

# The Elgar Society JOURNAL



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*Photograph of Elgar p.21.*

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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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*Members should note the Treasurer's new address as follows: John Knowles, 80 Langley Way, Watford, Herts WD1 3EF.*

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# The Elgar Society Journal

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104 CRESCENT ROAD,  
NEW BARNET,  
HERTS.

EDITORIAL

MAY 1982

Vol. 2, no.5

When the Society issued its first record "Elgar's Interpreters on Record" it was hoped that it would be the first of a number of specialised and historic recordings. We are pleased to say that the first issue has sold well (although it is ironic that the public has shown greater interest in the record than has the membership!). Progress is now being made on the second Elgar Society record, this time of Elgar's Choral Songs, sung by the BBC Singers, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. Details were given with the January edition of the Journal, and some subscriptions are already in. To secure our finances members were invited to order a copy in advance at the special price of £4.50, including postage. -The response has been disappointing - only 100 out of a membership of 1000. Come along Elgar Society members--is this what you call enthusiasm? We are always being told of all the things we should do, now let us give some practical support, even if times are difficult. Send your order and £4.50 to the Treasurer, and do it NOW! (Note new address on back cover).

In addition to the Choral Songs, conducted by Sir Adrian, it is planned to include two talks from the BBC Archives. The first was recorded in 1940 and has Sir Adrian and the composer's daughter, Mrs. Carice Elgar Blake, discussing the writing of *Enigma Variations*. The second is more substantial (around 12 minutes) and is entitled "As I Knew Him: Sir Edward Elgar - a personal portrait by Sir Adrian Boult". This was recorded in 1951. The whole project is most exciting, and those who have heard the tapes say that the sound quality is first class. It deserves your active support.

We look forward to greeting members at the Annual General Meeting of the Society on June 5th in Bristol, when we hope for a large attendance. The meeting will be followed by a special Evensong in the Cathedral which will include some of Elgar's music.

RONALD TAYLOR  
Editor

## NEWS ITEMS .....

The ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING of the Society will be held on Saturday, 5th June, 1982, at Bristol Music Club, 76 St. Paul's Road, Bristol. at 2.30. We hope that as many members as possible will attend.

THE LONG-AWAITED NEW EDITION of Michael Kennedy's "Portrait of Elgar" will be published by Oxford University Press in May. The hard-cover version will be £15, and the paper-back £6.95. The book has been much revised and expanded since the first edition in 1968, and will be reviewed in our next issue.

CAMBRIDGE RECORDS took a very long time to supply us with copies of the two Elgar issues, and our Treasurer wishes to apologise for the delay in supplying members. All copies have now been sent.

UNIVERSITY OF MANCHESTER Dept of Extra-Mural Studies has arranged a course on 8th to 13th August. A very full survey will be made of Elgar's music, and the course will include a visit to the Birthplace, and a recital of English songs by Kieran McNiff. The cost of the course, including full board at Holly Royde, West Didsbury, will be in the region of £100. Full details are available from Lynn Palethorpe, Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies, The University, Manchester, M13 9PL. Telephone 061-273 3333 ext. 3076. Completed applications must arrive by June 7th.

AS PART OF THE CELEBRATIONS of Maritime Year Garry Humphreys included the songs "Fringes of the Fleet" in a recital which he gave at St. Olave's, Hart Street, London, E.C.3. on the 28th April.

WE NOW EXCHANGE the 'Journal' with the Toronto Symphony News. This latter reaches all patrons of the orchestra, and concert-goers too, since it is included with the concert programmes. The Journal will keep our Canadian friends in touch with what is happening in the field of Elgar studies and performances, and we in turn will learn much of music-making in Canada. The orchestra is to make a European tour in the spring of 1983, though as yet we do not know their programme.

MALVERN FESTIVAL TOURS (Sheila Burgess-Smith) will be pleased to chauffeur visitors to the Malvern Festival around the Elgar country. Details are available from the Malvern Tourist Information Dept. in Great Malvern. Tel: Malvern 4700 for information on costs. The service is available mornings and afternoons.

AMENDMENTS TO THE ELGAR DISCOGRAPHY are still being made, and a supplement will be issued at some later date. More information in our next issue.

This year's Festival will be held from August 22nd to 27th. There are many concerts and recitals, and the orchestras involved this year are the Royal Philharmonic and City of Birmingham Symphony. Festival conductor is Roy Massey, with John Sanders and Donald Hunt, and the guest conductor is Sir Charles Groves. There is little Elgar this year, and what there is is of minor importance. However, as always there is much fine music and full details can be had

from the Festival Office, 34 Bridge Street, Hereford HR4 9DQ.

As usual the West Midlands Branch has arranged a special Elgar Society tea on the first Sunday, August 22nd at 4.30 p.m. at the Festival Club in the Shire Hall. The cost will be £1 per head, but payment in advance is not required, but Alan Boon would like advance notice of those wishing to attend. Please contact him at the Old School House, Martley Worcester. Telephone Wichenford 527, by August 15th at the latest.

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This year's MALVERN Festival of music and drama has many good things to attract the visitor. Shaw's "Getting Married" and Maugham's "Our Betters" are the main drama presentations, and the musical side of the festival will include performances by the Philharmonia Orchestra, the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, the Aldwyn Consort of Voices, the Borodin Trio, the Amadeus Trio, and the Equale Brass. Elgar items include the Violin Sonata, played by Nigel Kennedy and Peter Pettinger. Among orchestral items are Falstaff, the Second Symphony, (with Walton's "Belshazzar's Feast" in the same programme), and Go Song of Mine. On the day of the performance of the Symphony Jerrold Northrop Moore will give a morning talk on 'The Making of Elgar's Second Symphony'.

# Malvern Festival

## 16-29 May 1982

Booking is likely to be heavy, so an immediate application for details is advised. Our own copy of the brochure did not arrive until April 5th, the day advance bookings opened. Full details can be had from the Festival Box Office, Malvern Festival Theatre, Grange Road, MALVERN, Worcs WR14 3HB. Telephone: 06845 3377.

For the various Fringe Activities at Malvern ring the Tourist Information office at 06845 4700.

ELGAR HOUSES WITH PLAQUES

- 10 High Street, Worcester. Plaque approx. marking site - Russell & Dorrell's store.
- 4 Field Terrace, Worcester. Plaque.
- 3 Alexandra Gardens, Ventnor, Isle of Wight. Plaque.
- 51 Avonmore Road, West Kensington, London. GLC Blue Plaque.
- Forli, Alexandra Road, Malvern Link, Worcs. Plaque.
- Birchwood Lodge, Storridge, Worcs. Plaque.
- Craeg Lea, Wells Road, Malvern Wells, Worcs. Plaque.
- Plas Gwyn, Hampton Park Road, Hereford. Plaque.
- Severn House, 42 Netherhall Gardens, Hampstead, London. Ceramic Plaque - should really be on next door's house. No.44 is on site of Severn House.
- Brinkwells, Fittleworth, Sussex. Plaque.
- Napleton Grange, Kempsey, nr. Worcester. Plaque.
- Battenhall Manor, Worcester. Tree planted on site by Elgar, with plaque beneath.

*The above information was kindly supplied to the Society by Pauline Collett, and is believed to be complete at the present time. If any members know of additions or alterations to this list we should much appreciate being informed. Further details on the houses can be found in Pauline Collett's book "Elgar Lived Here" (Thames Publishing Co. £4.90).*

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URGENTLY REQUIRED. To complete recordings archive: good copies of: ALP 1062 (1st Symphony/Boult). RG 49 Sonata/Rostal/Horsley/Quartet/Element STCAM 5002 Sonata/Loveday/Cassini/Quartet/Aeolian CLP 1154 Enigma/Serenade/Goehr. PLEASE HELP! Details to Raymond Monk, 19 Severn Street, Leicester LE2 ONN.

QUESTION and ANSWER

A new feature in the JOURNAL in which questions of general interest will be answered. Contributions in the form of specific questions are invited, but questions easily answered by recourse to the standard books on Elgar are not solicited!

Q. 01 Can anyone explain why Elgar, after having such a success with his *Enigma Variations*, never returned to variation form in his later works?

Any answer to this question must be speculative, but I would suggest two main reasons. The programme note for the first performance of the *Variations* strongly indicated Elgar's dislike of 'academic exercises', which would presumably include works or movements written in strict variation form. He clearly aspired to the use of more flowing, more rhapsodic and ultimately more symphonic basis for his music, and the quest for this took Elgar on a long road. At just one point along this road he used variation form as a means to an end in writing an orchestral work. Brahms, a little earlier, may have judged variation form a suitable vehicle for his culminating symphony movement, but Elgar's music needed a freer atmosphere in which to reach fruition. By 1908, as we know, the thematic transformation which he favoured was successfully integrated with the bold handling of large-scale material to produce the effective mature style displayed in the *Symphony no.1*.

The second reason is bound up with the particular character of the *Variations* which so obviously had very special personal and emotional significance for the composer, linked as they were with the personalities of his wife, with the other friends portrayed, and indeed with his own personality and position in the autumn and winter of 1898-9. To the dismay of some critics, these extra-musical associations had been drawn to the attention of the musical public. For Elgar to have considered writing a comparable work in variation form at a later stage would have been unthinkable simply because it would have risked a severe emotional anti-climax; any new work on similar lines would have drawn attention away from and devalued the status of the original *Variations* and 'the friends pictured within'. But, after all, why should he want to write more variations after scoring such a success? Parry, whose own orchestral variations had appeared in 1897, was 'rapturous', Stanford's (for piano and orchestra) on the tune 'Down among the dead men' (1898) does not seem to have been a very lively rival, and, indeed, although a number of other composers, encouraged by Elgar's example, wrote works in this form, he had the satisfaction of knowing that his own unique work, the *Variations for Orchestra*, op. 36, remained foremost in the field throughout his lifetime, as it has to this day.

(T.C.F.-J.)

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## BIRTHPLACE NEWS

Jack McKenzie (Curator) reports: The Birthplace survived the winter well, no leaks or snow in the wrong places, and except for the Curator's inspection visits, the garden remained almost pristine - it looked lovely. Visitors actually numbered 69 in January. The month's highlight is undoubtedly the gift of the map on which Elgar wrote the *Pomp & Circumstance* no.5 theme and gave to Dr. Moore Ede. This map has been donated in memory of their father by his three sons, and was handed to me by Dr. Roderick Moore Ede in the North Porch of Worcester Cathedral on 19th January.

February was quite busy. With 267 visitors it was my best ever February in ten years. We had a mini-invasion by pupils of a local prep. school who are "doing a project on Elgar"; they came with their parents at half-term, and of course that is when Roy Hattersley visited this normally quiet corner of England. The garden came up trumps - blue and white - and snowdrops have never been so prolific. March brought 216 visitors. The mail orders continue to grow and add to the income. We welcome research students, but we do not have time to copy out the Pedigree and such like documents. In the face of this progress it is sad to see the effect that Winter has had on the garden - we have lost all our standard roses. Where are we to find replacements for our Donald Prior, Iceberg, and a Shot Silk standard rose?

Rose Cottage is in chaos again. The second stage of the damp course, the walls of the front half of the cottage and the floors, has been in 'progress' now for a month. The Birthplace itself is scheduled for pointing and painting, and meantime the builders' ladders and materials are still with us.

A REMINDER: Summer Hours at the Birthplace. 1.30p.m. to 6.30 p.m. every day except Wednesdays, when we are closed all day! Bank Holidays open mornings as well, 10.30 a.m. to 12.30 p.m.

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### DOROTHY HOWELL

The death occurred on 12th January, 1982 of Dorothy Howell, F.R.A.M. at the age of 83. She had a successful career as pianist, making her debut at the Aeolian Hall in March, 1918. She composed many works, a number of which were performed at the Proms under Sir Henry Wood, and she also taught at the R.A.M., the Tobias Matthay Piano School, the Birmingham School of Music, and the Montpelier Music School, Cheltenham. She was elected a Member of the Royal Philharmonic Society in 1971, the year after she retired from the R.A.M.

A memorial mass was held at St. Wulstan's Church, Little Malvern on 20th March, at which several of her own compositions were sung. It was most fitting that the burial and mass were held here for it was one of the great tributes that Dorothy Howell made to Elgar's memory by her constant attention to the Elgar grave. She did this in the name of the Elgar Society, and gave her time and effort without thought of reward.



## Transcriptions of Elgar's Music

by Philip L. Scowcroft

Arrangements and transcriptions are legion in the world of music and purists usually frown on them. However, they undoubtedly have their value, as they bring the compositions so treated to a wider range of performers and listeners; further, a good arrangement can often add something to the original and even assume a life of its own. Elgar himself, like most professional musicians, dabbled in the transcription business from the time he arranged music for his wind quintet, or local orchestras, or St. George's Church in Worcester; he often made the piano versions of his own works - necessary in an age when every middle-class home had its upright, or even grand, piano. He arranged for orchestra his own instrumental miniatures like *Salut d'Amour*, *Rosemary*, *the Chansons*, *May Song*, etc., and his scorings of Handel's *Overture in D minor*, Bach's *C minor Fantasy and Fugue* and Chopin's *Funeral March* for modern orchestra assume recognisably Elgarian qualities. Even accompaniments to anthems by Purcell, Battishill and S.S.Wesley, and of course to Parry's *Jerusalem*, claimed the great man's attention and his setting of the National Anthem is still frequently sung. He also arranged his (SATB) *Marching Song* (1908) as a solo (with ad lib. men's chorus), *Follow the Colours* when war broke out in 1914. (Percy Young: *Elgar, O.M.*, pp.402-3 conveniently lists Elgar's arrangements).

But what I want to do here is to mention a few arrangements of Elgar's own work and to look briefly at some of the arrangers, who mostly were not hacks but interesting figures in their own right. Choirs for example, whether mixed voice, male voice or female voice, never seem to have enough music. Countless solo songs and arias have their choral versions, and Elgar's songs, notwithstanding the slighting references made to them by many commentators, are no exception. All of the *Seven Lieder* exist in SATB versions (at least some in TTBB also) made by Leslie Woodgate (1902-61), an outstanding choral trainer who was Chorus Master to the BBC and, for a time, directed the male voice LNER Musical Society for whom he wrote original works as well as arrangements. He could have had his railwaymen in mind when he made, in the 1930s his TTBB arrangements of most of *From the Bavarian Highlands*, originally of course SATB. It was, however, H.A. Chambers, an employee of Novello's, who made the atmospheric male-voice setting of *As Torrents in Summer* (from *King Olaf*), also originally SATB, though unaccompanied by this time. Chambers, who arranged many folksongs, carols and nursery rhymes, also arranged Elgar's *O Soft was the Song* for SATB and *The Banner of St. George*, complete, for female voices in 1934.

The attractive version of *As Torrents* for female voices (SSA, accompanied - accompaniment is necessary to provide the bass) is, I discovered when hearing it recently, by Elgar himself, as apparently are those of other Novello-published, originally SATB, items like *My Love Dwelt*, *Weary Wind of the West* and *How Calmly the Evening* (mostly SS, unaccompanied).

Not so the female choir variants (SSA or SS, accompanied) or solo songs like *A Poet's Life*, *Queen Mary's Song*, *Rondel*, *Shepherd's Song* and *Like to the Damask Rose* which were made by Montague Phillips (1885-1969), remembered, though only just, for his operetta *The Rebel Maid*, very popular in its day, and a handful of light orchestral works (he also composed songs, cantatas, a symphony and two piano concertos). Phillips was an extrovert character and a splendid choir trainer. The *Bavarian Highlands* songs, or at least *The Dance* and *Lullaby*, were arranged for ladies' voices by one cryptically described as "F.P." Who was he?

Another interesting class of arrangements is of Elgar orchestral compositions, usually shortish ones, for organ. There were many of these, which was not surprising at a time when orchestral concerts, even amateur ones, were less frequent than nowadays, when the gramophone as a vehicle for serious orchestral music was only just gaining credibility and when organists delighted in drawing orchestral colours from their instruments. They spread Elgar's fame more widely than the original orchestral versions. Several of them were made by the "Three Choirs" organists, all of whom were Elgar's friends and had enjoyed kindnesses at his hands. By such transcriptions they repaid their debts. Thus G.R.Sinclair (Hereford) arranged *Pomp & Circumstance 4*, very well indeed; A.H. Brewer (Gloucester) set the *Chansons*, the *Prelude to The Kingdom* and the *Gerontius Prelude and Angel's Farewell*, which, despite a lot of doubling, is by no means a bad recital piece and was often so used earlier this century; Hugh Blair (Worcester) transcribed the *Crown of India March*, *Carillon* and *Carissima*, three works of the years 1912-14, by which time Blair was living in reduced circumstances in London; his successor Ivor Atkins tried his hand in 1912 at *Dream Children no.2* (also, curiously, later(1933) set, again for Novello by London organist Reginald Goss Custard) and the *Severn Suite*, which with its Minuet replaced by a brief cadenza of Atkins' own composition, appeared in 1933 as *Organ Sonata no.2*; a serviceable if occasionally clumsy-sounding arrangement.

Other eminent organists were attracted to Elgar's music: Sir George Martin (1844-1916), organist of St. Paul's from 1888 and composer of Anglican church music including a famous *Te Deum* performed on St. Paul's steps at Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, arranged (about that very time) the *Imperial March* and the *Meditation from The Light of Life*. Elgar later dedicated his *Psalm 29* setting to Martin. Harvey Grace (1874-1944), editor of the *Musical Times*, was organist of Chichester Cathedral 1931-8 and a composer of organ pieces, though the books of this noted musical scholar were rather better known - his transcription of the *Prelude For the Fallen* (1937) is good organ music. William H. Harris (1883-1973), organist at Christ Church, Oxford, then at St. George's, Windsor, conductor of the Bach Choir, and Professor of organ and harmony at the R.C.M., wrote some excellent Parry-like organ and choral music, and his organ setting of *Nimrod* (1932) lies well on the instrument. The biggest score of Elgar organ transcriptions

was chalked up by Edwin Lemare (1865-1934), composer of organ works - one was transmogrified into the hit song *Moonlight and Roses* - and sometime organist of Sheffield Parish Church (now the Cathedral) and various London churches who later went to the U.S.A. and became a concert organist; he arranged the violin pieces *Idylle* and *Gavotte, Sursum Corda, Salut d'Amour, Pomp & Circumstance 1*, and the *Triumphal March* from *Caractacus*, the latter a virtuoso exercise indeed for an organist. Some of Lemare's exercises were done before 1900 but even as late as 1978 there appeared a new Elgar organ transcription, by Basil Ramsey, of the *Grania and Diarmid Funeral March*, again very good organ material. This (and many of the above) appeared in Novello's recently issued *Elgar Organ Albums* whose very publication suggests that such transcriptions retain their interest even today. Other Elgar music similarly treated included the Larghetto from the *Serenade* (by C.H.Trevor), *Salut d'Amour* (by Gray, possibly Alan Gray (1855-1935), York-born composer of chamber, choral and organ music), the *Bavarian Highlands Lullaby* (by J.S.Winder), *Contrasts* (by Kingston), *Idylle*, again (by Redhead), the *Piacevole* of the *String Quartet* (arranger unspecified), and the slow movements of the *Cello Concerto* (by Dom Gregory Murray) and the *Violin Concerto* (played twice in Doncaster Parish Church recitals in 1930 and done by Edinburgh-born Charles Macpherson, Professor at the R.A.M., sub-organist at St.Paul's, and composer of a wide range of music).

Many piano versions of Elgar orchestral and instrumental music were probably done by the composer himself, particularly where Novello was the publisher, as it frequently was. Examples are both *Dream Children*, the *Falstaff Interludes* and the *Gerontius Prelude and Angel's Farewell*. One would think this would certainly also be the case with, for instance, the various similar violin and piano arrangements (e.g. *Sospiri, Carissima, Rosemary, Salut d'Amour*) and the viola/piano *Canto Popolare* extracted from *In the South*, though in the 1930s Keith Prowse commissioned W.H.Reed to transcribe *The Sad Doll* (from the *Nursery Suite*) for violin and piano, and virtuoso violinist Szigeti to similarly treat the piano miniatures *Adieu* (which incorporated a snatch of the *Violin Concerto*) and *Serenade*. Even Novello had one J. Pointer, who also set *The Snow* for mixed voices) arrange the *Serenade* from *Wand of Youth*, both for cello and piano and for piano quintet. The *Pomp & Circumstance Marches* were mostly transcribed by Adolph Schmid, Austrian born, an all-round musician who was once musical director at His Majesty's Theatre - he composed a ballet, incidental music and songs. There are, however, a few unexpected transcribers of Elgar in the piano field. Sigfrid Klarg-Elert (1877-1933) is well-known to organists as the prolific composer of rather attractive, well-written, often Impressionist, music for organ (250 individual works), though he produced also work for orchestra, chorus, chamber ensembles, solo voice and piano. He arranged both Elgar's symphonics for piano for Novello in 1909 and 1912 respectively. One wonders who ever played these - unless they were cut in transcription, each would be as long and as strenuous as the *Hammerklavier Sonata*! He worked *Falstaff* similarly (1914) but that was never published, possibly be-

cause of the Great War. Victor Hely-Hutchinson, South-African born, who died in 1947 aged only 45, worked for the BBC, latterly as Director of Music. One can still hear his *Carol Symphony* and one or two of his Handel parodies - he also arranged *Pomp & Circumstance 5* for piano (1930). Then Albert Ketelbey, as a change from monastery gardens and Persian markets, prepared in 1916 a piano suite from *The Starlight Express* (the six movements comprised two *Organ Grinder's Songs*, the *Dance of the Pleiades*, *Sunrise Song*, *In the Forest*, and the *Finale*) - another fascinating curiosity I would love to hear. Ketelbey was also a pianist, organist and conductor; his well-crafted music, incidentally, surely appealed to E.E. Ernest Austin (1874-1947), a quite prolific composer of piano suites and sonatas, at least five piano trios, an enormous tone-poem for organ entitled *The Pilgrim's Progress* and orchestral *Variations on The Vicar of Bray* performed at the Proms. He arranged Elgar's *Seven Lieder*, *Sevillana*, and *Mot d'Amour*, published in one book by Ascherberg in 1926. Elizabeth Howard was responsible for the piano version of *Bizarrerie* and an album entitled *The Children's Elgar*, one of several such simplified piano books.

Which brings us neatly to another class of Elgar transcriptions - those for amateur and student performers. Even here Elgar is well served. The six *Very Melodious Exercises in the First Position*, Opus 22 for solo violin (without piano) had piano accompaniments added to violin and viola versions, and have been arranged as *Six Short Pieces* for string orchestra and in this form sound characteristically Elgarian while retaining the technical simplicity of Elgar's originals. Bosworth is the publisher. I have heard *Land of Hope and Glory* in an arrangement for orchestra by Charles Woodhouse (1879-1939) in his day a prolific arranger and composer (one of his pieces was entitled *Rosemary*) for amateurs, and from 1919-34 leader at the Proms under Sir Henry Wood, while *Chanson de Matin* has sounded most attractive as a recorder quintet. The violin *Idylle*, much transcribed as we have already seen, was scored for orchestra by Henry Geehl (1881-1961), a conductor and prolific composer, notably of brass band test pieces like *Oliver Cromwell*, *Robin Hood*, and *On the Cornish Coast* - also of the popular song *For You Alone*, recorded by Caruso - who understood instrumentation intimately. He apparently helped Elgar considerably in the specialist task of scoring the original brass band version of the *Severn Suite*, and arranged that work for military band. He and Elgar jointly worked on the orchestral version of *Adieu*.

One could go on. What of arrangements for voice of Elgar instrumental music? *Salut d'Amour* was recorded (by Bjorling and several others) as a vocal solo - if you see an Elgar song entitled "Pansies", as I did in a Doncaster concert programme of 1921, this too is derived from *Salut d'Amour*. Words were fitted to the "big tune" of *Pomp & Circumstance 4*, and Alec Rowley (1892-1958), who produced some substantial chamber music but normally confined himself to instructional miniatures, set them for both SATB and TTBB. The *Caractacus March*, *Sursum Corda* and of course parts of the oratorios became anthems. I could mention those who have "realised" incomplete Elgar works; Percy Young in the *Piano Concerto* and *The Spanish Lady*; Gordon Jacob, orch-

estrator *par excellence*, in the *Soliloquy* for oboe; and John Parry in the *Piano Trio*. One should notice Tertis' arrangement of the *Cello Concerto* for viola, something of a landmark in the emergence of the viola as a solo instrument. And one must at least mention the transcriptions of Elgar for brass band. Even *Chanson de Matin* arranged by that excellent brass band writer Denis Wright (who also treated *Nimrod* and the *Three Bavarian Dances*) can appeal; the most-used Elgar brass transcription must have been that of *Pomp & Circumstance 1* by James Ord Hume (1864-1932), a notable eccentric, conductor, adjudicator, composer, particularly of marches, and arranger for brass. Hume obliged with the 2nd and 4th *Marches* also. Veteran Eric Ball, a superb composer and arranger both for the Salvation Army and general brass band world, did *Imperial March* and the *Gerontius Prelude and Angel's Farewell*. A younger (and brilliant) brass arranger of Elgar is Glyn Bragg, Newcastle-born and with orchestral experience, who has exercised his skill on the *Bavarian Dances* and the *Triumphal March from Caractacus*. And of course there are several effective military band arrangements; the Royal Marines Library has, apart from Geehl's *Severn Suite, Salut d'Amour* (arranged Charles Duthoit), *The Crown of India March* and *Sevillana* (arranged Frank Winterbottom), the *Serenade Lyrique* (arranged Beechfield), *Carillon* and *Sursum Corda* (arranged by Kappey), the *Pomp & Circumstance Marches* (arranged Conway Brown or Retford), *Cockaigne* (arranger unspecified) and *Three Bavarian Dances* and the *Wand of Youth Suites* (arranged Dan Godfrey, Junior). These arrangers were military or marine bandmasters; Godfrey was the son of Sir Dan Godfrey of Bournemouth fame and Elgar's friend.

This article has only scraped the surface of a subject which could furnish enough material for a thesis, but I hope it has shown that many people who were fine performers, even good composers in their own right, faithfully served Elgar and music generally, by making his works more widely known in arrangements which, however they might upset the purist, are more than competently managed and have provided performers with a lot of pleasure.

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 LETTER (Received too late for insertion on Letters pages)

From MARJORIE PARSONS

In Mr. Rowbotham's article in the Jan.1982 issue he refers to an article published in Lloyd's Bank Magazine and subsequent comments from a retired manager. The Grafton employed by Lloyd's Bank was GERALD Grafton, the eldest of Elgar's nephews, and a first cousin of my mother. Elgar's sister Polly was, of course, married to William Grafton. Gerald was latterly manager of the branch at Broadway, Worcs. When he retired, he and his sisters May and Madeleine(Madge) lived in Parkfield Lane, Hallow, the village just outside Worcester where I now live. He died there in 1950. May and Madge later moved to Wetherby to live near their younger brother, Roland.

# Gloucestershire Elgar Festival September 1982

- Sept.18 7.30 p.m. St.Mary de Lode Church, Gloucester. Gloucester Young Peoples String Ensemble. conductor J.G.Smith.  
*Serenade; Introduction & Allegro; two new works by local composers; Let us Garlands Bring (Finzi).* Soloist James Walkley
- Sept.19 6.30 p.m. Gloucester Cathedral. Festival Civic Service, incl. music by Elgar and Harold Briggs  
 8 p.m. College of Technology & Art, Oxstalls Lane, Gloucester. Festival Party for Civic Guests, with audio-visual show.
- Sept.20 8 p.m. Gloucester Cathedral. Birmingham Philharmonic Orch. conductor Kenneth Page.  
*Wand of Youth suites; Romance for Bassoon & orchestra.* (soloist David Robinson); *Symphony no.1.*
- Sept.21 7.30 p.m. St.Mary de Lode Church, Gloucester. The London Music Group, Hugh Bean, David Parkhouse, Eileen Croxford.  
*Elgar Piano Quintet, Schubert, Beethoven.*
- Sept.22 7.30 p.m. Gloucester Cathedral. Festival Chorus & Orch. conductor James Cowley.  
*The Light of Life; Sea Pictures.* (soloist Diana Walkley); *Coronation Ode*
- Sept.23 St. Mary de Lode Church. The Coln Music Group.  
*Elgar Piano Quintet; Brahms Quartet, op.60.*
- Sept.24 7.30 p.m. Gloucester Cathedral. John Mitchinson, Diana Walkley, Edward Chelluti, James Walkley, Chorus & Orch. cond. James Cowley.  
*Dream of Gerontius.*
- Sept.25 7.30 p.m. Tewkesbury Abbey.  
*The Apostles*
- Sept.26 7.30 p.m. Pittville Pump Room, Cheltenham.  
*The Music Makers; Cello Concerto.* (William Boughton, cello); *Spirit of England.* conductor James Cowley.

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Festival Patron scheme A: 10 events Ticket value £29.50 for £24.  
 scheme B: 10 events " " £21.00 for £16.50  
*Unreserved, a number very limited £1.50 each*

Applications to James Walkley, Craeg Lea, 86 Wells. Road, Malvern Wells, Worcs.

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## DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

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|---------|---|--|
| May 14  | <p>Dream of Gerontius<br/> <i>Walker, Bowen, Rippon, Camden Choir,</i><br/> <i>Ernest Read SO/Julian Williamson</i></p>   | Royal Festival Hall  |
| May 15  | <p>Overture in D minor; Coronation March<br/> <i>Rutland Sinfonia/Collett</i></p> <p>The Apostles<br/> <i>Fugelle, Hodgson, Evans, Keyte, Wickens,</i><br/> <i>Wilson-Johnson, Croydon Phil. Soc. etc./</i><br/> <i>James Gaddarn</i></p> <p>Cello Concerto<br/> <i>Robert Cohen, RPO/W. Weller</i></p> <p>Violin Concerto<br/> <i>Ralph Holmes, CBSO/C. Seaman</i></p> | <p>Uppingham School Hall.<br/> Rutland. 7.30 p.m.</p> <p>Fairfield Hall,<br/> Croydon. 7.45 p.m.</p> <p>St. Nicolas Church,<br/> Newbury, Berks. 7.30</p> <p>Warwick University<br/> 8. p.m.</p> |
| May 19  | <p>Chanson de Matin<br/> <i>Fairfield Concert O/Howard Williams</i></p>   | Fairfield Hall   |
| May 20  | <p>Enigma Variations<br/> <i>RPO/Menuhin</i></p>  | Royal Festival Hall  |
| May 22  | <p>repeat of above concert</p>  | Fairfield Hall   |
| May 23  | <p>repeat of above concert</p> <p>Dream of Gerontius<br/> <i>Wyn-Rogers, Bowen, Mann, RCMSO/</i><br/> <i>Willcocks</i></p>  | <p>Royal Festival Hall</p> <p>Mayfield Parish<br/> Church. Sussex</p>  |
| June 7  | <p>Enigma Variations<br/> <i>Roy. Liverpool PO/Groves</i></p>   | Wells Cathedral. 8<br>p.m.   |
| June 12 | <p>Dream of Gerontius<br/> <i>Wyn-Rogers, Gillett, Coghill, Devon Co.</i><br/> <i>Choir &amp; O/Willcocks</i></p>   | Exeter Cathedral   |
| June 28 | <p>Dream of Gerontius<br/> <i>Walker, Rolfe Johnson, Howell, RPO &amp;</i><br/> <i>Goldsmiths Chor. Union &amp; Highate Chor.</i><br/> <i>Soc/Brian Wright</i></p>  | Royal Festival Hall  |
| July 4  | <p>Introduction &amp; Allegro<br/> <i>Wells Cathedral School Chamber O.</i></p>   | Queen Elizabeth Hall<br>South Bank   |
| July 6  | <p>Dream of Gerontius<br/> <i>Murray, Bowen, Roberts, Bach Choir,</i><br/> <i>ECC/Willcocks</i></p>   | Westminster Cathedral  |

# A MESSAGE, AN OATH, AND A BAG OF STARDUST

by

K.E.L. Simmons

The play *The Starlight Express* by Algernon Blackwood and Violet Pearn, with lyrics by Blackwood and music by Sir Edward Elgar, was produced by Lena Ashwell - 'during the first agony of the war as a piece of Red Cross work for the mind' - at her Kingsway Theatre, London, in December 1915, with scenery and costumes designed by H. Wilson. Though not the great matinee success hoped for, and with shortcomings in both script and presentation, it was not in any way the dismal failure that some writers would have us believe and fulfilled its scheduled run, playing daily at 2 o'clock and on Saturday evenings at 8 from 29th December to 29th January 1916. The editor has asked (Journal, January, 1982, p.26) for information about the original programme. There were two, a ten-page one and a much smaller leaflet comprising a single folded sheet; copies of both (Elgar's own) may be found at the Birthplace Museum, Lower Broadheath. I have before me as I write the copy of the main programme book that belonged to the late Violet A. Pearn (1880-1947), kindly loaned to me (together with much other important material) by her literary executor, Mrs. Lavender M. Jones (see note 1, Appendix). Nicely printed, black on white, upon rather heavy cartridge paper, it has a cover bearing the now well-known comet design by Stanley North, details of acts and scenes, seating plan, and prices (see note 3), the programme gives the words of the three main Organ-Grinder's Songs (nos.1,13 and 37), of the duet for the Organ-Grinder and the Laugher at the end of Act 3 (no.44), and of the Laugher's "They'll listen to my song..." from Act 2 (no.34G) - the last in the form of 'A Message to Wumbled People from the Laugher'. ('Wumbled', we are told, means troubled, the 'trouble... traceable to one main source - that mis-understanding which is due to lack of *sympathy*'.) Information is also given, largely by means of a quite lengthy 'Explanation' (see note 4), about the wumbled English family - Daddy, Mother, and their three children (Monkey, Jimbo, and Jane Anne) - who 'live at the Wistaria Pension, but have rooms in an old building known as La Citadelle', the main one of which is called 'The Den', in the village of Bourcelles, Switzerland. We learn of their troubles and the happy changes produced by the magical effect of sympathy through the working of their children's Star Society and the help of visiting Cousin Henry and the Sprites - 'Figures of his own imaginative childhood' brought with him in the Starlight Express from England. Getting 'out' of their sleeping bodies at night, the children and Cousin Henry collect Star-dust from the Star Cave with the Sprites and distribute it among their wumbled parents and the wumbled villagers. Before witnessing the performance, all children coming to the play were required to take the Star Secret Society's Oath:

"All the rules I swear to keep  
When awake or when asleep,  
None can tell what I'm about  
For when I'm in I'm also - out!"



the passwords of the Society being STARS and OUT. Mrs. Jones, who knew both Blackwood and Miss Pearn, and attended one of the performances of *The Starlight Express* as a girl, told me that "the children in the audience were given a small bag of tinselly dust to take home - presumably 'Star-dust' ". Star-dust, the programme explained, is starlight which 'falls upon earth in a fine golden rain that clings to everyone', sowing 'sweetness in the heart - the shining dust of insight, love, and sympathy'; it 'falls in daytime too, only the blaze of the Interfering Sun renders it then invisible'. Elgar's own supply of Star-dust survives at the Birthplace, still spilling out its magical-golden contents from a small bag of blue-green grosgrain fabric tied by a thread of gold braid and bearing the message 'Present of Star-dust to make you soft-shiny/ From "The Sprites" '.

The Editor also drew attention to the cast-list published with *The Times* review of the play for 30th December, 1915. Far from complete, this omitted not only the Laugher but also most of the other Sprites and a number of other players. The full list of cast members (adapted from the main programme) is as follows therefore (see also note 5).

THE 'WUMBLE' FAMILY: *Daddy* O.B.Clarence; *Monkey and Jimbo* ('who know they get out of their bodies when asleep'), Elsie Hall and Ronald Hammond; *Jane Anne* ('who gets out - but doesn't know it'), Mercia Cameron; *Mother* Ruth Maitland; *Grannie* ('of Belfast; has her own room in the village'), Una O'Connor; *Cousin Henry* ('Cousinenry'), Owen Roughwood.

THE 'WUMBLE' VILLAGERS: *Mme Jequier* ('proprietress of the Wistaria Pension. Terms VERY moderate'), Juliette Mylo; *Miss Waghorn* ('who has lived there ten years'), Mary Barton; *The Governesses* ('retired from work to live on their earnings till they die'), Joy Chatwyn, Nannie Bennett, Lorna Lawrence.

THE SPRITES ('figures of everybody's childhood'): *Tramp* (the Organ-grinder - 'with barrel organ, simply lives on the road and - sings'), Charles Mott; *Gardener* ('tends everything that grows'), E.F.Mayeur; *Lamp Lighter* ('lights up people as well as stars'), James Stanners; *Sweep* ('cleans chimney flues and - hearts'), Leonard Calvert; *Dustman* ('with his sack of Dream-dust'), Jane Wells; *Woman of the Haystack* ('Mother of all the Sprites. Objects to moving'), Margaret Yarde; *Little Winds* ('always trying to move her'), Grace Glover and Bonnie Wright; *The Laugher* ('who sings trouble into joy'), Clytie Hine.

CHILDREN ('followers of the barrel organ'): Bonnie Wright, Grace Glover, Muriel Collins, Gladys Kellow, Winnie Gray, Nora Dickenson, Myrtle Goode, and Elsie Roselli. (Called 'street-arabs' in the script, they accompanied the Organ-Grinder/Tramp and danced as he sang before each act).

THE PLEIADES ('maidens changed by the Gods into Stars'): Lynn Fontaine, Vivian Rees, Doreen Whitten, Gay Silvani, Doris Merritt, Rita Thom, and Gwyn Muir. ('These seven sisters, virgin companions of Artemis, were pursued by Orion, the giant-hunter, for their beauty. Their prayer to be rescued was heard by the gods, who changed them into pleiades (doves) and placed them among the stars. Orion still hunts them from east to west across the skies, for they have the softest light of all the Constellations - and the finest Star-dust!')

I would be most interested to hear from anyone with unpublished information about the play and its authors, the music, and the participants in the Kingsway production. The Editor has already mentioned that fine character-actor O.B.Clarence (1870-1955) and the actresses Una O'Connor (1893-1959) and Mercia Cameron. Of the last, I as yet know very little but (like Mary Barton, Nannie Bennett, Elsie Hall, Clytie Hine, Una O'Connor, and Margaret Yarde) she was one of the many actors, musicians, and singers of the Concerts at the Front organisation founded and run by Lena Ashwell during the Great War. The same body, incidentally, which worked in conjunction with the Ladies' Auxiliary Committee of the YMCA, was involved in putting on the Chelsea Matinee in March 1917, for which Elgar wrote his *The Sanguine Fan* ballet music. O.B.Clarence and Una O'Connor I remember well from their film appearances in my youth; their unmistakable faces can be seen in the dress rehearsal photograph that was published in *The Graphic* for 22nd January, 1916 (note 6). Miss O'Connor specialised in character roles, on stage and screen, usually playing a sourpuss of lowly status - maid, other servant, companion, elderly relative - irritatingly sharp of tongue but often with a sense of humour and perhaps a heart of gold (which eventually came through). The role of 'Grannie', when she was still only in her early twenties, was of this type. Clarence, that 'uncommonly droll actor' in the words of an American critic and 'the real article' in those of Bernard Shaw, also specialised in playing characters much older than himself from quite early in his career. In 1901 he had appeared in Stanford's operatic version of *Much Ado about Nothing* at Covent Garden, taking the non-singing role of Verges, a short-lived engagement as the opera was performed twice only. Almost alone of those taking part in *The Starlight Express*, he left us some reminiscences of the event. Some 30 years after playing 'Daddy' at the Kingsway, he told A.E.Keeton (see *Music & Letters*, Jan. 1945) that 'it was one of the strangest and most moving parts I've ever had'; he went on 'The music was haunting in its beauty - I was proud to be associated with it - at the same time I felt there was something wholly wrong in the script'. In his autobiography (*No Complaints*, London, 1943), he recalled playing 'in a strange and rather beautiful play' with 'some enchanting music and songs which were sung beautifully by Charles Mott, who had a gorgeous voice'. It 'was all rather vague and mystical and required a master hand', which was evidently not forthcoming. During rehearsals of 'this attractive but disappointing production' there occurred, unfortunately, 'constant bicker-

ings and difficulties which was very regrettable and unpleasant' with 'disagreements about the symbolism of the decor, which was all rather highbrow and obscured the beauty of the story', and 'even dissensions among the orchestra which was conducted by Julius Harrison'. He felt that 'there was so much allure in the conception of this fantasy...it only wanted harmony among the interpreters to secure success' which 'was altogether very sad', adding 'I don't know what Elgar thought of it all'. Elgar made no remonstrance to Clarence's knowledge and 'was geniality itself and entertained the cast one day to lunch at the Connought Rooms opposite the theatre. As we know, however, from Alice Elgar's diary, the composer had found the *mise en scene* repulsive, so much so that he refused to conduct at the opening performance - though his absence then may well have been due as much to his wife's indisposition (she had been knocked down by a taxi two days before and was indisposed for the next ten days or so) as to his short-lived pique with the production. He seems not to have conducted at any subsequent performance either but to have left this to Julius Harrison, who was named in the programme. According to Percy M. Young (The Letters of Edward Elgar and Other Writings, London, 1956), however, Harrison was later replaced by Anthony Bernard when called to other duties, though none of Elgar's other biographers go into this and Young himself earlier claimed (Elgar O.M., 1955) that Bernard had conducted from the beginning of the run. This remains a matter still to be settled; both Harrison (on 12th December, 1915) and Bernard (27th December) had visited Elgar at Severn House during the preparation of the music (Alice Elgar diary).

Of the other players in the Kingsway production, Ruth Maitland (1880-1961), Owen Roughwood (1876-1947), Mary Barton (died 1970), and Margaret Yarde (1878-1944) were all well-known on the London stage, the last three also in repertory; E.F. Mayeur (born 1866) seems to have left the English theatre after his appearance in *The Starlight Express*. All but one of the rest of the cast seem not to have rated a mention in the standard theatre reference books, but the exception was to become famous - the Lynn 'Fontaine' of the programme being the Lynn Fontanne (born 1892), wife of the actor Alfred Lunt. As the Editor noted, there are two main singing parts in *The Starlight Express* - the Organ-grinder and the Laughter. Some other members of the cast also sang or chanted however; there is, for instance, the little song 'Dandelions, daffodils...' (no. 37a) for Jane Anne at the start of Act 3, while Elgar wrote a special call for the Sprites to sing off-stage at various times (see *Letters of Edward Elgar*). Also, as well as speaking freely against background music, some of the actors were required to take part in formal melodrama; unfortunately, none of this was realised in the EMI recording, (see note 2) but a flavour of it survived in the Raymond Raikes version of the play, now in the BBC Archives, which was broadcast on the Home Service in December 1965, and on Radio 3 in December 1968. Of the principal singers, Charles Mott has become familiar to Elgarians through the acoustic recordings he made with the composer for HMV in February 1916 of the three main Organ-grinder's songs, the 'Curfew Song' (no. 15b), and the final duet with the Laughter from *The Starlight Express*. In 1917, he took part in many of the live performances

of *The Fringes of the Fleet* and also in the recording of that work and its encore *Inside the Bar*; he was killed on active service in 1918. As yet, I have discovered little about Clytie Hine; her singing of the *Laugher*, though it pleased at the Severn House audition on 6th December (Alice Elgar diary), seems to have been disliked by most of those who heard it in the theatre and her place was taken by Agnes Nicholls for the recording.

In this note, I have confined myself largely to certain aspects of the programme book. Many loose ends remain, but in future articles I hope to report in more detail on my continuing research into the whole background of *The Starlight Express*, including its origins and history, the projected earlier production by Basil Dean and Algernon Greig (with music by Clive Carey), the story, and the characters - and how Elgar's music fitted into the Kingsway version of the play, number by number.

#### APPENDIX: NOTES

- 1: *Miss Pearn's programme, unlike Elgar's, bears a poignant reminder of the times, a red sticker on the cover which says: 'There is no charge for programmes TO-DAY; but will you please help the wounded by paying for one? Every contribution received goes directly to the British Red Cross and Order of St. John'.*
- 2: *This design was reproduced in Jerrold Northrop Moore's ELGAR, A LIFE IN PHOTOGRAPHS (London, 1972, p.78) and a version of it used for the box cover of the original issue(1976) of the EMI recording of the complete incidental music (Op.78) and for the sleeve and cassette-liner fronts of the re-issue(1981).*
- 3: *The prices ranged from one shilling for the Gallery to ten shillings and sixpence for the Stalls and two pounds twelve and sixpence for the best of the Private Boxes.*
- 4: *Most of this was quoted by Jerrold Northrop Moore in his notes for the EMI recording of the music.*
- 5: *The only other complete cast-list that I have found appeared, unannotated, in THE ERA for January 1916.*
- 6: *This photograph has also appeared in Dr.Moore's notes for the EMI recording and in the Pearl booklet accompanying THE ELGAR EDITION of the acoustic recordings. From left to right, the characters are: DADDY(standing), MME JEQUIER and MOTHER(sitting), MONKEY and JIMBO(starting to open the 'magic box'),MISS WAGHORN (standing behind it), JANE ANNE(standing), GRANNIE(sitting), and the three GOVERNESSES(standing).*

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A photograph of Elgar, taken in London, and presented to Dr. Buck, at Settle, Yorkshire. The original of the photograph is in the collection of Dr. Buck's possessions at Settle. This copy has been kindly supplied to the Journal by Dennis Clark.

## NEWS

### from the BRANCHES

At last we have news of our EAST ANGLIAN branch. They are hoping to visit the Malverns to coincide with the Festival, and in outdoor mood are looking forward to their annual strawberry and wine social on the 10th July. British Music on Cassette and a Members' Favourite Record evening complete the Spring/Summer programme.

In the SOUTH WEST the May meeting will be a talk on Elgar's London by Ian Lace, in June (26th) the branch AGM followed by a performance of Elgar's *Violin Sonata* by Lorna Osborn. Earlier in the month the branch will play host to the Society as a whole when the Annual General Meeting will be held in Bristol. (Details on another page).

YORKSHIRE Branch's most important forthcoming event is the recital by Charles Myers, ARCM, ARCO, on the Schultze organ of St. Bartholomew's, Leeds. The recital is sponsored by the Branch, is on May 17th, and is a mainly Elgar programme.

NORTH WEST have an extremely interesting talk lined up for June 19th, when Andrew Burn, Administrator of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Society, will speak on his work. He is a great lover of English music, and this should prove a fascinating evening. In July a joint meeting with the Yorkshire Branch. A tour of Liverpool, followed by dinner and Dennis Clark's 'Elgar's Yorkshire' presentation... Following the usual summer break Ian Lace will give his talk on Elgar's London on Sept. 11th, and on October 29th a joint meeting with the Liverpool Philharmonic Club will hear a talk by Diana McVeagh. The AGM and Christmas Social is on December 11th.

No news at the moment of forthcoming EAST MIDLANDS meetings, though we know that the branch is extremely active and enterprising. Our next issue will give news of their Autumn plans.

The WEST MIDLANDS Branch reminds us of two important annual events. The 'Birthday Tea' at the Birthplace, this year on May 30th at 3 p.m. We hope for fine weather to grace this happy occasion. On Sunday, June 6th at 4 p.m. the annual wreath-laying at the Elgar window in Worcester Cathedral during Evensong. The ceremony will be accompanied by Elgar items sung by the Cathedral Choir. Members will be very welcome at either event. On June 26th at 3 p.m. a concert of part-songs and instrumental music, arranged by Carol Holt, at the Old Hall, Martley,

Worcester (on the B4204 road 7 miles N.W. of Worcester). The music part in the Norman church. A nominal charge will be levied. Those who intend to go please contact Alan Boon (address on back cover) by 19th June.

LONDON branch secretary writes to give notice to branch members of the AGM to be held in the Read Theatre, Imperial College, London, S.W.7. on 14th June at 7.30 p.m. Agendas and minutes of last year's AGM, will be available on the night. The principal business is, of course, to receive the Secretary's and Treasurer's reports, and to elect officers and committee for the following season, 1982/3. Next season's programme details will also be announced. Mr. Malcolm Sced, having served for three years on the committee, retires and is not eligible for re-election; Mr. Geoffrey Hodgkins is resigning as Vice-Chairman owing to pressure of other commitments. There will therefore be two vacancies (all other officers and committee being eligible for re-election) and proposals, in writing, signed by two members, and countersigned by the nominee, should be sent to the Secretary of the London branch (address on back cover) to arrive by Friday, 11th June.

After their AGM LONDON say there will be a 'surprise programme' of some interest to members. Remaining meetings of the season are: 10th May, 'Elgar and Yorkshire' (an audio-visual presentation by Dennis Clark); 7th June, 'Discovering Elgar' (Steve Race).

LOOKING BACK at Branch activities...

As we have not had a report from EAST ANGLIA for two issues we give more space than usual to news of this branch. The new secretary, Tony Morris, writes: "Current season's programme continues to strike, we like to think, just about the right balance...Two interesting talks were enjoyed in the Autumn: firstly our own Barry Marsh on "The Closing Years" covering the period from 1920, and secondly the Society Chairman, Michael Pope, whom we were most happy to welcome to Norwich for his talk on "Parry and Elgar", and to share his keen interest in all aspects of the 'English Renaissance'. Pauline Collett talked to us on 20th April on "Elgar's Houses", the subject of her recent book.

Recorded music must inevitably play an important, though not obtrusive part in our programme, and a home-grown musical treat was provided by our "Treasurer's Choice" in November, with many varieties of Elgarian 'lollipops' subtly interspersed with excerpts from the major works... an entertaining evening. On 25th May Reg. Williamson (another local and now vice-chairman of the N.F.G.S.) will survey British Music on Cassette, including the new Vernon Handley recording of the *2nd Symphony*. Our last record-playing session on the 22nd June will be a Members' Choice evening when everyone brings their own favourites. Another visit to the main home-ground of our Suffolk contingent took place in November, at a concert of English music in the Cathedral at Bury St. Edmunds, under the baton of F. Harrison Oxley, who is also Cathedral organist. These events have long been regarded as high-spots in our programme, and we are looking forward with pleasure to the next one on the 19th June, when the programme will include the *Enigma Variations*. The success of these

visits encourages the idea of possible visits to other centres, further afield within the region, and where we may already have a nucleus of members. We are turning our attention to future events in Cambridge, and a possible link-up with our East Midlands associates might be arranged. At a performance of *Gerontius* at St. Andrews Hall, Norwich, on 6th February, we mounted our own recruiting drive - not without some success we are pleased to report. At our March meeting Michael Nicholas who is organist and choirmaster at the Cathedral, spoke on *The Dream* from a conductor's viewpoint."

The WEST MIDLANDS Branch had a good attendance at their AGM. The officers and committee were re-elected, with the addition of Miss Marjorie Parsons (a Grafton relative).

YORKSHIRE Branch reports: "We had our first 'live' music on 8th Feb, when Lance Tufnell spoke on 'Elgar and Sterndale Bennett'. Discovering that the piano in the corner of 'The Willows' meeting room was a Steinway encouraged Lance to illustrate his talk with some very competently played examples. Bradford Music Librarian, Derek Bell, gave us a first-class evening on March 8th comparing available versions of *Gerontius*.

The AGM of the NORTH WEST Branch took place in December. Chairman and secretary were both re-elected, with one person being replaced on the committee. Refreshments and entertainment were provided by members, who were asked to bring records of English music other than Elgar! On March 27th we were entertained by Peter Waddington, Librarian of the Halle Concerts Society. He started by giving us a quiz-22 extracts of British music, we had to guess either composer or title. Two of our members scored 21 marks and both received a cassette tape of works performed by the Halle Orchestra as prizes!

Mr. Waddington has an enormous amount of old and often rare recordings, some of which he played us. Included in these was a recording of Elgar conducting a choir in the hymn *O God Our Help in Ages Past*. He took it at an extremely martial pace, with every syllable accentuated - fascinating insight into his conducting style. Mr. Waddington was at one time Treasurer and committee member of the Malvern Concert Club, which was founded by Elgar, and he served at the time of Carice Elgar Blake's chairmanship of the club. He concluded a marvellous evening by showing us a set of scores owned by the Halle, including one of the *Serenade Mauresque* presented by Hans Richter, and a full score of the *Second Symphony* first used by Sir Adrian Boult on the 5th May, 1974 and inscribed by him. It was also the last time he conducted the Halle Orchestra.

The EAST MIDLANDS Branch was delighted and honoured to welcome Lady Barbirolli on November 24th. The subject was 'Barbirolli - Missionary for Elgar', and we were pleased to see an audience more than twice the usual number, including special guests Mr. & Mrs. Michael Pope. Lady Barbirolli held us enthralled while she told of numerous musical and personal experiences which she shared with her conductor husband. Of course we were especially delighted with the references to Sir John's association with Elgar's music, but there was much of other interest. Most of all we



were impressed by the charm of this lovely lady who has herself given so much to music.

Diana McVeagh spoke on 'Elgar's Concert Overtures & their Associations' on 28th January this year. The subject was presented in an enthusiastic and interesting manner with ample musical illustration. The three overtures are among Elgar's most popular works, but one seldom takes the time to reflect on their background and the stimulus which inspired their composition. Miss McVeagh, being an experienced lecturer, knew just how to maintain our interest throughout. Although Barry Collett is a Branch member and a regular attender it is always a pleasure to welcome him as a special guest when he attends as speaker. On 23rd February his subject was 'Elgar's Musical Style', and those who expected fresh thought-provoking material were not disappointed. In this talk Barry summed up all that we like in Elgar's music - the driving force of his compound rhythms, the rising 6th and falling 7ths, the "awkward" intervals (forbidden in textbooks!)... We rarely stop to analyse what we like about the music - Barry did it for us.

Finally, from the SOUTH WEST Branch... On the 23rd January the Third Day School took place devoted to Sir Edward Elgar, at Bristol University. Our speaker Brian Rayner Cook took as his subject 'Elgar - from a Singer's Point of View'. This turned out to be a very personal view which, in the event, gave us all an insight of the art of singing. From the songs, through the oratorios, copiously illustrated with recordings or sung by Mr. Rayner Cook. The last session of the day enabled three local singers to appear in an open workshop. The Branch was again pleased to be connected with the event, and we were pleased to see so many friends from other parts of the country. One keen Elgarian left home just after 5 a.m. to get to Bristol by 10.15 a.m. - it must have been an extremely long day for him, but well worthwhile. In February we had Diana McVeagh's excellent talk on the concert overtures; the March meeting took the form of a quiz, something of a trial really because the Branch won the local BBC radio quiz, and we are looking for any hidden talent. During the BBC quiz our team happened to be on holiday for one of the heats and we had quickly to find two replacements out of a team of three!

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BOOKS FOR DISPOSAL. Young. Letters of Edward Elgar, and Buckley. Sir Edward Elgar. Both good condition. First reasonable offer secures. Write to A.S.Hemmings, Noyes Farm, Laxfield, Suffolk. IP 13 8HZ.

Timothy Richards of 33 Seymour Street, Wellington, Somerset, is anxious to borrow cassettes of KING OLAF and THE BLACK KNIGHT. He is willing to pay for the loan, including postage. Contact Mr. Richards direct please.

# Record Reviews

SYMPHONY No. 2 in E flat

U.S.S.R. State Symphony Orch/Yevgeny Svetlanov

*HMV Concert Classics SXLP 30539*  
*(also on cassette)*

Recorded at a public concert in Moscow, April 12th, 1977.

Without doubt this is an important issue. If it is a barometer of foreign interest in Elgar's music, then it is most encouraging. We are now well-used to foreign conductors taking up the symphonies, but on record at least they have used British orchestras. This, then, is the first recording of an Elgar symphony played by a foreign orchestra. Listening to the polite rather than ecstatic applause that follows the last movement, one wonders quite what the Moscow audience made of it. I suppose the London of 1910 seems no more remote than Moscow in the same year!

Adrenalin flows freely in Svetlanov's account of the first movement. The opening is headlong, with the brass sounding very prominent, and although I favour a fairly brisk basic pulse for this movement, I fear Svetlanov tends to go over the top, the music sounding clipped and many important details hurry by unnoticed. The slow movement is warmly felt and expressively moulded, but again in the climaxes the brass blare out in a rather coarse and vulgar way, making the strings sound undernourished in contrast. This may be a fault of the recording balance, but it is certainly a surprise to hear in this music the characteristic Russian brass tone, so right for Tchaikowsky, but rather out of place in Elgar. Perhaps it is just what we are used to. The scherzo is splendid with the final peroration carried off with real aplomb. The pacing of the finale is fine too. It flows inexorably on without the extremes of the first movement. One interesting textural point - clearly the custom of holding the trumpet note at 149 for longer than indicated by the score (approved by the composer) has not yet reached Russia.

Like GHL, I have greatly enjoyed Handley's record of this symphony. He never puts a foot wrong, and if I had to choose just one recording it would be his. Nevertheless this Svetlanov performance is fascinating and we should be grateful to EMI for this opportunity of hearing it.

What next? A branch of the Elgar Society in Moscow? A complete cycle of the major orchestral works of Elgar recorded by Karajan and the Berlin Philharmonic? Who knows? After this, nothing would surprise me!

J.G.K.

The Premiere Chamber Recordings: *Violin Sonata*(Albert Sammons,William Murdoch:1935); *String Quartet*(Stratton Quartet:1933); *Piano Quintet* (Harriet Cohen, Stratton Quartet:1933); *Organ Sonata no.2*(Herbert Dawson:1933).

Cambridge Records DIMP 1  
(2 records or 1 double-play cassette)

Sir Hamilton Harty conducts Elgar: *Cello Concerto*(W.H.Squire:1930); *Enigma Variations*(Halle Orch:1932)

Cambridge Records IMP 1  
(also on cassette)

Whilst acknowledging that these are important historical recordings, to dub them the "Premiere Chamber Recordings" is misleading. Certainly the *Organ Sonata* was a premiere and it is likely that the first performance was given by Herbert Dawson at the Organ Music Society in 1933, but the other works had all been recorded before. The *Sonata*, albeit abridged, played by Marjorie Hayward and Una Bourne was issued by HMV in 1920, the *Quartet*, also abridged, appeared around 1922 in a splendid performance by the London String Quartet on the Aeolian Vocalian label. The *Quintet* was recorded complete by Ethel Hobday and the Spencer Dyke Quartet in 1926 for the National Gramophone Society.

The Stratton Quartet's records *are* special though in that we know they meant a lot to Elgar during his final illness and that it was he that suggested that these players be asked to make them. The performance of the Quintet is splendid, with the slow movement especially eloquent and one can imagine the memories of Brinkwells that this conjured up for the dying composer, for we read that this 'seemed to quiet him and act as a balm'. I was interested recently to come across a book on chamber music which first appeared when Elgar's music (and particularly the symphonies) seemed at its lowest ebb in popular esteem. The *Sonata* and *Quintet* are given short shift but there is some rather lukewarm praise for the *Quartet*. Yet now this work seems the least Elgarian of the three, rather terse and unloveable. Unfortunately the Stratton Quartet's performance tends to reinforce that view, as to my mind they handle the music far too aggressively. Their account of the slow movement is surely too forthright, severely lacking in poise and repose.

Those who know and admire Sammons' splendid records of the *Violin Concerto* will not need encouraging to hear his account of the *Sonata*. This must be the finest account of the work yet recorded. Sammons' playing is that of a virtuoso, but this is never at the expense of the music, with which he displays a real empathy.

I have long enjoyed W.H. Squire's records of the *Cello Concerto*. This is a rich, full-blooded interpretation, full of big gestures, string portamenti and a real period atmosphere, and is fully able to stand beside Beatrice Harrison's account recorded two years earlier. It is interesting to see that in both these performances there is a massive slowing up for the 'big tune' at fig.22 in the sec-

ond movement. Coupled with an exciting account of the *Variations* (only the fourth time they were recorded) it makes a fine record, a worthy tribute to a conductor who was a powerful advocate of Elgar's music. Throughout the transfers are exemplary. There are excellent notes and full details of both recording dates and venues, with matrix numbers. The chamber works are accomodated on one double-play cassette which allows the *Quintet* to be heard without a break. J.G.K.

## ELGAR COMPLETE EDITION

Northrop Moore & Christopher Kent.  
*Novello.*

Edited by Jerrold  
*The Dream of Gerontius. v. 6. £45*  
*Symphony No. 1. v. 30. £45*

The year 1984 has had an ominous ring in the literary and political world since 1949, but since long before that among English music publishers. For in 1934 Delius, Elgar and Holst all died - as astounding a conjunction as when in 1685 Bach, Handel and Domenico Scarlatti were all born. Fifty years after a composer's death is a good time to celebrate and evaluate his work, but for publishers facing hard economic facts it means the end of exclusive printing contracts: that is, on the one hand, the end of royalties; on the other, the chance of new opportunities.

Elgar and Novello go together so naturally that it is easy to forget that his Opus 1 was published by Schott, *Mina* (his last completed work) by Prowse, and that neither the most famous salon piece nor the most famous march of our century comes from Novello. But after 1984, anyone may print them. So long-term plans have been laid by his main publishing house for an Elgar Complete Edition in 43 volumes grouped in six series, and the first two have now appeared. Two are to come each year and it seems that Novello have assumed complete financial responsibility without receiving aid from their composer's Trust (as the Holst Facsimile Edition has) or from some benevolent sponsor (such as the New Berlioz Edition has found in the Gulbenkian Foundation). All honour to Novello!

So far we have volumes 6 & 30, *Gerontius* and the *First Symphony*. These, which Elgar himself saw through the press, and which have been in Novello's list since their first performance, pose few problems for the editors. Series III, the dramatic works, is likely to prove more challenging and more valuable, since so little of *King Arthur*, *The Starlight Express*, *The Sanguine Fan*, etc, was published - Dr. Moore's splendid rescue work on the ballet has already put it back on the stage. Vol. 14, solo songs with orchestra, will usefully fill a big gap. Vol. 34 is to cover Elgar's arrangements of Bach, Handel and Chopin but not all his arrangements of his own works are to be included, according to the general preface. Obviously vol. 29 (the marches) and others including music from Schott, Breitkopf & Hartel, Boosey & Hawkes, etc. will come after 1984. Series VI is to bring sketches and fragments: vol. 41, *The Spanish Lady*; vol. 42, the *Piano Concerto* and *Third Symphony*; vol. 43, miscellaneous sketches. There is no mention by name of *The Last Judgment*, which will presumably be dealt with in *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*.

This raises the question of sketches for completed works. Very many exist for, say, *Gerontius*. Two fascinating ones are reproduced here, but no account is given of the rest. The editors state that the aim of ECE 'is to provide a readily accessible and reliable musical text for every known work in its original form'. Also, we are referred to their forthcoming *Elgar Thematic Catalogue* for 'documentary histories of compositions, full description of manuscript sources, bibliographic description of editions, and select bibliographies'.

In the case of these two volumes, and others to come, the editors concede that 'it is seldom possible to improve upon the printed source', so the original editions are here photographed. In both works small mistakes have been rectified (generally these were omissions) and detailed in the commentary. For *Gerontius*, also given are comments on tempi probably in Richter's hand, two omissions noted by Britten, and information sought from the late Astra Desmond that 'if a singer had a true capacity for the more dramatic *ossia*, Elgar often preferred it'. There is also Elgar's letter to Kilburn, replying to his questions about specific points: the chanting of 'Noe...', the pronouncing of 'Ha! Ha! etc.

For the *First Symphony*, there are authoritative contributions from Boult. A letter is printed from Elgar to him of 1932 on echo effects in the first movement, and Sir Adrian's own comments made in 1976 on the end of the finale. Of the two sketches reproduced, the one showing the join of introduction to allegro reveals that Elgar deliberately saved the cello counter-melody until the recapitulation. Elgar's own miniature score which he used at early rehearsals yields the fact that he would have liked extra horns. Instead of four, he might have preferred the sound of six or eight, like Wagner, Strauss and Mahler.

That brings one to the appearance of ECE. Certainly it is eye-catching. It is bound in what the publishers call 'a rich red durable material with gold blocking'. It makes the collected editions of Holst (olive green and gold), Berlioz (black and silver), even Wagner (purple and gold), look sober. One could have wished for cloth binding, but with publishing costs escalating weekly, that would presumably have put it out of 'readily accessible' reach. ECE, at 44cms, does quite literally stand out among its fellows. The print-area of these two works has an over-generous top and bottom white space. In a uniform edition, later volumes must of course be considered; even so, will *The Apostles* really need to be over 6cms. taller than *Cardillac*, *Moses und Aron* and *Die Meistersinger*?

That, and much else, will be discovered. The next twenty years look like being extremely exciting. In 1903 Elgar wrote about *The Light of Life* to Jaeger of Novello: 'if you engrave the score of the Meditation let it be ready (in same size) for the complete edition of full scores of *all my things* which will come some day'. I, and I feel sure, all readers of the Journal, salute the publishers and editors of this great enterprise, and wish them well.

DIANA McVEAGH

# Letters

[Miss Olive Gosden's article on the Fitton family, in our last issue, brought forth several letters including two from members of the family. We print them both below as we believe they will interest readers.]

From VICTOR MARTIN

May I introduce myself as a relative of the Fitton family? Ethel Fitton was my grandmother and Isabel my great-aunt... One association with the Fitton family which Miss Gosden has not mentioned is the dedication by Elgar of his two part songs "The Snow" and "Fly Singing Bird" to my great grandmother Mrs. Harriet Fitton.

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From MRS. PATRICIA EGERTON-SMITH

I am the daughter of Monica Fitton who married Arthur Trew in 1914... my father was a music master at Charterhouse. My father died in 1960 and my mother in 1961, and I and one daughter of Ethel Hickman are the only direct descendants of the Fairlea Fittons, i.e. the first grand-children of Mrs. Harriet Fitton... My husband, alas, died in 1975 - I have three children left (our younger son, a gifted pianist, died in 1977...) My elder daughter Mary is a very good viola player and both she and I play in quartets and orchestras - two grand-children have also inherited their great-aunt's musicianship.

My uncle by marriage, Edward Capel-Cure, who married Hilda, also officiated at our wedding and lived till 1958. Clare Hickman died in 1975, and Ethel in 1970, aged 104. - a great age... you remember my father's remark about the "Magic Casements opening on Fairy Lands Forlorn", during my youth when I started the violin (which I still play) I can still hear his shouts of "C Natural Child!" - a note I still find hard to play, oddly enough. Incidentally, Hilda Fitton didn't marry Edward Capel-Cure until the 11th November, 1919. I was their bridesmaid at Holy Trinity Church near Fairlea.

[The above letter is part of a letter addressed to Miss Gosden, and is reprinted with permission. In a letter to the editor Mrs. Egerton-Smith adds the following:]

I have so many clear memories of my grandmother and aunts and Uncle Guy at Fairlea, Malvern. I did not know my grandfather Fitton who died in 1910, or my Uncle Hugh who was killed in Jan. 1916, but I can remember Edward Elgar in the drawing room at Fairlea playing a duet(!) on the piano with my grandmother (must have been about 1919) and I can still 'see' Elgar's panama hat on the chest in the hall.

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From MISS OLIVE GOSDEN

A week or so ago, Hilary Elgar showed me a programme of "Elijah" - conducted by Sir Ivor Atkins in 1926 - in the Malvern Assembly Rooms. In the orchestra, among many people I remember, was Isabel Fitton in the violas, my sister and I (cello and second violin), and Miss Norah Masefield (first violins).

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From STEPHEN LLOYD

It might be of interest to draw members' attention to the "Siegfried Sassoon Diaries 1920-22" recently published by Faber (£9.95). There are several references to Elgar and also to Frank Schuster (on whom there is a brief appendix), besides other figures like Lord Berners making brief appearances.

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From M.B. MOULDS

I have for some time now been compiling a bibliography of the published material by and on Elgar. This will include books, periodical articles and newspaper material - indeed anything publicly available (in my opinion mss. material and letters should be a separate exercise). Ill health has delayed my progress in the last few months, but I hope to have the work completed this year. I should be grateful for members' advice in two respects: firstly, what might be the best way of making the bibliography available. Secondly, if anyone thinks they know of any obscure or rare items (especially those published abroad) I will be very pleased to hear from them at the following address: 18 Escuan Road, Aberdeen Park, London, N5 2AP.

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From ANDREW YOUDELL

While on holiday last summer in Amsterdam, I had the good fortune to attend the Concertgebouw and hear the Amsterdam Philharmonic Orchestra give a really excellent account of 'In the South' under the baton of Kenneth Montgomery. The work seemed really well prepared, and was played idiomatically, with the 'nobilmente' passages really well drawn out and an eloquent, nostalgic viola solo! They obviously have a feeling for Elgar, as Vernon Handley was able to secure excellent results in a performance of the First Symphony, given in October. I believe Mr. Handley has been invited back: is it too much to hope that he will take the Second Symphony with him? I would very much like to hear of Mr. Handley's experiences in working with this Dutch orchestra, and whether he has encountered difficulties of any kind in communicating Elgar's unique language.

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From DAVID MICHELL

I note from this year's Malvern Festival programme that there are no 'fringe activities' by the Elgar Society. Is this deliberate policy? It seems curious for us to ignore such an important event!

# THE ELGAR SOCIETY

(PRESIDENT: *Sir Adrian Boulton, C.H.*)

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We regret that all other issues are now out of print.