. They are inclined only to remember failures and adverse criticisms in the Press. For my own part I cannot recall that Sir Edward Elgar, unlike his old friend Sir Frederic, ever achieved such a thing as a palpable failure - nor even an approach to one, despite the oft-repeated erroneous statement that *THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS* was coldly received on its production at the Birmingham Festival of 1900. On the contrary, I can emphatically declare (and I was there) that it was received with enthusiasm; while the critics, without exception, lavished upon it their warmest superlatives. (How, indeed, could they honestly have done otherwise?) To prove this, once for all, I will quote here some of the opinions that they wrote:-

*The Daily Telegraph* : "There is nothing for it but to lay before Mr. Elgar the homage due to a very striking and brilliant effort, the more remarkable because he barred himself from other than occasional use of melody, as apart from chromatic progressions determined by harmonic ends...*THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS* advances its composer's claim to rank among the musicians of whom the country should be proudest."

*The Times* : "If we look back to the sugary inanities of the oratorios of Gounod, which nearly twenty years ago were so loudly admired in Birmingham, we may well be grateful for the solidity and the sincerity of feeling which are apparent on every page of Mr.Elgar's score."

*The Standard* : "THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS is a work of more than ordinary importance. It has occupied Mr.Elgar for over eight years, and the result may unhesitatingly be pronounced to be one of the finest choral writings of recent times... In short, it is a composition in which are revealed very great qualities, imagination, and poetic feeling, besides a remarkable capacity in dealing with the resources of the orchestra."

*The Daily Chronicle* : "It is as notable for its melodic beauty and sustained loftiness of tone as for its elaborate construction."

*The Manchester Guardian* : "Comparison with Berlioz is simply inevitable - for Edward Elgar's dramatic power admits of comparison with the great masters."

*Pall Mall Gazette* : "Mr. Elgar has produced a genuine masterpiece. Since the death of Wagner, no finer composition has been given to the world."

So much, then, for the instant verdict of the leading critics. It does not read like a "comparative failure," does it? Yet that is how the chronicler in *GROVE* has described it. On the other hand, looking back at my own criticism of the Birmingham performance (*Sunday Times*, October 7th, 1900), I find I said that "A more perfunctory rendering of a new work it has never been my lot to listen to at a big Festival." In a word, it was permeated by a spirit of hesitancy, apart from flat intonation, uncertain attack, and "a grating harshness of tone that wrought material harm at its birth to a composition which demands in a peculiar degree the absence of those distracting influences which accompany a faulty interpretation." Still, there was no approach to disaster such as the composer had feared at the final rehearsal, when he had "lost patience with the chorus and told them, in good plain English, that they neither knew nor understood his music." The simple truth was that the Birmingham Choir that week was a mixture of youthful incompetence, inexperience, variableness, and lack of stamina. At the same time it would have been impossible to have had three more perfect soloists than Edward Lloyd, Marie Brema, and Plunket Greene, or a greater conductor than Hans Richter. The composer, when he appeared, received an enthusiastic ovation.

Finally, of the *DREAM* itself I wrote: "If this cantata does not belong to the type of works that live and flourish in the full light of day, then I am greatly mistaken concerning the present trend of musical feeling and opinion in this country. Cardinal Newman's poem is a *chef-d'oeuvre*, and, to pay Mr.Elgar the highest compliment in my power, I

consider his music worthy at all points of association with it." The realization of the true grandeur of his conception soon followed upon the fine performances that were heard in London and elsewhere. Meanwhile the present writer went to New York and helped to spread the Elgarian propaganda there. From that period of revelation success upon success, triumph after triumph, honour after honour, fell to the new master with a rapidity never before experienced in our musical annals. Such examples of genius meeting with quick and abundant reward are rarely encountered. And so, in the time of harvest as in the time of sowing, there was constant and unending reason for the expression of gratitude.

P.S. The above was written before I had seen the account of Mr. Basil Maine's "Elgar Lecture" at the Royal Institution. The address seems to have brought out some thoughtful and instructive points. I was interested to note that Mr. Maine had applied the term "Edwardian" to Elgar and his work in precisely the same manner that I have done in this article. I am not sure whether the idea had previously occurred to any publicist of the moment; but, if not too late, I shall be pleased if my brother East Anglian (we were both born in Norwich) will permit me to share the honour of it with him. I would like also to congratulate him on his way of putting the case with regard to Professor Dent's indefensible disparagement of Sir Edward Elgar some time ago in a German *Handbuch*. In a sense, one might say that the Professor had been sufficiently sat upon already. In another it could be urged that the objectionable article has never been withdrawn from circulation. There may be justification sometimes for "flogging a dead horse."

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 HERMAN KLEIN (1856-1934) was a famous critic and music-teacher. He knew or was associated with many of the outstanding singers and musicians of his time. His books *Musicians and Mummies*, and *Thirty Years of Musical Life in London, 1870-1900*, are essential reading for a complete understanding of the period.  
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STOP PRESS!! ORIGINAL RECORDING OF THE SEVERN SUITE REISSUED.

*Foden's Motor Works Band, Fred Mortimer. Twoten Records TTV 099.*

The publishers of the band version of the *Severn Suite*, have just issued a record entitled *ORIGINAL VINTAGE BRASS*, consisting of transfers of some famous band records of the 1920's and 30's. Foden's Band were winners of the Crystal Palace Band Contest in September 1930, for which Elgar wrote the *Severn Suite* as test piece, and so their record (made in the same month) is one of the few Elgar recordings which involve the performers who played at the premiere. Because it was compressed on to two 10" sides, the Suite is cut - there is only a snippet from the Toccata and none of the Fugue. The transfer seems generally good, apart from a slight swish on one of the 78 sides used. Unfortunately no details are given of recording dates in the notes. The record, price %3.50, is available from R. Smith & Co. Ltd. PO Box 210, Watford, Herts

## ELGAR \*\*\*\* A Yorkshire Friendship

by DENNIS CLARK

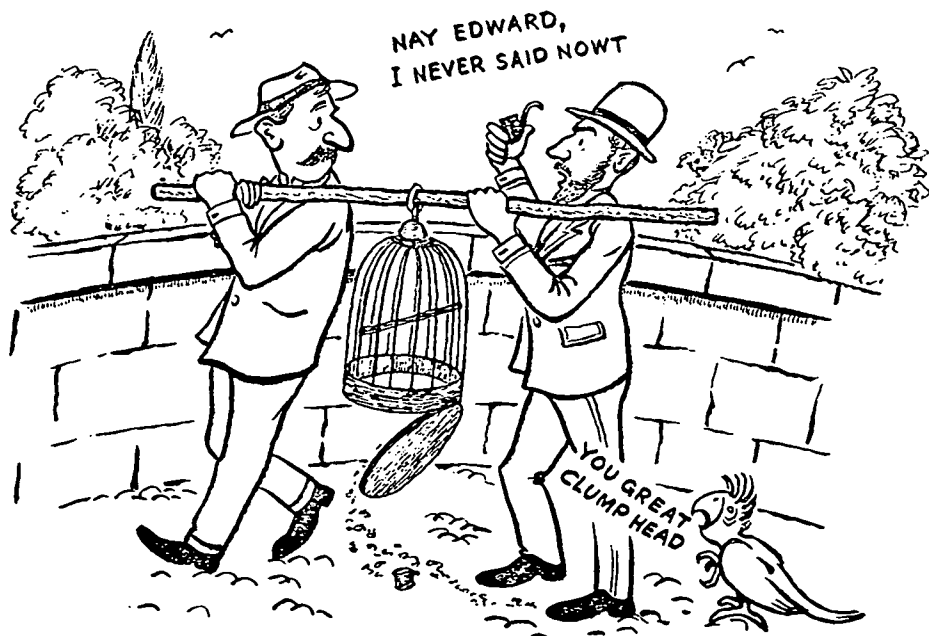
As a mature composer, and as a conductor, Elgar travelled north to Yorkshire on many occasions. In the early 1880's, however, long before he had achieved any fame outside Worcester, Elgar struck up a Yorkshire friendship which was to last for fifty years and which, for its continuance, relied very little upon music. This was the friendship with Charles Buck, the Settle doctor. Elgar and Buck are usually said to have met at a musical soiree which rounded off the British Medical Association's 1882 Conference in Worcester, and while it is likely that the two were acquainted earlier, there is no doubt that this is where the friendship really gained momentum.

Elgar was introduced to Dr. Buck by John Beare, a London music dealer who did business with Elgar Bros. and who had become a friend of the family. Beare was the son of a Settle lawyer and had known Buck from boyhood. Although Buck was a highly competent musician, with many involvements in the musical life of Settle, he was quite content in his professional career as a country doctor, and music remained, for him, an amateur pursuit. How he found time for this and for his many other interests is a mystery, since his patients were scattered over a hundred square miles, and getting round them must have been a time-consuming job in his horse and trap, often using rough moorland roads and farm tracks. In winter, he often went on horseback, plodding through deep snow to reach those needing his attention.

The first invitation to spend a few days in Settle arose directly out of the events in Worcester and was eagerly received by Elgar, who must have had few holidays. Since leaving school, any money that could be spared had always been used to further his musical ambitions. His already fragile health was not helped by an often inadequate diet, and an opportunity to enjoy a bracing holiday as the guest of someone who could afford to feed him well must have seemed heaven-sent to Elgar. Small wonder that, throughout the 1880's, he took his friend up on every invitation to visit him. However, Settle came to represent considerably more to Elgar than an occasional free holiday. From what we know about Buck, Elgar could not have had a more congenial companion. Musically, Buck was probably the equal of the twenty-five year old Elgar, playing viola and 'cello, enjoying chamber music with his friends, conducting the local orchestra and even trying his hand at composition, but although music undoubtedly brought them together, they proved to be kindred spirits in many ways and their friendship thrived on their many other common-interests. They shared, in particular, a love of outdoor pursuits. Together, they walked, rode, played golf and tennis, and spent much time touring the local countryside in Buck's carriage. In showing Elgar the local beauty spots Dr. Buck may well have been taking a typically Yorkshire delight in showing a southerner that Yorkshire was not entirely given over to "dark satanic mills." Nevertheless, a few days spent exploring the Craven landscape, with its impressive, natural limestone

features, such as Malham Cove, Giggleswick Scar, and Kilnsey Crag, must have done much to restore Elgar, physically and mentally.

Buck shared Elgar's sense of humour. An event which they recalled in later correspondence, and about which they must have laughed uproariously at the time, concerned the transportation of a parrot. We are not told where (or why) they were taking the bird, but they had passed a pole through the ring in the top of the cage and were carrying it across their shoulders. Crossing Settle Bridge the cage bottom dropped out, depositing an aggrieved parrot on to the road, to survey the backs of the two men as they strode along.



Above all, in those frustrating early years, Elgar found in Buck a patient and sympathetic ear to his problems - perhaps, at times, almost a shoulder to cry on. Buck was five years older than Edward: young enough to join him in energetic pursuits, yet old enough to seem a mature friend whose advice and opinions were of value. The high Pennine moors seem frequently to have provided the setting for some deep, philosophical discussions between the two men. Following his marriage in 1889, Elgar wrote to Buck telling him of his happiness, and saying that he could now forget all their long discussions while driving about, and all their talks about the mystery of living.

Elgar's marriage, which Buck attended, marked the end of the most active period of their friendship - a period during which Charles Buck had welcomed Elgar into the heart of his family, and his circle of friends. Buck had himself married John Beare's sister in 1884. The high-spirited days - the 'mad days' as Elgar later called them - were

gone, to be replaced by a more mature friendship: a friendship well able to survive the longer periods of separation dictated by their respective marital responsibilities, and by Elgar's busier musical life. Alice was duly taken to Settle, but it is hard to imagine the very 'correct' Mrs. Elgar, with her rigid code of social formality and etiquette, being at ease among the more down-to-earth people to whom she would be introduced. Alice would have been far happier when she did the entertaining, but one visit by the Bucks, in 1890, to the Elgar's West Kensington home, may not have provided the ideal opportunity for Alice to demonstrate genteel living. With baby Carice less than two weeks old, it is tempting to wonder whether Buck was being afforded a chance to cast his professional eye over mother and child.

Elgar's visits to Settle did not end, however, although they were now often made while travelling north on festival matters or on conducting-engagements. The very early 1900's saw Elgar achieving real recognition, with consequently greater calls on his time. Buck was coincidentally going through a difficult period. His wife Emma died in 1902, leaving him with a teenage son, Morton, and a much younger daughter, Monica. He re-married in 1903, but suffered a spell of poor health, and from 1906 we find him in premature retirement from his medical practice and living in a former coaching inn in Giggleswick, the 'other half' of Settle, across the River Ribble.

Our insight into Elgar's character and temperament has always been the greater for the rich legacy of his hundreds of letters, available to us today through the providence of so many of the recipients. Charles Buck had more foresight than anyone. His correspondence with Elgar began long before anyone would have predicted fame for Elgar, and went on for half a century. Regrettably, nothing in Buck's own hand has survived, but Elgar's letters are a joy to read. Carefully preserved by the doctor and now in the possession of his daughter, they provide a picture of two intelligent, active young men enjoying a sincere friendship - rejoicing in each others' triumphs, sympathising during their misfortunes - and fully bear out the conclusion that the friendship would have continued even if Elgar had sunk into musical obscurity. Many of the letters contain no mention of music. We read Elgar's accounts of the dog, Scap, which Buck gave him in 1885. Wishing to bring Scap with him on a visit, we find Elgar assuring Buck that the dog is of high moral character and that 'fleas know him not'. Scap's forays into the local tripe-shop - and rapid exits pursued by the proprietor - are described in detail, revealing Elgar, early on, as a man who cherished the affection and companionship of his dogs. Elgar was fascinated by the Naked Man Hotel in Settle and repeatedly asked Buck for a photograph of it, even specifying from what viewpoint the picture should be taken. Whether he ever got it is unknown, but he did receive from the doctor pictures of two waterfalls, Catrigger Force and Scaleber Force, which he had visited with Buck and mutual friends. Put up in Elgar's room, they presented 'a pretty contrast' and compensated for 'the violence done to Settle geography.' Elgar's playful wit is instanced in a letter sent shortly after Carice was born. Seeking Buck's advice on a medical book to give their nurse, and



wishing it to be a surprise to her, he requested 'dear, quiet, docile Charles' to 'put thy quaint pen to virgin paper - not a p.c. please or they will read your screed...'

Musically, nothing very great came out of Settle, although *Salut d'Amour*, the piece which would have made Elgar's fortune had he not sold it outright in 1889 for no more than five pounds, was composed there. *Rosemary*, another charming piece, was an early example of Yorkshire inspiration, being written during Elgar's first ever visit in 1882, while *Clapham Town End*, a local folk-song, was accorded an arrangement for voice and pianoforte in 1890. A *Gavotte* was dedicated to Dr. Buck in 1885, but was probably not written in Yorkshire.

It is interesting to ponder how close Buck came to being immortalised in the *Enigma Variations*. Elgar was with the Bucks in Giggleswick only four months after the first performance and, while congratulating Elgar on his great success, Buck may well, to himself, have mused quietly on what type of friend qualified to be 'pictured within'. An essential element in any set of variations is, of course, variety, and Buck the cellist would have been in competition with 'B.G.N.' and, as a viola player, with 'Ysobel'. However, the omission of 'C.W.B.' is a (perhaps enigmatic) fact. In Yorkshire, Charles Buck is assured of a prominent place in the Elgar history as the man who had confidence in the young composer when Elgar himself was often despondent. For a week - occasionally a fortnight - the Yorkshire doctor provided Elgar with new surroundings and fresh company. Whatever Elgar might want to do, Buck could provide. They could talk music - and frequently would - but they also made much music, in company with the doctor's friends. Up on the hills and 'scars' the Pennine breezes would clear the head, while the high moors would provide the isolation for some deep thinking. It is no conjecture to say that Elgar enjoyed his holidays in Settle, or that he valued Buck's friendship most highly. We have Elgar's word for both. His letters, particularly those written during the 1880's, are among the most cheerful and outgoing that he ever wrote, and leave no doubt that he was writing to a dear friend.

In August 1932, only three months before the old doctor died, Elgar wrote to Charles Buck a letter which touchingly sums up the value he had placed upon their friendship. He wrote:

"I have thought much of you and the dear old days lately...it is just fifty(!!) years since you were here & played in the orch: what a lovely time we had, the first of many adventures. In this August weather I always live over again the holidays I had with you & the taste of potted Ribble Trout comes with ineffaceable relish: nothing so good in eating or company has occurred to me since 1882."

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*The cartoon is reproduced by courtesy of J.S.Varley, of York*

## Dates for your Diary

|         |  |  |
|---------|--|--|
| Feb. 19 | <u>Falstaff</u><br><i>Scottish Nat.Orch, Gibson</i>  | Music Hall, Aberdeen   |
| Feb. 20 | repeat of above concert<br><u>String Quartet</u><br><i>Medici Quartet</i>  | Caird Hall, Dundee<br>Wigmore Hall, London                                     |
| Feb. 22 | repeat of Aberdeen concert   | Usher Hall, Edinburgh  |
| Feb. 23 | repeat of Aberdeen concert<br><br><u>The Music Makers</u><br><i>Norwich Philharmonic Choir &amp; Orch, Nicholas</i>                      | City Hall, Glasgow<br><br>St.Andrews Hall,Norwich<br>at 7.30 p.m.              |
| Feb. 27 | <u>Falstaff</u><br><i>BBCSO, Loughran</i><br><br><u>Violin Sonata</u><br><i>Lorraine McAslan (violin)</i><br><i>John Blakely (piano)</i> | Royal Festival Hall<br><br>Purcell Room, Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank      |
| Feb. 29 | <u>Symphony no.2</u><br><i>No details available</i>  | Town Hall, Birmingham  |
| Mar. 1  | <u>Symphony no.1</u><br><i>CBSO, Seaman</i>  | Lichfield Cathedral<br>at 7.30 p.m.  |
| Mar. 8  | <u>In the South</u><br><i>Guildford PO, Handley</i>  | Guildford Civic Hall, Surrey. (Phone: R.A.Forrow, Guildford 75274 for details) |
| Mar. 9  | <u>Cockaigne, Sea Pictures, Three Bavarian Dances, Violin Concerto</u><br><i>No details available</i>                                    | Spa Centre, Leamington   |
| Mar. 15 | <u>Meditation from "Light of Life", Polonia</u><br><i>Rutland Sinfonia, Collett</i>  | Uppingham School Hall, Rutland. at 7.30 p.m.                                   |
| Mar. 20 | repeat of Lichfield concert  | Birmingham Town Hall   |
| Mar. 21 | repeat of Lichfield concert  | Royal Festival Hall  |
| Mar. 23 | <u>Cello Concerto</u><br><i>Julian Lloyd Webber, RPO, Hughes</i>   | Wembley Conference Centre  |
| Mar. 26 | repeat of above concert  | Fairfield Hall, Croydon  |
| Mar. 27 | repeat of above concert  | Leas Cliff Pavilion, Folkestone  |

|         |   |  |
|---------|---|--|
| Mar. 29 | <u>The Dream of Gerontius</u><br><i>Robinson, Walker, Lewis,<br/>Rayner Cook, CoB Choir, CBSO</i>   | Birmingham Town Hall   |
| Apr. 1  | <u>Cello Concerto</u><br><i>Ralph Kirschbaum, BBC Scottish<br/>SO, Rickenbacher</i>   | City Hall, Glasgow   |
| Apr. 12 | <u>The Music Makers</u> ( with "Five<br>Mystical Songs" by Vaughan<br>Williams, also in programme)<br><i>Leith Hill Festival Chor. &amp; Orch,<br/>Robinson</i> | Dorking Halls, Dorking,<br>Surrey  |
|         | <u>The Music Makers</u><br><i>National Westminster Choir</i>  | Queen Elizabeth Hall   |
| Apr. 18 | <u>Violin Concerto</u><br><i>Yehudi Menuhin, SNO, Gibson</i>  | Usher Hall, Edinburgh  |
| Apr. 19 | repeat of above concert   | City Hall, Glasgow   |
|         | <u>The Kingdom</u><br><i>Price, Cable, Thompson, Titus,<br/>Holy Trinity Choral Soc, Scudamore</i>  | Worth Abbey, nr. Crawley,<br>Sussex, at 7.45 p.m.<br>Phone 0293 30817 for all<br>details |
| Apr. 22 | <u>Symphony no. 2</u><br><i>Philharmonia Orch.</i>  | Royal Festival Hall  |
| Apr. 22 | repeat of Edinburgh Menuhin concert   | Music Hall, Aberdeen   |
| Apr. 23 | repeat of above concert   | Caird Hall, Dundee   |
| Apr. 29 | <u>Symphony no. 2</u><br><i>CBSO, Handley</i>   | Town Hall, Cheltenham  |
| May 7   | <u>Symphony no. 1</u><br><i>BBC Scottish SO, Rattle</i>   | City Hall, Glasgow   |
| May 10  | <u>The Apostles</u><br><i>Townley, Guy, Caddy, Keyte, Burrows,<br/>Knight, Guildford PO &amp; Choir.</i>  | Guildford Civic Hall,<br>Surrey. Phone: R.A.<br>Fallow, Guildford 75274                  |
| May 11  | <u>Froissart, Falstaff, Violin Con-<br/>certo.</u><br><i>Ralph Holmes, Birmingham PO, Page</i>  | Collegiate Church of St.<br>Mary, Warwick, at 8 p.m.                                     |
| May 19  | <u>The Music Makers</u><br><i>Royal Choral Society</i>  | Royal Festival Hall  |
| May 23  | <u>The Apostles</u><br><i>Cathedral Special Choir, soloists &amp; orch, Harker</i>  | Bristol Cathedral  |

# Book Reviews

THE ENGLISH MUSICAL RENAISSANCE - Twentieth Century Composers and their Works, by Peter Pirie. Victor Gollancz. £8.50

To have covered the span of English music written between 1890 and 1978 in a book of 270 pages is no mean achievement, especially as it is extremely readable and remarkably informative. To give point to the title, the author contributes a prefatory chapter which traces the course of English music to the time in the 15th century when 'England was the centre of the musical world'. Subsequently, except for a relatively small number of notable composers of whom Byrd, Gibbons, Tallis, and Purcell were outstanding, English music progressively declined after the death of Purcell 'until the first works by Elgar almost exactly two hundred years later'. Thus the author concludes that Elgar marks the beginning of our musical renaissance, 'a career that was vital for the rebirth of music in England'. The other major figure at the beginning of the renaissance was Delius, and we are reminded that both men were completely isolated from the musical establishment of Victorian England. It is a telling point.

Composers are dealt with chronologically, whilst at the same time the important works of contemporary European composers are referred to in parallel. Perceptive and succinct comments help considerably to put into perspective the whole range of 20th century music so far. In the author's words 'It was Edward Elgar who raised music in England from the dead and the renaissance is his. He was the greatest of the three composers (the others were Delius and Holst) who began the twentieth-century revival in England...his greatness rests not only on his works and in what he did for English music generally, but in what he overcame to achieve this. In breaking the strangle-hold of the respectable amateur on English music he made the renaissance possible'.

Other major figures receive extensive appraisal - for example Bax, Britten, Tippett, Vaughan Williams and Walton, together with less well-known composers such as Bridge, Ireland and Warlock. It is a fascinating progress. Including a comprehensive bibliography and index, together with a number of interesting photographs, this excellent book is a welcome change from the many biographies published in recent years. It is alive with detail and will appeal particularly to Elgarians, for the author makes no secret of his admiration for Elgar and constantly demonstrates his love of English music. If some of his comments are questionable, your reviewer rarely found himself in disagreement with his opinions. Mr. Pirie has been writing and lecturing on music for many years, and his book provides an admirably concise presentation of an astonishing mass of material. It is well produced and, despite the relatively high price, is worthy of being prescribed reading for all wishing to obtain a factual and balanced account of English music since the turn of the century.

E.W.A.J.

The title of this book, first published in the U.S.A., might lead one to suppose that this was a scholarly account of the problems of conducting at the present day. In fact, the book consists of a number of conversations with Mr. Jacobson by a group of internationally famous conductors. Each conductor was primarily questioned on his attitude to the music of a particular composer...Adrian Boult on Elgar, Colin Davis on Berlioz, Haitink on Mahler, Giulini on Brahms, etc. Within the limits set by the conversations the results are interesting, but seldom give us more than a surface view of the problems of interpretation. There are photographs of the conductors "in action", and Mr. Jacobsen's comments and questions are clearly set out against the replies. Boult's contribution will be of special interest to readers, but the questions and answers in this case do not only concern Elgar. There is a fair amount on Schubert, Brahms and Beethoven in the 17 pages devoted to the Boult interview. Does it add greatly to our knowledge of Adrian Boult the interpreter? The answer must be No, but it must be said that the book as a whole makes entertaining reading, even if it does not add greatly to our basic musical knowledge.

R.P.T.

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## Record Reviews

SYMPHONY No. 1 in A flat, op.55

London Philharmonic Orchestra/Daniel Barenboim

CBS Classics 61880

Somehow, Daniel Barenboim's series of Elgar records for CBS never seems to have had the attention from the critics that I feel it deserves and it is good to be able to welcome this reissue, at mid-price, of the *First Symphony*. One drawback in the past has been the technical quality of the CBS records, but it seems that for this reissue the disc has been recut and the sound is now more than adequate, if not quite the match of Decca's for Solti or HMV's for Boult.

Space precludes a detailed review, so suffice it to say that I enjoyed this record enormously. Barenboim's love of and enthusiasm for the music are never in doubt, and coupled with fine playing from the LPO this makes a memorable performance, exciting on the one hand, rapt on the other, the judicious use of portamento adding a character of its own.

Even if you already own the Solti (1972: Decca SXL 6569) or Boult (HMV ASD 3330) records of this symphony, I would commend this as a warm-hearted alternative, and at its new price a bargain.

J.G.K.

SYMPHONY No.2 in E flat, op.63

Halle Orchestra/James Loughran

Enigma K 53594

Although James Loughran has conducted a fair amount of Elgar's music in the concert hall and on radio, this is his first Elgar record to be issued. The Halle are, of course, no strangers to this music, and both of the records of this symphony made under the baton of Loughran's predecessor, Sir John Barbirolli, are at present still available. On the whole, this is a very sane and sensible reading of the second symphony, but, in the ultimate, I found it curiously uninvolved. Although the stop-watch can be misleading, it is significant that Loughran's performance at around 57½ minutes is the longest of any on disc. The first movement is taken very steadily (the overall timing for this movement is nearly a minute and a half longer than even Sir Adrian Boult's 1976 recording) and certainly loses impact as a consequence of this. As I said, when writing in the Journal a year ago, about the Barbirolli Society's reissue of Sir John's earlier, and to my mind much better, 1954 record of the symphony, I favour a fairly fast basic tempo but coupled with a fair degree of flexibility within that pulse. Barbirolli, in 1954, and Gibson seem to me to get it just right. With Loughran, one longs for a little urgency at times, more of a sense of struggle, more of a sense that mighty things are at stake. It all tends to sound rather tame and somewhat pedantic, in spite of some fine orchestral playing.

In the second movement there is some rapt pianissimo playing but again the climaxes seem to lack real bite. It is elegaic but without the gravity that Boult, for example, brings to this music. The violins seem to be lacking in punch, their tone lean when compared with the lush sounds that the LPO produce for Solti or Barenboim. The scherzo is taken very steadily - Barenboim, for example, takes under eight minutes, Loughran over ten - and although there is an infectious lilt to the music, the overall effect tends to be rather too cautious and serious. The last movement is again on the slow side, but without the warmth that Barenboim, also rather steady here, finds. In particular, the fugal passage after 145 has none of the fire that so characterises Barbirolli's 1954 performance at this point.

The recording-quality is very good and the German pressings, despite the long sides, are immaculate, and I am sorry that I cannot be more enthusiastic about the interpretation. If you like your Elgar understated, this then may be the record for you, but I would not turn to it in preference to those of Gibson (1977: RCA RL 25104), Barbirolli (1954: Bar. Soc. SJB 101) or Barenboim (1972: CBS 73094, currently available).

J.G.K.

PIANO QUINTET in A minor, op.84 \*\*

New London Quintet (Frank Wilbaut-piano) HNH 4061

There are two very fine performances of the Elgar Quintet on LP,

Cassini/Aeolian Quartet and Ogdon/Allegri Quartet. I'm pleased none-the-less to welcome this American recording - the wider known this fine work now becomes, the better. The highlight of this performance is the central Adagio, surely one of the most sublime of Elgar's slow movements. It is played with a heartfelt simplicity that gives the movement a warm and glowing life, and the more restless central climaxes are finely judged. I was less sure about the first movement and Finale, although there are many good things therein. I liked the opening and close of the first movement, these spectral Moderato sections not being allowed to sag, and I particularly enjoyed the light, fanciful treatment of the syncopated second-theme of the Finale, which can often sound rather aimless. There are occasional fluffed notes from the pianist, generally unimportant in what is, after all, a very demanding part, but there is one badly-wrong left-hand chord just before fig. 19 in the first movement, which should have been corrected. Elgar's dynamic-markings are meticulously observed throughout, but what I ultimately miss in the outer movements is the sense of onward momentum, of nervous restlessness which is such a characteristic of these movements. Listening to the surge and sweep of the Finale played by Ogdon and the Allegri Quartet immediately after, does show up the comparative caution of the new group. Still, it is a performance I am sure no one would be seriously disappointed with.

B.C.

SERENADE in E minor, op.20, for Strings\*\* (coupled with music by Arne & Britten)

Boyd Neel, conducting the Toronto Chamber Orchestra

Ultra Fi Digital (Toronto)

ULDD 10

This is a lovely performance, recorded with a clear immediate sound. The first movement is on the steady side, but none the worse for that, while the remaining two movements are simply delightful. There is no mistaking the obvious warmth and affection of both interpretation and playing.

B.C.

\*\* Both of the above records should be available to order, as imports through Direction Dean Street, 97-99 Dean Street, London, W.1.

ECCE SACERDOS MAGNUS, AVE VERUM CORPUS, PSALM 48, with Liszt's "Via Crucis."

Leeds Parish Choir, cond. Simon Lindley Abbey LPB 813

This record is to be welcomed as it contains the first recording of Psalm 48 'Great is the Lord', the earlier, and, to my mind, greater of Elgar's two psalm settings. It receives a spirited and enjoyable performance from the Leeds Choir, and the recording is clear and well-balanced. The weakest section is the andantino ('Let Mount Zion be glad') which is taken far too slowly, forcing an unmarked stringendo in order to return to the correct tempo for the final section, where the opening theme returns.

*Continued on page 31.*

## Branch Reports

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YORKSHIRE

Secretary: Dennis Clark, 227 Tinshill  
Road, Leeds LS16 7BU. Tel: 0532-671533

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First mention must be of the events of Oct. 23rd, when sixteen members travelled forty miles to the other side of Sheffield. The occasion was an invitation from our friends in the Sheffield Elgar Society to view the 'Dorabella Bequest', a large collection of letters, scores, photographs, newspaper-cuttings, old concert programmes, etc, formerly the property of Mrs. Dora Powell and left by her into the care of the Sheffield society. Delving into the large amount of material on the tables was an exciting experience, as we wondered what treasures next awaited our gaze. The original score of *THE SHEPHERD'S SONG* was noted with interest, as were many items bearing Elgar's unmistakeable handwriting. Remembering that Dorabella was for a time Elgar's unofficial, unpaid archivist, keeping his papers in order, it is a pity that the valuable items she has left behind cannot be given more ordered, accessible storage. Going through piles of assorted documents can engender considerable excitement as to what might next emerge, but we could not help feeling that this material should be available to Elgarians generally. Despite the fact that this was a very rare showing (even to the Sheffield members), we were surprised to find that we outnumbered our hosts almost three to one, and, in thanking them for a fascinating evening, we must also hope that some of our enthusiasm has rubbed off on them.

Our first meeting of the new season on Sept. 24th was an informal occasion to welcome new members. Not wishing too serious an evening, we took the opportunity to play the re-issued 'Miniature Elgar' record, with its selection of lighter pieces, the rest of the evening being given over to informal conversation, and the important matter of disposing of a tableful of sandwiches and cakes provided by our lady members. On October 1st, we were to have had a visit from Jack and Vivienne McKenzie, of the Elgar Birthplace. Unhappily, Jack was ill and they were unable to be with us. Three members stepped into the breach with a record recital which, despite limited preparation time, proved to be excellently presented. As the next meeting on our own premises was not to be until Nov. 19th, the members decided to bridge the gap with a further record evening on Oct. 22nd. We seemed to have no shortage of members willing to contribute, and once again, with a very informative presentation, it was proved that there is more to a recital than merely dropping records on to a turntable. Two of those taking part, Lance Tufnell and Don Campbell, are committed to giving us full evenings later in the session, and we believe we have much to look forward to.

On November 6th a party of members will visit Sheffield again, this



time for a special showing of Ken Russell's *ELGAR* film, made for television during the 1960's.

Our Branch has now topped the thirty mark in membership, and we are still picking up the extra members from the general public rather than from existing Society members. It may well be that we have already enrolled all those latter who live near enough to get to Horsforth, but anyone within reach who has not already joined us will be very welcome, and should contact the Branch secretary for information.

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LONDON

Secretary: E.W.A. Jackson, Killiegray  
7 Batchworth Lane, Northwood, Middx.  
Tel: 65 22010.

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We opened our new season with two very successful meetings, at which we were delighted to welcome an appreciable number of new members to add to the solid backbone of the branch. The steady growth in membership is most encouraging - it now stands at over 200.

Oct. 1st. PREBENDARY ROWLAND CHIGNELL - Elgar and Worcester. Our policy of aiming to enrich our programmes by inviting some of those having direct links with Elgar to share their reminiscences was splendidly fulfilled by Rowland Chignell. He grew up in Worcester and sang as first bass in the Three Choirs Festivals from 1928-30, when all the major Elgar choral works were performed under the composer's direction. This experience obviously remains a vivid memory, especially the way in which Elgar used his eyes when conducting. This interesting and entertaining talk gathered momentum, particularly after the interval, and was illustrated by excerpts from a variety of recordings made by Elgar himself, Beecham and Sir Adrian Boult. The latter included part of *FALSTAFF*, the prologue to *THE APOSTLES*, and a movement from Tortelier's recording of the *CELLO CONCERTO*.

Nov. 5th. DEREK FORSS - 'The trees are singing my music' (Elgar) Having had a good report from West Midlands branch when Derek Forss presented his programme there last year, we anticipated that a repeat in London would be equally enjoyable. In the event, Mr. Forss far exceeded our expectations. Using mainly his own equipment, his admirable programme included a number of sequences which beautifully combined the arts of photography and music. An extended tour of Elgar's Birthplace, with Jack McKenzie (the curator) as guide and mentor, was followed by a sequence shewing the lovely countryside around Dorking, with its close association with Vaughan-Williams - the music here was V-W's *TALLIS*. On through *LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY* as it appears in the *CORONATION ODE* to the sublime sunset at the end of the *SECOND SYMPHONY*, we then embarked on a delightful tour of the houses which had seen the creation of Elgar's greatest music, with music appropriate to each location. This was embellished with an excellent commentary recorded by Michael Kennedy, distinguished scholar and one of Elgar's biographers.

Superb photography allied to the music which had been specially taken

from the master tapes and produced resplendent sound, combined to make a programme which was skilfully and imaginatively presented. Space forbids an adequate appraisal, but we were all conscious of having witnessed a quite remarkable tribute to Elgar. When thanking him at the close, the Hon. Secretary proposed to the capacity audience that we broke the rules by immediately convening an 'extraordinary general meeting' for the purpose of electing Derek Forss an Honorary Member of the London branch. This proposal was seconded by Mrs. Dolan and was carried with acclamation.

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NORTH WEST

Secretary: Malcolm H. Key, 10 Eversley Park, Oxtou, Birkenhead, Merseyside.  
Tel: 051 652 6388

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Sept. 22nd. VERNON HANDLEY - Elgar, a "Formal" Giant. The well-known conductor gave a detailed and humorous account of Elgar's use of form and structure, particularly concentrating on the *FIRST SYMPHONY* and *FALSTAFF*. He spoke of Elgar's mastery of orchestration, and how it was necessary to thoroughly study the scores, in the same manner as a conductor, to understand all that was in the composer's mind. The speaker dealt with the structure and development of the *FIRST SYMPHONY*, and showed that the themes and notes from the first movement are developed as the symphony proceeds. Elgar chose an idea to develop it, and was not content to pick up "any old tune out of the air" and put it in. Thus critics are wrong when they say that the final movement is entirely new material. Turning to *FALSTAFF*, we were told that all the material is contained in the first few minutes. The four main themes are then developed. These come in many guises, including changing of note values, and broken themes. At Falstaff's death all the main themes are repeated (the first heavily fragmented) and the end comes without further ceremony.

Using records, and his own voice, Mr. Handley showed conclusively that Elgar was indeed a master of form and innovation.

Oct. 27th. DENNIS CLARK - Elgar, his Music and the Malverns. Mr. Clark, the Yorkshire branch secretary, gave us a marvellous tour of the Malvern Hills on slides, accompanied by some of Elgar's most beautiful music. Following a short introduction dealing with the Malverns as an area, we continued with views of the Priory Church (accompanied by *Ave Verum*), then the Hills (excerpts from the *Variations*), St. Wulstan's Church and Grave, Birchwood and the Birthplace. (We saw Elgar's desk before the glass top was put on).

We then returned to the Hills, accompanied by the *Chanson de Matin*, and the *Little Bells* from the second *Wand of Youth suite*, during which we saw breathtaking views of the Hills in winter. On to the British Camp, Little Malvern Priory, the Jubilee Drive (*Serenade* from the first *Wand of Youth suite*), with the final view of the Hills in the setting sun to *Nimrod*. A splendid evening

Nov. 17th. JACQUELINE HARTLEY and KEITH PASCOE - A Recital. These two

young players, the former a violinist at the Royal Academy, the latter at the Royal College (also a violinist, but an admirable accompanist), gave a first-class performance of the *Chanson de Nuit*, *Chanson de Matin*, and the *Violin Sonata*. The sonata was outstanding - there was a commitment in their playing (their love of Elgar goes back to their childhood) that distinguished it from being just another performance. The applause was tumultuous!

Future Programme: After the Christmas Social on December 15th, we have our Winter break (bearing in mind last year's bad weather), and our 1980 programme will commence on March 29th, with the AGM followed by a performance of the *STRING QUARTET*.

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SOUTH WEST

Secretary: Ian Cartwright, Herschel House, 61 North Street, Nailsea, Bristol BS19 2BS. Tel: 02755 2621

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In our first full season we have a membership in excess of 40, and better, but cheaper, premises for meetings. A full programme has been planned, and the attendance at the first two events, whilst a little disappointing, has established our new pattern for the fourth Saturday of each month with a nucleus of regular support.

Sept. 22nd. MARTIN PASSANDE. It was a great pleasure to welcome Martin and his wife to start our 1979/80 season. The title of the talk "Elgar and the Hereford Heritage," was illustrated with music and colour slides. It was apparent that Mr. Passande had a great love for the area of which he was speaking, and he was able to bring alive many of Elgar's associations with the City and County of Hereford, with his vivid descriptions of the places.

Oct. 27th. JOHN KNOWLES. We were very fortunate to have a 'preview' of this fascinating talk on the "Pre-Gerontius Choral Works" to be given to the London branch in December. Great trouble had been taken over finding recordings of the works concerned, and the detailed research made this an unforgettable evening. To hear parts of *THE BANNER OF ST. GEORGE* and *THE BLACK KNIGHT* was feast enough, but we were not prepared for the revelation produced by the excerpts from a superb performance of *THE LIGHT OF LIFE*. It is sufficient praise to say that it is likely to lead to a performance of one of the above works in Bristol, with professional soloists and orchestra, which would otherwise not have taken place. It was equally interesting to hear of our Chairman's involvement in performances of the three works "earlier in his career." Our grateful thanks to both speakers so far this season for their efforts on our behalf. We are looking forward now to Dr. Christopher Kent's talk on "The Sound of (Elgar's) Music", when he will analyse the influences on Elgar and the reasons behind the individuality of his music. We are also keenly anticipating the remaining events of the programme:

\* Jan. 26th. 1980. Elgar's Houses & their Music -- Jack McKenzie

- Feb.23rd. All-day programme at Bristol University addressed by Michael Kennedy. (See NEWS ITEMS on earlier page)
- \* March 22nd. First Annual Meeting followed by "The Miniature Elgar" - a record recital by Arthur Hicks.
- April 26th. A visit to Bath Abbey for a choral and orchestral concert, to include *SURSUM CORDA*, and works by Puccini and Kodaly.

Meetings marked with an asterisk are in the Folk House, 40 Park Street, Bristol, starting at 7.30 p.m. This is very near the centre and has excellent facilities. The committee are currently involved in a membership campaign through giving record recitals through local gramophone societies. This has created interest, as has publicity on BBC Radio Bristol. Our current need is for members to turn up at meetings and support the committee in their efforts.

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EAST ANGLIA

Secretary: Barry Marsh, 'Homelea', Whitwell Road, Reepham, Norfolk. Tel: Reepham 613

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Recent experience has taught us two things; firstly, that many members prefer to attend a meeting which can offer a well-balanced, but conventionally popular programme of recorded music, and secondly, that visiting speakers, although interesting, are never so well patronised!

So, in September we opened our new season with records of *COCKAIGNE*, *SEA PICTURES*, and *SYMPHONY NO.1*, following in October with a more specialised talk by Barry Marsh entitled 'Elgar, Puccini and Opera' for which Barry had done extensive research, and had come up with a few startlingly original theories, particularly in relation to Elgar's *THE SPANISH LADY*! On Nov.3rd members enjoyed a pre-Bonfire Night Party and fireworks; later in the month we were very lucky to secure the services of Ailsa Campin for a piano recital of Chopin, Elgar, and various Norwegian composers. Ailsa, whilst admitting that Elgar found it difficult to write pianistically, enjoyed playing the salon-style music of *SONATINA*, *SKIZZE*, *SERENADE*, *ADIEU*, and the more ambitious *IN SMYRNA*. Incidentally, members might like to know that we now meet in the Barbirolli Room of Norwich School, a fully equipped music-room which was opened in 1972 by Evelyn Barbirolli, in memory of her husband. It was pleasant to sit back and enjoy live music without having to leave our home base for the more austere surroundings of a concert hall.

Elgar concerts have been drawing the crowds to the south of our region; on Nov.24th the Suffolk Schools Music Association performed *COCKAIGNE*, *VIOLIN CONCERTO*, and the *INTRODUCTION AND ALLEGRO* at a concert in Bury St.Edmunds Cathedral. On Dec.8th the St.Edmundsbury Bach Choir, under direction of Harrison Oxley sang *THE MUSIC MAKERS*, with Diane Walkley as soloist in *SEA PICTURES*. For both events we were happy to provide extra publicity and support.

The first part of the season ended with a traditional Branch Dinner,

to which we welcomed Bill Jackson who did so much to get us off to a good start two years ago. After Christmas we look forward to a lively AGM, a pre-concert talk by Michael Nicholas on *THE MUSIC MAKERS*, a social party in March, another live recital, of Elgar songs, on the 21st of the same month, and in April the first visit of Ron Taylor, editor of this Journal. We go from strength to strength!

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WEST MIDLANDS

Secretary: Alan Boon, Old School House,  
Martley, Worcester. Tel:088 66 527\*

*\*Please note new phone number*

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August 4th. At short notice an opportunity arose for some 50 branch members and guests to hear many of the rarely heard *WIND QUINTETS*. Mr. & Mrs. Jeremy Campbell Grant opened their lovely home in Martley, provided wine and refreshments, and the accomplished musicians, led by Hugh Nicholson, performed. We heard *HARMONY MUSIC, nos. 1, 2, & 4, the six PROMENADES, five INTERMEZZOS, and four DANCES*. As darkness fell, torches were lit in the flower-beds--a wonderful evening, to which members responded by collecting £174 for the Elgar Statue Appeal. We were glad to welcome Mrs. Leicester (Hubert Leicester's daughter-in-law), Mary and Margaret Elgar (Frank Elgar's grand-daughters), and Mrs. Olive Gordon, who knew Elgar well. Kenneth Potts brought along his bronze model of the statue.

Sept. 22nd. A large gathering of members turned up at St. George's R.C. Church, Worcester, to hear Geoffrey Hodgkins repeat his London talk on 'Elgar's Religious Character.' It was of special interest to hear the *CREDO* (finished in 1880) performed at last in the church for which it was intended. Of great interest was *A CHRISTMAS GREETING* (1907), *LO, CHRIST THE LORD IS BORN* (1909), and *GOOD MORROW* (1929), written to commemorate the King's recovery, and first performed under Elgar's baton at Windsor. Incidentally, Elgar's last composition to religious words.

Oct. 20th. George Wallis and Tony Cross presented 'My Dear Nimrod', with readings of the letters between E.E. and A.E. Jaeger, interspersed with extracts of the music to which the letters referred. A most enterprising and deeply felt programme, which we greatly enjoyed. Nov. 17th. Almost 40 of our members were able to sit together to enjoy a wonderful performance of *THE KINGDOM* in Worcester Cathedral, conducted by Donald Hunt. A feature of the gathering was the distance travelled by some members. Some travelled from Coventry, Stoke, Abergavenny, Telford, Ross, etc. It was good to see them, and we hope they will be able to come to other events planned for the summer months, details of which will be sent out in a letter after Christmas.

During the Three Choirs Festival, in Hereford in 1979, almost 60 members attended a splendid tea at the Festival Club. Our Chairman, Michael Pope, and JOURNAL editor, Ronald Taylor, were present, as were members from Cyprus, Canada, and a lady from Atlanta, Georgia, who is organising an Elgar week in that corner of the U.S.A!

# Letters

From DAVID BURY

I enjoyed reading the *Reminiscences* by Sir Steuart Wilson (Sept. 1978), and John Buttrey's article on Edward J. Dent (Sept. 1977).

Steuart Wilson was a pupil of Dent's when he went up to King's, Cambridge, in 1908, and in fact wrote Dent's obituary notice in the magazine "Opera" (November, 1957) in the course of which he made the following observation: "He (Dent) was not a tolerant critic and could dig large holes in what he did not like. Elgar was one of his targets for excavation, and to his few friends and pupils who went to his cremation it was a moment of grim irony (in which he would have revelled) when the organ began to play 'The Angel's Farewell' from Gerontius! There was thus present at the very last appearance of him this note of sardonic humour which he would have vastly enjoyed."

Sir Steuart also recalls the following anecdote: "When we were rehearsing 'The Magic Flute' at Cambridge, and performance grew near, someone said 'What shall we do after the last night?' Dent said at once 'I should like to go across the road and burn down the Roman Catholic church.'"

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From ALAN WEBB

Gramophone Recordings: In the January 1976 number of the JOURNAL there appeared lists of still unrecorded works by Elgar. It has been suggested to me that the time has come for those lists to be revised and brought up-to-date. My idea was (and is) that the record companies should be approached by individual members of the Society with their own particular requests. In the intervening years quite a number of the works I mentioned have, in fact, been recorded - but gaps remain, and I still feel that the record companies should be interested.

Here are the new lists:

## I. Choral Works.

King Olaf  
The Black Knight  
The Banner of St. George  
From the Bavarian Highlands (with orch-  
estral accompaniment.)

## II. Theatre Music. (with orchestral accompaniment)

The Crown of India Masque (in full)  
There are seven that pull the thread (from  
Grania & Diarmid)

Fringes of the Fleet  
More of "The Spanish Lady"

III. Part-Songs.

(a) Mixed Voices  
Death on the Hills  
Serenade, op.73  
Spanish Serenade, op.23  
Weary Wind of the West  
Windlass Song

(b) Male Voices  
The Herald

IV. Solo Songs.

A Child Asleep  
When the Spring comes round again. (From  
Une Voix dans le Desert)  
Arabian Serenade  
Shakespeare's Kingdom. (from Pageant of  
Empire, 1924)  
Follow the Colours (Marching Song)

*It is to be hoped that Robert Tear will include the op.59 and op.60 songs in his new record.*

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From RICHARD C. BURNS, of New York

*I would recommend that the Society might start to exert its enthusiasm and influence for the publication of a Complete Edition of the Music of Elgar. Such editions are routinely subscribed to by all important music libraries, and thus the entire corpus of Elgar's works would become readily available to scholars and performers.*

*At the present time it appears that the complete works may well be recorded long before they are published, reminding one of what Elgar, himself, had to resort to in regard to his music for 'The Starlight Express'. Certainly, the recordings are important, but for performance and study purposes there is no substitute for a Complete Edition of the musical scores.*

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Continued from page 23

However, this is a record that every Elgar lover will want to have, as it fills another vital gap in the Elgar discography.

G.H.

RECENTLY RE-ISSUED. Symphony no.2. LPO / Sir Adrian Boult. Lyrita  
REAM 2. (Records & Recording 11/79)

THE ELGAR SOCIETY  
(President: Sir Adrian Boult, C.H.)

The ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION to the Society is £2. Applications for membership should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Andrew Neill, 11 Limburg Road, London, SW 11. Existing members should renew their subscriptions, due on January 1st, to the Hon. Treasurer, John Knowles, 11 The Chase, Watford, Herts, WD1 7JQ.

BRANCH SUBSCRIPTIONS These are additional to the Society's annual subscription at the following rates:

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|---------------|--|
| LONDON        | £3 per annum, the combined subscription to be sent to E.W.A. Jackson, Killiegray, 7 Batchworth Lane, Northwood, Middx HA6 3AU.   |
| WEST MIDLANDS | £1 per annum, the combined subscription to be sent to Alan Boon, The Old School House, Martley, Worcester.                       |
| EAST MIDLANDS | Enquiries should be directed to the Elgar Society Hon. Secretary.  |
| NORTH WEST    | £2 per annum, the combined subscription to be sent to Malcolm Key, 10 Eversleigh Park, Oxton, Birkenhead, Merseyside.            |
| EAST ANGLIA   | £1 per annum, the combined subscription to be sent to Bernard Ward, 96 Welsford Road, Norwich, Norfolk.                          |
| SOUTH WEST    | £2 per annum, the combined subscription to be sent to Ian Cartwright, Herschel House, 61 North Street, Nailsea, Bristol BS19 2BS |
| YORKSHIRE     | £2 per annum, the combined subscription to be sent to Dennis Clark, 227 Tinshill Road, Leeds, LS16 7BU                           |

NEW MEMBERS are always welcome, and the Society will advise you if you live in a branch area. All members receive the JOURNAL, at present published in January, May, and September.

ELGAR SOCIETY NEWSLETTER (forerunner of the JOURNAL). first series: A few copies remain of nos. 4 & 9, at 15p. plus 10p. post & packing for each issue. An index to the articles in the first series will be sent gratis. new series: No.1 has been reprinted in photo-copy, price £1.10p. post included. Issues 2 to 6 (May, 1977-Sept. 1978) each 70p. post included.