

The Elgar Society JOURNAL



J A N U A R Y

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The editor does not necessarily agree with the views expressed by contributors, nor does the Elgar Society accept responsibility for such views.

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RADIO TIMES.

Novissima verba.....

31st March at 7.30 p.m. in Worcester Cathedral Chapter House. Dr. Donald Hunt and the Donald Hunt Singers. Illustrated talk on "Elgar's Piano Music and Part-Songs". £2. Contact West Midlands Secretary by end of February re possible reduced prices.

9th May at 7.00 p.m. St. Michael's College, Tenbury. Elgar's Organ Sonata and Religious Works. Roger Judd(organ) and College Choir. Contact W.Midlands Secretary. (Includes wine and cheese).

Mr. Bernard Steff; Caxton Cottage, 173 Eastwood Road, Boston, Lincs, has offered members the chance to purchase his sets of Elgar's First and Second Symphonies, on the original 78's.(D1944/9 & D7558/63). He also has runs of the Gramophone magazine from 1960; space forbids full details of the run. Offers should be made direct to Mr.Steff.

The Elgar Society Journal

104 CRESCENT ROAD,
NEW BARNET,
HERTS.

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EDITORIAL

Vol.2, no. 1

In 1951, following a Malvern Festival, a group of people from the Malvern and Worcester area got together and formed The Elgar Society. Immediately after Elgar's death in 1934 the suggestion was put forward that a Society be formed to perform and keep alive Elgar's works. Perhaps it was too ambitious for the times, for nothing came of it. So it was not until 1951 that the Society was finally formed to "honour the name of Edward Elgar." Thirty years later the Society flourishes, no longer confined to the Elgar Country, though an active branch keeps us very much alive there. Seven branches thrive in various parts of the country, though as yet there are no Scottish, or Welsh branches. Members are, moreover, to be found throughout the world.

In our May Journal we plan to have an article on the beginnings of the Society, written by two founder members, but the fact that we are thirty years old should make us pause for a moment. All music societies are important - they provide a point for musicians and music-lovers to meet and exchange views and enthusiasms. They generate publications, music research, and, in our case, even recordings. In time, no doubt, someone will wish to write the history of the Society, and there lies the difficulty. In thirty years it must be admitted that, like many other organisations, the Society has made no proper attempt to retain archives. Minutes, and some papers, do exist, but they are very far from complete. The Committee has decided, albeit late in the day, to do something about it. The Archive is to be lodged with the Journal for the present, until more permanent arrangements can be made. But we do appeal to all those who have been members from the early days to let us have anything which might be of interest. Letters, leaflets, duplicated notices, publications(not the Newsletter), photographs, in short anything bearing on the history of the Society which can be lodged with us. If you are not keen to part with particular papers may we make copies and return the originals to you? Do help us - many of the early members are no longer with us, and their memories are already lost. Any useful items or information should be sent to me as soon as possible.

RONALD TAYLOR
Editor

Annual General Meeting and Dinner 1981

The 30th Annual General Meeting will take place on Saturday, May 30th, 1981, in York Hall, Malvern Girl's College, Malvern at 2.30 p.m.; courtesy of the Headmistress.

The response of members to the suggestion of a Dinner was sufficient to organise this for the evening in The Beauvoir Room, The Abbey Hotel, Great Malvern, at 8 p.m. with members foregathering at 7.30 p.m. A three-course meal, with cheese and coffee, will be served at a cost of £7 per head. Drinks and wine will be available at extra cost. Michael Kennedy will be the guest of honour at the dinner, and will propose the health of the Society.

Members who wish to purchase tickets for the Dinner should send their remittances to The Hon. Secretary, as soon as possible (but not later than 1st May). Cheques should be made payable to The Elgar Society, and an s.a.e. included. Send to: 11 Limburg Road, London, S.W.11.

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NEWS ITEMS The Society's record Elgar's Interpreters on Record continues to sell, but there are many members who have not yet bought their copy. Copies are still on sale from the Treasurer, price £3.50. Send your remittance now to 11 The Chase, Watford, Herts.

Our congratulations to Mr. & Mrs. Geoffrey Hodgkins on the birth of a second daughter. Congratulations too, to Mr. and Mrs. John Knowles on the birth of their third daughter.

BBC RADIO LEICESTER gave a splendid concert as the climax to their Choral Workshop in September. Sarah Walker and the City of London Sinfonia, conductor Malcolm Goldring, were supported by the special choir of amateur singers brought together for the occasion by Radio Leicester. The performance of *Musica Makers* was particularly impressive, and all concerned are to be congratulated.

OVERSEAS MEMBERS received a special questionnaire with the September issue. This dealt with appreciation of Elgar's music in other countries and the results are now being considered. A statement of the results will be given in our May issue, and we hope that more overseas activity will follow.

THE ELGAR BIRTHPLACE

The Curator, Jack McKenzie, reports: Up to the beginning of November, I have had over 6,000 visitors this year - 350 up on the same period in 1979. The increase is mostly due to school parties, which kept me fully occupied many mornings in May, June and July. One of our regular visitors, Mrs. Jenny Cockcroft, brought a party of pupils from Tillington Manor Primary School, Stafford, who had performed a play about Elgar for their May Festival. After their tour and picnic at the Birthplace, they went on a whistle-stop tour of Elgar haunts in and around Malvern. Vivienne acted as guide, and they managed to include posting a letter in the fluted Victorian letter-box not far from *Forli*, and a race to the tope of "Caractacus's Hill" (more usually known as British Camp!) Another regular visitor is Cavendish Close Junior School, Derby, under the enthusiastic guidance of Don Henderson, a Society member. This year the pupils came with their instruments hoping to give a concert in the garden. It turned out to be one of those wet summer days, and eventually the children were transported to Martley Junior School, where Alan Boon teaches and where the delayed concert took place.

One quiet day in the summer I was delighted to welcome Nigel Kennedy and his wife, during their honeymoon spent in Malvern. Michael Kennedy paid a working visit in September, when he was able to work undisturbed in our old kitchen, after I had gone home. The combined appeal of the Society's AGM and a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* in Hereford drew a strong contingent of Society members to the Elgar Birthday Tea on 1st June. A sunny day, good company, excellent cake (cut by Michael Pope) and many willing volunteers to do the washing up, ably organised by Alan and Dot Boon, made it quite a party.

The garden has flourished again this year. Flower-beds and general war-on-weeds have once again been in the capable hands of Eddie Williams, and lawn-mowing and hedge-trimming have been taken care of by Mr. Parkes. The hollyhocks have reached an all-time high of about twelve feet, and the roses, mallow tree, dahlias and gladioli have been greatly admired for their mass of colour. The trees are giving us some concern, especially the big flowering cherry, mentioned on Carice's garden plan.

Gifts to the Museum have included more concert programmes, including one from James Loughran of the concert in Tokyo, when he conducted the first performance in Japan of Elgar's *First Symphony*. Fourteen books belonging to Sir Edward, and two of Carice Elgar Blake's, have been given by Mrs. Henry Wohlfeld (formerly Miss Sybil Russell, friend of Carice for many years). Mrs. Fernside of Worcester, has very kindly donated a delightful watercolour of Elgar by Percy Anderson. The rush-seated ladder-back chair which Elgar used at "Brinkwells" was given by Carice to Mrs. Vera Hockman, whose second husband, Mr. Don Cheeseman, has very kindly returned the chair to the Birthplace. Sir Adrian Boult has given an annotated copy of *Elgar as I Knew Him* by W.H. Reed, and no. 59

of a limited edition of 100 copies of a booklet in memory of Billy Reed. The stand made by Dick Mountford, Elgar's valet and chauffeur, and used by Elgar during his last illness to hold his orchestral scores, has been given given by Leonard Petts of EMI Music Archives. Another gap in our archives has been filled by Mr.E.W.Trowbridge with the gift of Dunhill's "Sir Edward Elgar".

Now that Vivienne and I have been rehoused in "Rose Cottage", the upstairs room which was our bedroom has been fitted with made-to-measure showcases. This has created an exhibition room which is gradually filling with those Elgar treasures which have hitherto had to be kept in store for reasons of preservation.

I have for sale most of the current books, albums, records and cassettes of Elgar, including autographed sets of *The Dream* and *The Apostles* by Sir Adrian; many deleted records, e.g. Elgar on Record, the Wind Quintets, Sacred Music, Complete Piano Works, by John McCabe, and *Falstaff* by Barbirolli. Also the range of souvenirs now includes busts of Elgar, silhouettes by Pennyfarthing, Birthplace mugs, paperweights, calendars, Christmas cards and notelets and bookmarks, and a full range of scores and sheet music. Further enquiries to me please at The Elgar Birthplace, Lower Broadheath, Worcester.

LATE NEWS..... To celebrate 30 years of the Elgar Society members are invited to a cocktail party at the Savile Club, 69 Brook Street, London, W.1. on January 29th 6.30 p.m. to 8.30 p.m. Members wishing to attend are requested to advise the Hon. Secretary as soon as possible. It was on the 29th of January 1951 that the inaugural meeting of the Society was held. This celebratory party will be held in the Ballroom of the Savile Club, and members will be expected to purchase their own drinks.

AN ELGAR WEEKEND SCHOOL will be held on April 10/12 1981 at the Hill Residential College, Abergavenny, Gwent, conducted by Kenneth Loveland, well-known music critic and broadcaster. There will be six sessions, and a visit to the birthplace by coach on Saturday afternoon. Further details from H.Strand-Jones, Principal, Hill Residential College, Pen-y-pound, Abergavenny, Gwent NP7 7RP.

EGHAM & DISTRICT CHORAL SOCIETY will perform *The Music Makers* among other items in their concert at St.Peter's Church, Laleham Road,Staines, Middx. at 8 p.m. on Saturday, 2nd May. Programme giving admission price £2.50 and £2 is available from Mrs.J.E.Rees,Elm Lodge, Egham Hill, Englefield Green, Egham, Surrey.



The silver salver presented to Elgar on his 70th birthday, by Percy Pitt, Director of Music, on behalf of the BBC.

The salver was one of several important items recently placed in the personal custody of Mr. Raymond Monk by Mrs. Sybil Wohfeld of Cheltenham. Mrs. Wohfeld, who has presented the Elgar Birthplace with a number of books and printed scores from Elgar's own library, was, for over thirty years, a close personal friend of the late Mrs. Carice Elgar Blake, and is a former Trustee of the Birthplace. Mr. Monk has said that he is "proud and happy" to have been entrusted with these particular items, and he would like Elgarians everywhere to know that ultimately they will become part of the great Elgar treasury at Broadheath.



WESTMINSTER CATHEDRAL
AMBROSDEN AVENUE, VICTORIA STREET, S.W.
(By Gracious Permission of H.E. CARDINAL VAUGHAN).

Saturday Afternoon, June 6, 1903, at 3.

FIRST PERFORMANCE IN LONDON
OF

The Dream of Gerontius

(EDWARD ELGAR)

Under the Sole Management of Mr. HUGO GÖRLITZ
(119, New Bond Street, London. W.).

Tenor - - - Dr. LUDWIG WÜLLNER
Mezzo-Soprano - Miss MURIEL FOSTER
Bass - - - Mr. FFRANGCON DAVIES

AND

Chorus of the North Staffordshire District Choral Society
(Conductor—Mr. J. WHEWALL)

FULL ORCHESTRA

Conductor - Dr. EDWARD ELGAR.

Organist—Mr. R. R. TERRY.

The net proceeds will be for the Benefit of the Cathedral Choir Schools.

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

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LUDWIG WÜLLNER AND THE WESTMINSTER 'GERONTIUS'

by David Bury

The full story of the belated first London performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* has not yet been told - but it is a fascinating one. It took place on Saturday, 6th June 1903, in John Francis Bentley's new, unconsecrated, and incomplete Cathedral at Westminster, and involved heated disputes over numerous issues, varying from the propriety of Edward VII's entering a Catholic place of worship (in the end he did not), to whether Alice Elgar's ticket should be paid for.

Elgar was, of course, in the thick of it all. He got his own way over the positioning of the choir, the choice of contralto, and wording of publicity handbills; all of which involved Görlitz, the long-suffering impresario, who had guaranteed the performance to the tune of £1,000, in additional expenses. When the famous Amsterdam Orchestra withdrew from the performance six weeks before the event, Elgar badgered Görlitz continually about the personnel and strength of the hastily improvised replacement. Richard Terry, the Cathedral organist, was compelled to abandon his intention of interpolating a performance of his edition of Tallis's *Lamentations* into the programme - "squashed" as Lady Edmund Talbot put it.

Melba, it is true, got the better of Elgar when it became necessary to rearrange rehearsals to accommodate those members of the orchestra who were committed to her June 5th concert, - "Melba is not willing to oblige anyone by a change." Stanford's pessimism regarding the Cathedral acoustic, so justified in the event, left Elgar irritated but ineffectual in his famous letter to Littleton of Novello's on April 20th.

On the day itself confusion reigned over whether or not applause was appropriate, and Elgar found it difficult to commence the second part because of the hubbub of the fashionable audience, who had paid as much as 5 guineas for their seats. In the end he had recourse to the expedient of requesting the bass, Ffrangcon Davies, to quit his seat and speak to the ushers. The whole was played out against the background of the imminent death of Cardinal Vaughan, who had received the Last Sacrament in March, and whose Requiem, just over a fortnight later, was to be the next great Cathedral event. But perhaps most interesting of all was the role of Dr. Ludwig Wüllner.

Wüllner was born at Münster, Westphalia, on 19th August 1858, the son of the noted conductor and composer Franz Wüllner (1832-1902), who was, in turn, Munich court Kapellmeister, Director of the Dresden Conservatory, and Head of the Cologne Conservatory. Despite his parentage Ludwig faced family opposition to a theatrical or musical career

He took a doctor's degree in philology after studying at the Universities of Munich, Berlin, and Strasbourg, and became a lecturer in the Münster Academy. It was only after his grandmother's death that he turned to the stage, at Meiningen in 1889, and not until 1896 that he graduated from actor, via reciter, to singer. This step caused considerable surprise because of his many vocal shortcomings, including, according to Spemann in his "Das goldene Buch der Musik"(1900), a "speech impediment from birth". But the dramatic intensity of his performances compensated for his limited vocal means. Otto Klemperer recalled the deep impression he made on him at about this time in *Tannhauser*, while, in England, the "Staffordshire Sentinel" summed it up when it noted that Wüllner "wouldn't secure many engagements from people who believe that melody should be the beginning and ending of all efforts", but that "Dr. Wüllner is the Irving of singers."

Elgar first came across Wüllner at the famous Dusseldorf performance of *Gerontius* in 1901 and 1902. Elgar and Jaeger were captivated, "Directly Wüller opened his mouth to sing 'Jesus, Maria meine Stunde kom', we said 'that man has brains'...He made us sit up and realize that Elgar's intention could be realised by an artist. I never heard such intellectual deeply-felt singing. Not that W's voice is wonderful. No! But his brains and his head are", wrote Jaeger to Dora Penny. While Elgar wrote to Novello's about the first Dusseldorf performance, "Dr. Ludwig Wüllner was splendid, not in voice but intelligence, genius. (He carried everyone away and made *Gerontius* a real personage.) We never had a singer in England with so much brain."

The driving force behind the notion of a performance of *Gerontius* at Westminster Cathedral, in aid of the endowment of the Cathedral Choir, was Lady Edmund Talbot, sister-in-law of the Duke of Norfolk. Alice Stuart Wortley put Lady Edmund in touch with Elgar in a letter of 14th March 1903. The suggestion found Elgar at his most receptive, - "I am quite in sympathy with the plan...the North Staffordshire Choral Society knows the work well. It is a very fine chorus and sang *Gerontius* under my direction on Friday last... Mr. Coates, however, must be *Gerontius*". [On Friday, 13th March, Elgar had conducted the highly successful Hanley performance. He was brimming with confidence and determined to have the same choir and soloists, Muriel Foster, David Ffrangcon Davies and John Coates.]

However, once the organisation of the event was placed in the hands of the impresario Hugo Gürlitz, (sole agent for Wüllner whose British debut was just about to be launched), it became inevitable that Wüllner, not Coates, would be the preferred tenor. Elgar, with his enthusiastic memories of Dusseldorf, had no objection. Indeed even before the Westminster performance was mooted, Elgar had agreed to attend the singer's recital debut at St. James's Hall. By March 31st Wüllner had been engaged, and before April was out Elgar and Jaeger were corresponding about the necessity of transposing the *Sanctus Fortis* for his benefit.

Meanwhile, Wullner, "the most renowned lieder singer of the present day", duly made his English debut on 20th March. Elgar, however, "rather lumbagoish" had taken to his bed. Alice's diary for the 19th records that Dr. Earl "would not let E. go to London next day". So Elgar missed the recital which was favourably reviewed.

"In Dr. Wullner we have undoubtedly a master...[his] voice has little or no beauty of tone. At times its quality conjures up visions of Beckmesser. But for musical intelligence, for beauty of interpretation...and for clearness of enunciation...for in a word the complete triumph of the musical mind over such matters as a rather unmusical voice, his equal has not been heard on a London concert platform since the days of Julius Stockhausen", reported *The Times*.

Further recitals followed at St. James's Hall and Queen's Hall in May, but of more interest and significance was his performance of *Gerontius* in Liverpool on 24th March. Elgar was not present, and he affected not to read the critics, but even if he remained unaware of press misgivings - "the embarrassment inseparable from singing in an unfamiliar language...much embarrassed by the high notes" (*Manchester Guardian*); "too vehement in his declamation" *Liverpool Courier*); "Did not commend himself to his audience by his voice" (*Liverpool Mercury*); - Elgar received a personal hint from the conductor himself, Frederic Cowen, who wrote: "Just a line to tell you that we had a really excellent performance last night in Liverpool. The only thing was that Wullner's English was rather unsatisfactory".

In the circumstances Wullner was perhaps unwise to eschew the rehearsal on the morning of the Westminster performance - the only one with the choir, whose members, at their own expense, travelled by special train from the Potteries in the small hours of June 6th. "Dr. Wullner will not attend the rehearsal on Saturday morning...[he] will rehearse his part on Friday afternoon, or will do without rehearsal altogether", Grlitz informed Elgar bluntly at a low point in their correspondence. His place was taken by Mr. John Harrison "the new English tenor", a protege of Grlitz whose career the impresario was assiduously attempting to further. However, Wullner not only attended Friday afternoon's rehearsal, but also lunched with the Elgars at Schuster's house, 22 Old Queen Street, where Edward and Alice were staying as guests, having travelled from Malvern the previous day. Alice's diary records her impression of a "charming and wonderful personality."

For Alice Elgar the great day itself was, of course, a triumph. "Dressed in haste. There came to lunch Lady Edmund Talbot, Lord Northampton, Lord Shaftesbury, Mr. Cary (i.e. Gervase) Elwes and Lady Winefride, the Stuart Wortleys. Then the Cathedral - most beautiful. Glorious afternoon and vast audience. E. conducted splendidly. Chorus very beautiful. Wullner finer than anyone".

Alice's view of the performance, and in particular the soloist, was not widely shared. Certainly *The Sunday Times* thought that, with due allowance made, his enunciation "was remarkably distinct and clear", and *The Daily Chronicle* was disturbed "only occasionally" by

his pronunciation. Predictably, too, the Catholic weekly *The Tablet* enthused about the tenor, as about everything, uniquely discerning "great vocal beauty" in a Wullner performance.

But led by J.R. Fuller-Maitland of *The Times*, a pupil of Stanford and no friend of Elgar (though his article on Elgar in the 2nd edition of Grove, which he edited, is full and pretty fair), the main body of critics destroyed Wullner's performance. Fuller-Maitland observed that among "the many imperfections...at the words 'Take me away' only one vowel was pronounced as it would be by an Englishman. *The Standard* disliked the "Teutonic twang which is undesirable in works of sacred character", while *The Westminster Gazette* singling out Wullner as the sole factor operating against success was reminded of the Prima Donna who referred affectionately to her spouse as her 'horse pond'. Both Rosa Burley and Lady Winefride Elwes made similar observations. The latter, who imagined very mistakenly that she was attending only the second English performance of the work in which her husband was to have such great success, found that "Newman's verse inevitably suffered through being delivered in a strong German accent". While Rosa Burley considered that "Wullner produced horrible distortions of our vowel sounds which seriously endangered the gravity of the proceedings", and in general judged it "a sad disappointment".

Indeed the professional critics soon turned to the wider matters of Wullner's vocal limitations and melodramatic approach. *The Monthly Musical Record* found the "unattractive quality of his voice and unsatisfactory vocalization made his performance anything but a thing of beauty". In *The Pall Mall Gazette* the singer was "considerably exaggerated", and in *The Globe* though "intensely dramatic - the effort was too obvious". *The Referee* felt the performance "bordered on exaggeration" and *The Westminster Gazette* described the performance as "overdone" with liberties being taken with the tempo "profoundly unsatisfactory". *The Daily News* and *The Times* were particularly scathing. The former dismissed Wullner's efforts as "mere ranting", and added the sarcasm, "personally I have some liking for definiteness of pitch". Lady Winefride Elwes described Wullner as a fine singer, "rather of the operatic type, but to our way of thinking...to eager to emphasise the dramatic aspect of the part, even to the point of being theatrical".

Fuller-Maitland, however, alone found the performance insufficiently dramatic on top of all its other shortcomings. "The whole, from beginning to end was sung without alteration of tone quality, nor was anything particularly expressed excepting only the weakness of the dying man. In the fine litany the tenor solo should surely be audible through the chorus; it was not, and there was no suggestion of any contrast between the man in his bodily agony and the disembodied spirit in its new surroundings". Wullner's vocal defects and the transposition of the *Sanctus Fortis* were not compensated for by any intellectuality of interpretation or intensity of realization, which attributes were on this occasion "hardly perceptible".

It seems certain that, for one or two critics, the dissatisfaction with Wullner was an expression of a wider Chauvinism. "Next time

...he (Elgar) will do well to secure the services of a native tenor", observed *The Westminster Gazette*, and *The Telegraph* observed that "it seemed strange to engage a foreign artist...since we possessed an English artist (Coates) who had proved so fine an exponent". Fuller-Maitland made the generalisation that, "In Oratorio the English...are easily the superiors of foreign singers", and indeed went on to attribute the very survival of *Gerontius* to "the lavish praise that was bestowed on it by Herr Richard Strauss...no doubt, speaking with an authority based on an exhaustive knowledge of the whole of British music". The upshot of Strauss's remarkable tribute was, thought Fuller-Maitland, that "many who would not venture to express a favourable opinion of anything English on their own account have the satisfaction of feeling that they have the right to admire what has been so warmly praised in Germany". Hence it was that *Gerontius* had become "a prime favourite", whereas previously "there was no reason to doubt whether the oratorio would not meet the fate of many better works and be put straightway on the shelf. To this doom it seemed, indeed, for some time to have been consigned". In conclusion he said: "Still, Londoners have now heard the work, and as two more performances in different surroundings are spoken of, it will not be allowed to share the oblivion which is the lot of so much of the best English music". This seems to indicate a lack of awareness of events outside London, and indeed England, in the previous two years.

Thus it was that Wullner provided a catalyst for wider controversy. Elgar made typical reply. In a letter of thanks to the Choir, he observed that "The whole of the work was splendidly done...Several critics who have been brought up to regard a mere shouting machine as an ideal English chorus have naturally something absurd to say, but the real judges were more than satisfied and so was I". Published in *The Staffordshire Sentinel*, this opinion, recalls R.W.Shipp, was much resented by the London writers. Already, a week before the *Gerontius* performance, Elgar had written his well-known letter to Canon Gorton referring to "the sleepy London press" and containing his assertion "that the living centre of music in Great Britain is not London, but somewhere farther North". This, too, was now published in the July issue of *The Musical Times* with the somewhat rhetorical question - 'What will the musical critics of the "sleepy London press" say to this?'

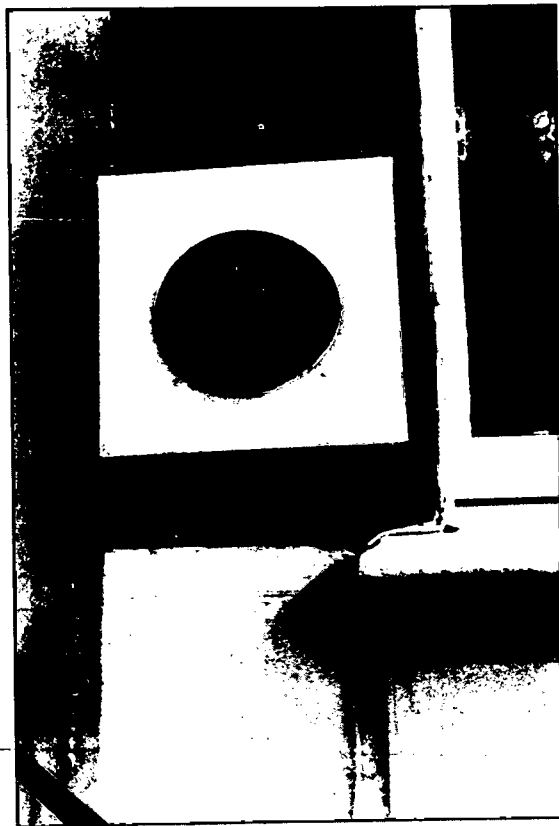
It is difficult, however, to disagree that the Westminster performance was not a very happy one. After this fresh *Gerontius* setback, when London next heard the work on February 15th, 1904, John Coates re-emerged in the title role.

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IAN LACE, 20 Quarry Hill, Haywards Heath, Sussex, wishes to exchange a copy of *Letters of Edward Elgar*, edited by Percy Young, for *Maine's Life & Works of Elgar*. If not will sell for best offer...

RAYMOND MONK, 19 Severn Street, Leicester, requires a good copy of the recording of *Enigma Variations* by the Philharmonia/George Weldon.

A PLAQUE HAS BEEN PLACED ON THE HOUSE AT VENTNOR, ISLE OF WIGHT where Elgar and his wife spent part of their honeymoon. The plaque, shown below, has been placed by the doorway of 3 Alexander Gardens by the present owner Mr. Parsons, but the initiative that gave rise to the plaque really came from a member of the Society, Mrs. Patricia Goold.



Several years ago Mrs. Goold visited Ventnor and was interested in finding out if the house still existed. By checking the files of the Isle of Wight Mercury, which listed the comparatively few visitors to the island in 1889, she discovered that Mr. & Mrs. Elgar had stayed at 3 Alexander Gardens, Ventnor. Interestingly it is still a guest house to this day but now known as *Bermuda*. The present owner was interested in what Mrs. Goold had discovered, and has since put up a very attractive plaque, entirely at his own expense. Elgarians will be pleased that the house has been marked in this way, and we can only hope that Mr. Parsons' public-spirited action will be rewarded in the shape of a much increased business at his guest house.

The Society's thanks, and congratulations, to Mrs. Goold for an excellent piece of detective work which has had such a happy outcome.

NO PRIZES FOR SPOTTING THE ERRORS.....

Recently we came across a book previously unknown to us. It was "Music and Romance for Youth, a course of study in Music Appreciation for use in Junior High Schools" by Hazel Gertrude Kinscella, and was published by the RCA Victor Company in 1930 in Camden, New Jersey. Of course the Victor Company, and its associate HMV in this country, did fine pioneer work in using gramophone records in education; and several excellent books were published over the years. Naturally we turned to the index to see if Elgar was mentioned, and sure enough there was *Pomp and Circumstance*. (It is surprising how many Americans do not know that the march containing "Land of Hope and Glory" is the first of five published under the same title--Miss Kinscella was obviously among them.)

The range of music described is very wide and not a lot of space was available to describe the Elgar piece, but we read with some astonishment the following:

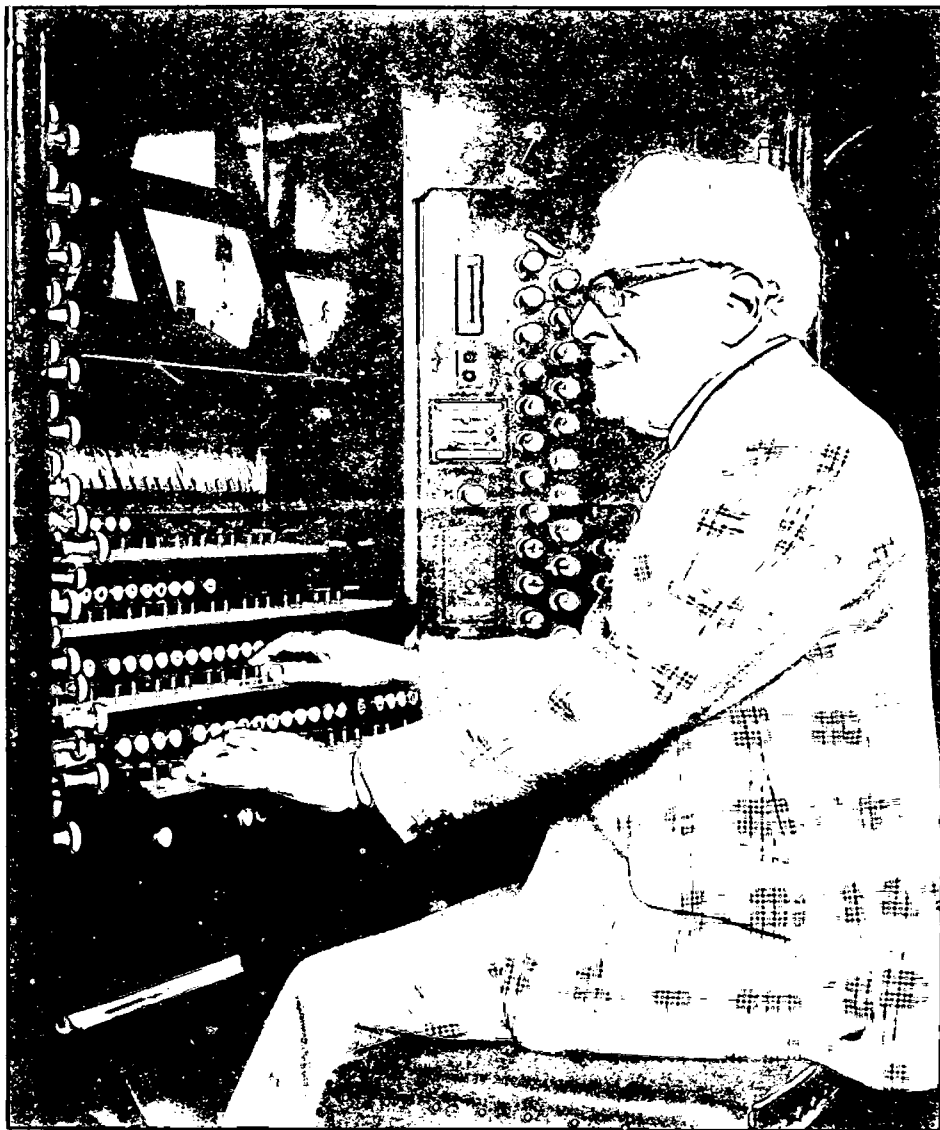
"Pomp and Circumstance" is an example of a piece of music written expressly to celebrate a great event in history, having been composed in 1901 by Sir Edward Elgar, eminent English composer, for the coronation ceremonies of King Edward the Seventh of England, which took place in Westminster Abbey. At the conclusion of the ceremony the bands of the city of London burst into brilliant music, most splendid of all being that written by Elgar, who had composed a whole series of military marches for the day. Finest and most inspiring of all these is the one which is known as "Pomp and Circumstance", and to the middle section of which the Kipling poem, "Land of Hope and Glory", is often sung. This song has become a sort of unofficial anthem of England....."

At the end of the chapter the author suggests that her young readers study "Land of Hope and Glory by Rudyard Kipling." Somehow I feel that Miss Kinscella must have lost the confidence of her readers at this point. For myself, I could not bear to go on. Had Elgar been singled out for this mass of mis-information or were there other discoveries yet to be made? One can only be amused at the author's catalogue of errors, but it seems a pity that in an excellently-intentioned book American children were not given a more accurate account of one of the world's most famous tunes.

MICHAEL TROTT wishes to exchange his copy of J.F. Porte's 'Sir Edward Elgar' (1921) for any of the following: Elgar, his Life and Times by Diana McVeagh. Elgar, O.M. by Percy Young. Letters to Nimrod, edited by Percy Young. Offers to 1 Shuthonger Manor, Tewkesbury, Glos.

Dates for your Diary

Feb. 4	Two Chansons <i>London String O/Maddocks</i>	Purcell Room, South Bank
Feb. 16	Serenade for Strings <i>Camerata Bern/Thomas Fueri</i>	Queen Elizabeth Hall
Feb. 21	Music Makers <i>Janet Baker/Bach Choir/LSO/Willcocks</i>	Royal Festival Hall
	Songs from the Bavarian Highlands <i>Barnet & District Choral Society</i>	Queen Elizabeth's Girls School, Barnet, Herts
Mar. 1	Violin Concerto <i>Haendel/LSO/Berglund</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Mar. 11	Violin Concerto <i>Holmes/BSO/Del Mar</i>	Colston Hall, Bristol
Mar. 15	Dream of Gerontius <i>Univ. Choral Soc. & O/MacDonald</i>	Bute Hall, Univ. of Glasgow. 7.30 p.m.
Mar. 17	Intro. & Allegro; Cello Concerto <i>Harrell/Philharmonia/Maazel</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Mar. 21	Dream of Gerontius <i>Hodgson/Tear/Rayner Cook/Halle & Sheffield Phil. Chorus/Handford</i>	City Hall, Sheffield
	Dream of Gerontius <i>Worcester Festival Chorus. No further details to hand.</i>	Worcester Cathedral
	Three Bavarian Dances <i>Band of RMS of Music, Kneller Hall</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Mar. 23	Enigma Variations <i>Philharmonia/Handley</i>	Wembley Conference Centre
Mar. 25	Introduction & Allegro <i>Bristol Sinfonia/Sager</i>	Colston Hall, Bristol
Apr. 6	Enigma Variations <i>Philharmonia/Rattle</i>	Royal Festival Hall
Apr. 24	Violin Concerto <i>Menuhin/Halle/Loughran</i>	City Hall, Sheffield
	Organ Sonatas 1 & 2 <i>Roger Fisher</i>	Malvern Priory, Worcs.
Apr. 25	Cello Concerto <i>Lloyd-Webber/CBSO/Hunt</i>	Worcester Cathedral
Apr. 26	In the South <i>Kent County Youth Orchestra</i>	Royal Festival Hall
May 2	Cello Concerto; Pomp & Circ. no. 4 <i>Carr/BBC SO/Rozhdestvensky</i>	Royal Festival Hall



Perhaps the last photograph taken of the late Dr.Caleb Jarvis at the console of the Willis organ in St.George's Hall, Liverpool. Dr. Jarvis was City Organist there from 1957 to 1980, and was Chairman of the North West branch of the Elgar Society. [Photograph by F.T.Wallace, copyright Peter Charles who has kindly given permission for its use.]

Book Reviews

ELGAR, HIS LIFE AND TIMES, by Simon Mundy. *Midas Books, £7.50*

Although a number of books on Elgar have been published in the past two decades, most of them are now out of print. A new book on the composer is therefore to be welcomed, even if it does not pretend to say anything particularly startling or original. Mr. Mundy's book is a popular account of the composer's life and work, with only a little critical appraisal, but equally it has a nice appreciation of the outstanding moments of Elgar's career. The author tells his story with a fine journalistic sweep, and even makes the duller patches of Elgar's life interesting. The book has a large number of illustrations, including some which are unfamiliar. It is attractively produced, and its combined survey of Elgar's life and his music make it a first-class introduction for anyone knowing little of Elgar's career.

On the debit side there is evidence of some careless proof reading on several pages. Part of the index, under the letter S, is out of order, and there is one real howler "The Black Night" on p.26. On my copy there was a dull grey look to most of the illustrations, and since a lot of thought has obviously been given to the design of the book it seems a pity that such copies have slipped through.

R.P.T.

SIR ADRIAN BOULT, Companion of Honour; a tribute edited by Nigel Simeone and Simon Mundy.
Midas Books, £7.50
(Hardback); also available in paperback.

Here is a book about the Society's President, most welcome at a time when he has come to be truly loved for his life of music in Britain. It is not a biography (which, doubtless, will come in time), but a collection of articles by a wide range of friends and colleagues, including Sidonie Goossens, Denis Matthews, Christopher Bishop and Richard Hickox. Most valuable of the original material is an interview with Lawrence Tanner about Westminster School, and Oxford days, and the beginnings of a friendship that ended only with Tanner's death in 1979. It is good to have available again Bernard Shore's exciting portrait of Boult at work in the 1930's (from *The Orchestra Speaks*), as well as Jerrold Moore's assessment of Boult's career (from *The Gramophone*). There is a comprehensive discography, and a wealth of illustrations, few of which will have been seen before.

I had not previously heard of Midas Books, but on the evidence of this elegant volume their standards of design and production are of the highest. High, too, is the esteem in which Sir Adrian is held, not only by the individual contributors but by the editors, young men both known for their stylish and perceptive writing in such periodicals

as *Classical Music*. It is appropriate that so much of this book should come from young musicians representative of those with whom Sir Adrian has been (and, indeed, still is) so generous of his time and knowledge. This reviewer speaks from grateful experience.

The editors' royalties from the sale of this book will be donated to the British Musicians Sick and Pensions Society.

G.P.H.

THE HENRY WOOD PROMS by David Cox.

BBC Publications, £8.75

The Proms have been in existence, almost without interruption, for 85 years, and it is fitting that the BBC, 'owners' of the Proms since 1927, should have commissioned an official history. A remarkable music institution, but even the name is not original--as Mr. Cox reminds us, the Promenade Concerts trace their history back to the Pleasure Gardens of the 18th century. After that a variety of theatres and concert halls housed performances which are clearly the forbears of today's concerts, even if much of the music has changed.

Inevitably, the story of the first 50 years of the Proms is also the story of Henry Wood - "Old Timber" as he was affectionately known. Sir Henry was a remarkable man, and as one looks at the impressive list of the works he introduced to the British public, it is like looking at about half of our musical knowledge. Some of his 'novelties' have not survived - tastes are fickle, and the wildly-applauded symphonic poem or concerto is often consigned to the waste-bin of music history, but we have so much to treasure, and without the Promenade Concerts our lives would be that much poorer. Elgarians have cause to be very grateful to Sir Henry, especially in the years when other concert promoters neglected his music. Of course, Elgar conducted his own music at several successful Prom appearances.

The story is told in two ways, first the general background of the season under review, and then a survey of the music played. At times this gets a little confusing, and there is some duplication of information. There are lengthy appendices of 'novelties', selected programmes, orchestras used, ticket prices, 1895-1979, the latter showing the remarkable value of a season ticket even in these inflationary times.

The book is very well-illustrated, and contains a mass of information. The occasional error has crept through - Percy Pitt may well have deserved a knighthood (many lesser men got one), but he was not Sir Percy. Nor was Thomas Russell secretary of the Royal Philharmonic, it was the London Philharmonic. However, such minor errors do not really detract from a book that truly 'fills a long-felt want.' To those of us who have been 'Promming' for many years now, much of the book is pure nostalgia. Others at the beginning of their concert-going careers will learn from this volume what a rich inheritance they have acquired.

R.P.T.

Record Reviews

IN THE SOUTH, ELEGY FOR STRINGS, CELLO CONCERTO

Robert Cohen(cello), London Philharmonic
Orch./Norman Del Mar.

Classics for Pleasure CFP 40342

I had high expectations of Norman Del Mar's *In the South*; his recording of the *Enigma Variations* is a classic of the Elgar discography. In fact, this performance is one of the finest I have ever heard. It is wonderfully alive rhythmically, extremely passionate when appropriate, yet sensitive and full of breath-taking subtleties. Unfortunately however, the performers have been badly let down by the recording engineers. The stereo sound is wide-spread, and dominated by the first violins and harshly-recorded brass at the extreme ends. In the middle is a confused aural mush from which little detail emerges clearly. The wind instruments suffer particularly badly, but neither the cymbals nor the tympani, whose additional colour is so important in this work, emerge with sufficient clarity to contribute to the brilliantly scored climaxes, and the whole dynamic range seems constricted. This is a pity - the performance clearly has qualities which would place it alongside the marvellous Silvestri version. The latter was made 12 years ago, yet the affect of playing it after the new recording is akin to removing cotton wool from the ears. Now that the Silvestri is available on a cheap label (EMI ESD 7013) it is an obvious first choice bargain, although the slightly less vivid Barenboim version (CBS Classics 61892) is just as attractive a performance in its own, different way, and has the advantage of an unusual coupling, in the form of the *Crown of India* suite. Incidentally, the Classics for Pleasure disc has a fill-up *Elegy for Strings* on the same side as *In the South*, placed after the major piece - which is a bit daft. At the start of the side it would make an attractive curtain-raiser. At the end of the side is sounds anti-climactic.

It is difficult to know what to say about Robert Cohen's *Cello Concerto*. Heard on the radio on a Saturday afternoon this performance would seem most attractive. In competition with the experienced international stars on record it sounds lacking in character. I am sure this young man's interpretation will mature, and there is no doubt that his technique is well up to the demands of the work already. Again the orchestral sound is muddy. The balance of the solo instrument is sensible, although his tone sounds a bit thin and limited in colour range.

G.H.L.

The above record is also available on cassette (TC-CFP 40342). The transfer has been well-managed and reproduces pleasingly, with a very natural concert-hall sound, encompassing a wide dynamic range, each strand clearly delineated.

It must be admitted however that the cassette of the Solti *In the South/Falstaff* performance (KSXC 6963) is in a class of its own. Certainly it is the most sophisticated tape transfer that I have yet heard. It is not just the silent background, nor the firm base line, nor the smooth clear treble, but somehow there is a real immediacy to the sound of these marvellous performances. One major advantage that the cassette has over the equivalent disc is that *Falstaff* is accommodated complete on the first side (35 mins.) whereas the record involves a turn-over. A tape to win converts to the cassette medium!

J.G.K.

SYMPHONY NO. 2 in E flat

London Philharmonic Orch/Barenboim

CBS Classics 61988

Quite by chance, the day before this record arrived, I came across a newspaper cutting of a review of it which appeared at the time of the recording's first release in March, 1973. It is strange now to recall how much of a novelty it then was to have a record of a major Elgar work conducted by anyone other than Boult or Barbirolli, let alone a foreigner. Indeed, this was the first recording of the *Second Symphony* to be made by a conductor outside the circle of Elgar, Boult and Barbirolli. Since then there have been four completely new recordings (Solti, Gibson, Boult and Loughran) with one more on the way (Handley).

Of course, in 1974 Barenboim's record was greeted with howls of protest that it was unidiomatic, but I'm not really sure that I know what that means. In one sense it is very idiomatic in that Barenboim demands 'authentic' portamenti from the LPO strings. The reading is more of the Barbirolli school than of Boult. Tempi fluctuate wildly, and in one or two cases this is patently too extreme and distorts the overall structure of the work. Yet this is a performance that I have returned to many times in the last seven years with very great pleasure. Barenboim really loves this music, and wants to share his enthusiasm with others, and I, for one, much prefer this to the type of bland performance that we find, for example, on Loughran's disc.

What was particularly impressive in 1973 was the very fine playing that Barenboim drew from the LPO. It was much the most assured playing that this symphony had had on record, and I doubt if even the more recent recordings can match the precision of Barenboim's performance of the scherzo. The major snag with the original record was the quality of the sound. It was so muddy and over-reverberent that much detail was lost and fast-moving passages (such as the end of the first movement) tended to degenerate into a muddled noise. Happily the disc has been recut and is much improved, and although not of the very best is more than acceptable.

J.G.K.

SONGS WITH ORCHESTRAL ACCOMPANIMENT - Pleading, Three Songs, Op. 59,
Two Songs, Op. 60. (Coupled with Vaughan Williams - On Wenlock Edge,
and Butterworth - Love blows as the wind blows)

Robert Tear (tenor) with the City of
Birmingham Orch/Vernon Handley.

HMV ASD 3896

Neither Elgar nor Vaughan Williams were naturally composers who thought pianistically. The publication of Elgar's earlier songs with piano accompaniment was a necessary expedient, but the later songs on this unusually interesting disc were all arguably composed with the sound of an accompanying orchestra in his mind's ear. The orchestrated versions were prepared soon after composition; in the case of *Pleading* within a few months, and in the case of the Opus 60 songs after about two and a half years. The Opus 59 songs are, in fact, the remnants of an uncompleted orchestral song-cycle, set to poems by Canadian-born Sir Gilbert Parker in 1909. It goes without saying that this selection includes some of Elgar's finest songs, and they all sound perfectly natural in their orchestrated form - especially the highly original Opus 60 pair.

Interesting though it is to hear the Elgar songs in this unfamiliar form, the revelation of this disc is the Vaughan Williams cycle. Inevitably there are moments when one misses the intimacy and understatement of the piano quintet accompaniment of the original version, especially as an unusually large orchestra is involved. The wide range of colours, however, often lead to a deeper illumination of Houseman's verses. The Butterworth settings (poems by W.E. Henley) were also originally composed for piano and string quartet accompaniment, but their character is changed less, perhaps, by the composer's choice of light, transparent orchestral textures.

I wish, however, that I could feel more enthusiastic about these performances, as we are unlikely to be presented with alternative versions. The orchestral playing is excellent, and Vernon Handley conducts with his usual sensitivity, yet missing none of the dramatic possibilities. Unfortunately Robert Tear was not in his best voice when the recording was made. He sounds strained and his tone is heavy and inflexible, the upper voice particularly not always responding to the singer's wishes. The more dramatic moments of the Vaughan Williams cycle, and the Opus 60 songs of Elgar suffer most in this respect. The recorded sound is excellent - the voice is perfectly balanced with a clear yet rather recessed orchestra.

G.H.L.

FALSTAFF - Symphonic Study; IN THE SOUTH (Alassio) Overture.

London Philharmonic Orch/Solti

Decca SXL 6963

Every one in a while a standard is set in art which seems so right

that the previous standards become over-shadowed and those that follow suffer inevitable comparison. At times this can have severe consequences, with actors in particular, having great difficulty in producing an alternative valid performance. To take two obvious examples, it was virtually impossible to follow the Lady Bracknell of Edith Evans, and the Richard III of Olivier until memories began to fade. Indeed it could be argued that they still dominate the roles today.

In music things are different, but the gramophone record has preserved performances of artists by which any subsequent recording will be judged. To take personal preferences I would suggest, as examples, the Chopin of Lipatti, the Tosca of Callas, and the Marschallin of Schwarzkopf. I believe Solti's recording of *Falstaff* is one of these. Never has a fictional creation been better served in music than Falstaff. Less than twenty years before Elgar wrote his work, the final flowering of Verdi's genius produced a work of incomparable delight and subtlety. Indeed, although based upon the much-criticised *Merry Wives of Windsor*, his opera tells us as much of Falstaff as Shakespeare did. His theme is comic rather than the more serious one adopted by Elgar, who prefers abstract music to tell his tale. His score is timeless, unlikely to ever appear dated and always relevant; one of his greatest achievements. It contains so much that it cannot be absorbed on first hearing. It must be studied and heard many times before it can be fully understood. Perhaps its only weakness is that Elgar's version of the story must be understood for the music to be fully appreciated. Others have argued for the music to be heard for its own sake, but I believe much is lost if the listener does not know what is going on. There is not a note too many, with the music conveying every mood and action with complete sympathy. How much better to understand the end to which it is put.

Solti's performance is precisely paced with the hidden story clearly stated. Falstaff's drunkenness and attempt at a speech (after 62) is a delight, and the taboo in the second interlude sounds as Elgar intended, never louder than *p*. The death of Falstaff is movingly portrayed, the final eloquent clarinet solo at 146 is his requiem, and the more telling as the triumph of "the man of stern reality" ends the work. I was privileged to attend part of the recording sessions, and found Solti's understanding of the score complete and the playing of the LPO of the highest order. *In the South* is finely projected with the most sensitive and full-toned viola solo yet on record. My devotion to the Silvestri performance remains unshaken, but it is for *Falstaff* that this record will be bought, and I recommend it as enthusiastically as Falstaff did his beloved sack.

'If I had a thousand sons, the first human principle I
would teach them should be, to forswear their potations
and to addict themselves to sack.'

A.H.A.N.

Recent recordings include the Cello Concerto (Harrell/Cleveland SO/
Maazel) on Decca SXL 6965. Serenade in E minor (Scottish Baroque Orch/
Friedmann) on Abbey ABY 810. and the same by the Bournemouth SO/del
Mar. HMV Greensleeves ESD 7088

Branch Reports

NORTH WEST

Secretary: Malcolm H. Key, 10 Ever-
sley Park, Oxtou, Birkenhead, Mer-
seyside, L43 5XA. Tel. 051 652-6388

Sept. 13th. Doreen Wedgewood--An Evening of English Song. We were delighted to have Doreen with us for this evening. She was a pupil of our late chairman, Dr. Jarvis, and there was an excellent attendance. The first part of her recital included songs ranging from Purcell and Arne to Quilter, Delius, Vaughan Williams, Bridge and Parry. The Vaughan Williams song *Silent Noon* was exquisitely performed.

In the second half Michael Head's cycle *Over the Rim of the Moon*, and finally to Elgar: *Where Corals Lie*, *Pleading*, and the *Seven Lieder*. A very entertaining evening, with Miss Wedgewood interspersing her song with a great deal of humour.

Oct. 11th. Unfortunately Edmund Walters was not able to be present with us this evening, so we turned to two of our members, Charles Sutcliffe and Douglas Carrington, to provide the entertainment. Charles shared with us some delightful reminiscences of his life as an organist and choirmaster of four churches on Merseyside, the highlight of which, for him, was the performance of *The Banner of St. George*, which he had the privilege of conducting at an Empire Day concert in 1949. Douglas has been spending a lot of time researching the organists and organ of St. George's Hall, Liverpool, for a book he is writing, so naturally he shared with us the fruits of his labours. Marvellously illustrated with drawings, specifications, an example of the first City Organist (W.T. Best) arrangement of *God Save the Queen* (played on the piano by Douglas's wife, Linda), this talk fascinated us, especially those who had been brought up on Ellingford (3rd City Organist) Penny Recitals. Our link, of course, was Dr. Jarvis, 4th City Organist, and it was appropriate that the talk ended with a recording of an arrangement of *Nimrod* played on St. George's Hall organ by Christopher Dearnley.

Oct. 15th. Our 'unofficial' outing to Crosby for "An Evening of Elgar". The *Violin Sonata* and *Sea Pictures* were performed in the first half - neither was outstanding. The second half Gerald Brown brought his singers on to sing the *Ave Verum*, *As Torrents in Summer*, *A Song of Autumn*, and *My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land*. Finally, what we were all waiting for, *The Banner of St. George*. Totally anachronistic (the words coming from a different age altogether), it was nevertheless performed with great gusto, a small orchestra playing their hearts out. Yes, the budding Elgar was there in the music, and the work's rarity value was sufficient reason for it to be heard.

Nov. 8th. Our major event this year, with an attendance of over 50 members and public. The Elgar String Quartet entertained us with three "firsts" - Haydn's Quartet, Op.1, no.1, extremely well played; Mendelssohn's First Quartet in E flat, Op.12, again a polished performance; and the Elgar Quartet. This proved a trifle more daunting than the previous two, rubato and tempo alternating quite fiendishly. Nevertheless, despite some harshness and a few wayward notes, it was a spirited performance appreciated by all.

Next season's programme is complete save for three dates. These following have already been arranged:

April 25th. Martin Passande - 'Elgar and Hereford.'
May 16th. Robert Seager - 'Elgar in 1904'.
June 20th. Albert Howell - 'Reminiscences of an Elgar Lover'.
July 11th. Joint outing with Yorkshire Branch to Settle.
Sept. 12th. Barry Collett - 'The Lesser-Known Elgar'.
Dec. 12th. AGM and Party. We hope to have Doreen Wedgewood to again entertain us at this meeting.

LONDON

Secretary: Garry Humphreys, 4 Hill
Court, Stanhope Road, London, N.6.
Tel: 348-1678

Since the last edition of the Journal the Branch has undergone a change greater than any since its formation. For the first time in ten years there has been a change of Chairman, and Secretary (and we now have a Vice-Chairman and a separate Treasurer), and a change of venue for meetings. The best laid schemes of new committees can go awry, and the recital part of our first meeting of the season (a stunning performance of Elgar's *Sonata for Violin and piano* by Jonathan Josephs and Maureen Parrington) was saved only by the very helpful organisers of a pop concert elsewhere in Imperial College. Their proceedings were broadcast, loud and clear, through the ventilation system. The second meeting was preceded, rather than bisected, by the refreshment interval, while South Kensington was scoured for an available tape-recorder (ordered from the college but not supplied) to enable Dr. Robert Philip to illustrate his talk on Elgar's orchestras. In the event, the Registrar of the Royal College of Music came to the rescue with unhesitating generosity, and we were eventually treated to an absorbing evening, with all the clarity and elegance Dr. Philip brings to his radio broadcasts. At the time of writing the third meeting has not yet taken place, but we are hoping for a vindication of the old adage 'Third time lucky'.

Apart from tearing its collective hair over such 'unforeseen circumstances' the Committee has met twice to organise its business. Apart from next season's programme of speakers, the matter of bringing the Branch constitution in line with that of the Society (recently revised)

is under consideration, as well as ideas and plans for the rejuvenation and promotion of Branch activities. Above all, the Committee is anxious for all members to feel welcome and involved, and to know that their ideas and views are essential to the Branch's well-being. Although the Secretary asks all new members to make themselves known to him at their first meeting, it is tactically impossible for the officers and committee to make contact with all members at meetings, so much must depend on your own initiative. We regard our work as a means to an end; you must tell us what that end shall be.

Members are reminded that guests and prospective new members are welcome at all meetings without the necessity of prior arrangement; refreshments are now available before each meeting (from 6.30 p.m.) as well as during the interval.

EAST MIDLANDS

Secretary: Malcolm Smitham, 5 Riddon Drive, Hinckley, Leics, LE10 0UF.
Tel: 0455 - 613737

Sept. 30th. Bryan Crimp - "Recording the Violin Concerto". This first meeting of the new season was held in conjunction with the Leicester Recorded Music Society. It was well attended, and Mr. Crimp, formerly with EMI, held the meeting enthralled with his excellent presentation of this much-loved work. He chose to compare all the recordings of the *Concerto* from Sammons (1929) to Ida Haendel (1978). In view of the large amount of listening involved, comparisons were made of the first and last movements only. The juxtaposition of recordings on tape, together with Mr. Crimp's interesting commentary was absorbing, and enabled members who did not possess all the recordings to hear a wide variation of interpretation, given by expert conductors and soloists. Firm favourites emerging from the talk were the Heifitz/Sargent (1952), and the Haendel/Boult. We were delighted and privileged to hear and discuss this work with someone having such a thorough knowledge of his subject.

Oct. 28th. Barry Collett - "The Unknown Elgar". This was a most interesting subject excellently presented by Mr. Collett. Our attention was drawn to the fact that Elgar is not the only composer whose music is sharply divided between the extremely popular, and the less well-known and rarely heard. As with other composers, much of the music which is rarely performed is quite as good and exciting to hear as the most popular. We heard excerpts from *Polonia*, *Empire March*, *the Wind Music*, and the *Coronation Ode*, these illustrating the larger works. Among the smaller pieces we heard *The Snow*; *Fly, Singing Bird*; and the Harvest Anthem *Fear not O Land*. Two unusual and extremely short pieces illustrated were *Griffinesque* (1884), a piano piece lasting only 15 seconds, and a short duet for double bass and trombone (1887), an unusual combination written as a wedding present for a friend. Many of these unusual pieces are available on the Society's recent record, or

on Barry Collett's own record, still available from him.

Perhaps most interesting of all were three songs which are not available on record, but which had been taped for the meeting. They were *A Child Asleep* (1909), *Arabian Serenade* (1914), and *The Chariots of the Lord* (1914). As Mr. Collett pointed out, Elgar's words and music do not always seem inspired when viewed from the printed page, but Elgar's music "lives in the sound". Such is the case with these songs, which when performed have undoubted charm. A thoroughly enjoyable evening.

Our November meeting with Michael Kennedy will be noted in the next issue of the Journal.

WEST MIDLANDS

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

Sept. 6th. For the first time the branch met in Hereford. This was specially arranged so that Martin Passande could return to his old territory, in order to talk to us on 'Elgar in Hereford.' Biographical detail, interesting detours (e.g. that when Sinclair was organist at Truro, at the age of 17, his deputy was Ivor Atkins), coupled with a delightful selection of "Plas Gwyn" compositions, and some beautiful slides of the house and district made it a most enjoyable evening.

Whilst the projector was in operation, we were delighted to see recent slides of the villa the Elgars rented in Alassio, with the street sign "Via Edward Elgar", brought along by a loyal branch member, Mr. V. Cartwright. We were glad to meet members from Hereford and district.

Oct. 11th. "Troyte Griffith, Friend and Architect." A memorable meeting. Visiting guests from the Yorkshire branch helped to fill to bursting point a Commandery room, with about 60 members. Add the tremendous enthusiasm of Mr. Hutchinson (himself an architect) for his subject, stir in his vast amount of research, top up with a wide selection of colour slides and music (shown and played by his wife and Spencer Noble respectively). Finish with coffee and savouries provided by Carol Holt and Eleanor Noble, and one has all the ingredients of a most successful evening.

WEST MIDLANDS FORTHCOMING MEETINGS - All welcome....

Feb. 14th, 7.30. At Old Palace, Deansway, Worcester. Joint meeting with Recorded Music Society: 'Orchestral Works', with Graham Smith.

March 7th, 7.30. Rear of 37 Albany Terrace, Worcester. AGM, plus Elgar songs, with Margaret Powell, and rare piano pieces, with Tim Tozer.

May 9th, 7 p.m. At St. Michael's College, Tenbury. Music, wine and cheese, with Roger Judd (organ), and the College Choir.

EAST ANGLIA

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

Our new season began on Sept.20th with a pleasant wine and cheese party at Hengrave Hall, nr. Bury St.Edmunds. Besides providing a chance for our Suffolk-based members to meet together, we were also fortunate to hear the organist of Bury Cathedral, Harrison Oxley, and members of his family play music by Elgar. One of the problems of a scattered membership (Lincolnshire across to Essex) is attempting to cater for the long-distance traveller! As the year progresses we hope to organise events elsewhere in our region.

The Oct. 24th meeting was held our Norwich Barbirolli Room. Our music expert David Bunkell presented a varied programme of records, made up of an overture (*Froissart*), a cantata (*Spirit of England*), and a concerto (for Cello).

We duly celebrated Bonfire Night on the Saturday before Nov.5th, with our Annual Fireworks Party at Overstrand, a small coastal village nestling on the cliffs. The Court Hotel gardens provided a natural arena. Members of the committee have noted that to attend these events armed with hammer and nails (and a torch) for obstinate catherine wheels on trees, will probably make for instant re-election next year. How versatile we have to be. (Elgar, with his love of chemistry, would have appreciated our rockets).

The most memorable meeting to date took place in November. John Warren, organist of Framlingham Church and director of the Debenham Music Festival, gave us a fascinating insight into Elgar's piano music, dividing it into Early, Middle and Late Periods. Progressing from *Salut d'Amour* we were surprised by the complex harmonies of *Skizze* and dazzled by John's technique when he played Elgar's own difficult piano arrangement of *Nimrod*. John's point about bad performances in bad arrangements of Elgar's music made a real impression. The highlight of the evening was a transcription by Ketelby of *In the Forest* from *The Starlight Express*. Has anyone else seen this effective piano album?

As I write, plans are in hand for an Edwardian Evening, with mince pies and punch. No doubt various members will reveal hidden talents as they busk and bluff their way through suitable part-songs, glees, monologues or whatever. As Master of Ceremonies the Secretary is having sleepless nights - at least he won't be lost for loquaciousness(words!).

SOUTH WEST

Secretary: Ian Cartwright, Herschel House, 61 North Street, Nailsea, Bristol, BS19 2BS. Tel: 0272 852621

Our September meeting took the form of a recital by the Caso Wind Quintet nobly aided at the piano by the compiler of the evening's

programme, Derek Johnstone, to whom many thanks are due for putting together such an excellent and varied bill of fare. The five young woodwind players, all past and present members of the County of Avon Schools Orchestra, demonstrated a marvellous musical ability and feeling, not only in well-prepared group items but in solo pieces as well. The musical offerings were framed by performances of some of Elgar's Wind Quintet music, but also included fascinating pieces by Rimsky-Korsakov, Jean Francoix, and Brahms. Despite torrential rain, there was a good turn-out of members and friends for a memorable evening.

When we first met as Branch in March 1979, Vincent Waite spoke on "Elgar and Parry", and so it was only natural that he should be asked now to give us a talk on "Elgar and Stanford" and this he did at our October meeting under the title "The Case of the Odious Letter". The talk was, if possible, even more fascinating than the earlier one. Generous excerpts from Stanford's rarely heard works were most illuminating. Particularly unforgettable was a section of Stanford's *Requiem*, which was exceptionally beautiful, and which affected everyone at the meeting. Our gratitude is due to Mr. Waite for the time and trouble he put into the preparation of this talk.

After Christmas our meetings resume a regular pattern, all at the Music Room of the Bristol Folk House, 40 Park Street, at 7.30 p.m.
Jan. 24th. *The Dream of Gerontius*; an evening in the company of this great work, to be performed by the Bristol Choral Society in the 1981/2 season under our Chairman Clifford Harker.

Feb. 28th. *Introduction and Allegro*. A talk (by Derek Johnstone) and Record Review (by Ian Cartwright) about the work, prior to its performance by the Bristol Sinfonia in the Colston Hall, on March 25th. Meeting organised in conjunction with Bristol Sinfonia.

March 28th. 'Troyte, Friend and Architect.' A talk on the 'friend' from the *Enigma Variations* by J. Maxwell Hutchinson.

April 25th. ELGAR RECORD REVIEW. Recently issued records and reissues of Elgar's music, reviewed by Ron Bleach and Ian Cartwright.

Would all members please note that the meeting announced for May 30th (Christopher Kent on the *Third Symphony*) has been postponed to June 6th, because of the Society's Anniversary Dinner in Malvern.

As agreed at the Annual General Meeting, regrettably the Branch subscription will be £3 for 1981, making a total of £6 for the combined subscription to Society and Branch. Whilst we regret this increase at a time when finances for every-one are under strain, it is also a fact that the Branch's finances will be under considerable pressure. The committee sincerely hope that members will continue to feel that they are getting "value for money."

We regret the absence of a report from the YORKSHIRE BRANCH, but this did not reach us in time for publication.

Letters

From RAYMOND MONK

With the completion, and eventual publication, of Jerrold Northrop Moore's definitive Life of Elgar, a significant milestone will have been reached in the field of Elgar studies. Three important projects remain: the complete Elgar Edition; a thematic catalogue; and a collection of Elgar letters. Plans already exist for the Edition, and work has already begun on the thematic catalogue. Sadly, however, a comprehensive edition of the letters would appear to be very low on the list of priorities. Readers of this Journal will know already that Elgar was a great and fascinating letter writer. Truly, to read the letter is to know the man, both as a human being and creative artist. It is my view that a complete edition of Elgar's letters, all 10,000 of them, should be seen as an essential requirement for this and future generations. The Elgar Society, the Elgar Foundation, and Elgarians everywhere have a vital role to play in ensuring that this great need is eventually met.

From GEOFFREY PRENTICE

Re Michael Trott's list of corrections and additions to his "Guide to Places of Elgarian Interest in Malvern/Worcester area."

In August of this year I was able to visit some of the places included in this list. However, I went to visit Elgar's first school, the address of which the Journal has printed as no.12 Britannia Square. It seems that, after talking to the present occupiers of both houses, the school was, in fact, next door at no.11. A small point, but I thought I should write and tell you.

From B.K. DOUGLAS, of Christchurch, New Zealand

I have always loved Elgar's music since I remember first attending Halle concerts in Manchester. Elgar came to lunch with us on one occasion. He was a friend of the Johnston's (the Wedgewood people), who were friends of ours. He had been conducting King Olaf, I think, at Hanley. In 1960 I emigrated to Australia, where Elgar is by no means neglected, and now live in New Zealand where the same applies. Sir David Willcocks is a regular visitor here, no doubt attracted by the excellent choral societies in the country.

From N.R. BURNETT, of Brisbane, Australia

Brisbane has a population of about 900,000, and we have 11 radio stations, 3 of which cater for the listener to serious music. (One of them 24 hours a day.) I have just received the programmes for the

month of October, and the music of Elgar is very well represented. On the two F.M. stations alone we will be hearing *Dream of Gerontius*, *Falstaff*, *Symphony no.1* (three times), *Sanguine Fan*, *Severn Suite*(twice), *Cockaigne* (twice), *Coronation Ode*, *Enigma Variations*, *Serenade in E*, *Introduction and Allegro* (twice), *Pomp and Circumstance 1-5* (twice), together with shorter items, and a feature on enigmas and riddles in Elgar's music.

Brisbane is far removed from the Malvern Hills, but obviously Elgar's music strikes a few responsive chords here.

Book Review

BRASS TRIUMPHANT, by Cyril Bainbridge. *Frederick Muller, £8.95*

Just arrived, shortly before we go to press, is an important new book. The brass band movement is, without doubt, the most remarkable amateur music movement anywhere in the world. Not only has it thousands of ardent followers, but it has tens of thousands of musicians, some of them very highly skilled indeed. Sir Henry Wood described conducting massed bands 'like being in a whirlwind of sound', and what a magnificent sound it is. Those who have not attended a live brass band concert can have no idea of the remarkable musical experience that they have missed. And yet this enormous movement for music-making was completely ignored by the early editors of Grove's Dictionary, though late editions did have a first-class article by Harold C.Hind. Why, one wonders, did the musical establishment look down on brass bands and their players. Was it the cloth caps and colliery image which persisted for so long? Was it too 'working-class' for the academicians? Whatever it was, they were sadly wrong as Elgar would have been the first to tell them. The fact that he, and Holst, Bantock, Ireland, Rubbra, Vaughan Williams, and many others composed music specially for band contests shows how much they valued the contribution which bands have made to British musical life. The author, a well-known journalist, has an enthusiasm for his subject, and tells the long, and sometimes complex, story in fascinating detail. His story really begins with the Waits, and the private bands of the 18th century, and comes up-to-date with the packed championships at Belle Vue, Manchester, and the Albert Hall, London. Appendices list all the contest winners, and test-pieces (including an arrangement of music from *Caractacus* in the British Open Championship of 1903). I could have wished for rather more photographs than are included here, and it is a pity that despite a selected discography of current recordings, there is no bibliography. Admittedly the literature is shamefully small - all the more reason to welcome this new account of the world of the Brass Band.

R.P.T.

THE ELGAR SOCIETY

(President: Sir Adrian Boult, C.H.)

The ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION to the Society is £3. Applications for membership should be addressed to the Hon. Secretary, Andrew Neill, 11 Limburg Road, London, S.W.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:

LONDON	£3 per annum, the combined subscription to be sent to M.Sanderson, 18 Lyncroft Mansions, Lyncroft Gardens, London, NW6 1JX
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SOUTH WEST	£3 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

The following back numbers of the JOURNAL (formerly NEWSLETTER) are available from the editor: 1977, *May & Sept. 70p. each.* 1978, *Jan., May & Sept. 70p. each.* 1979, *Jan. £1.10p. Sept. 80p.* 1980, *Jan., May & Sept. 90p. each.* All prices include postage. We regret that other issues are now out of print.

MANY MEMBERS HAVE MADE ENQUIRIES REGARDING BINDING OF THEIR COPIES IN COMPLETE VOLUMES. We have made arrangements with Messrs. Muir and Muir The Bindery, Stoneham Street, Coggeshall, Essex, to bind 6 issues (one volume) in black buckram, gilt lettering, for £9. Those interested should write direct to Muir and Muir, and not to the Journal.