

# The Elgar Society JOURNAL



M A Y

1983

# Contents

	Page
Editorial	3
Sir Adrian Boult, by Michael Pope	5
Obituaries - Walton, Howells, Day	6
News Items	8
Three Choirs and Malvern Festivals	9
Concert Notices	10
Jack McKenzie - a tribute	11
<u>Article</u>	
The Archive Answers Back. Pt.I	13
Concert Diary	18
<u>Article</u>	
Edward Elgar & the Carillon	19
Book Review	22
Record Reviews	23
News from the Branches	26
Letters	28
Subscription Details	32
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# The Elgar Society Journal

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EDITORIAL

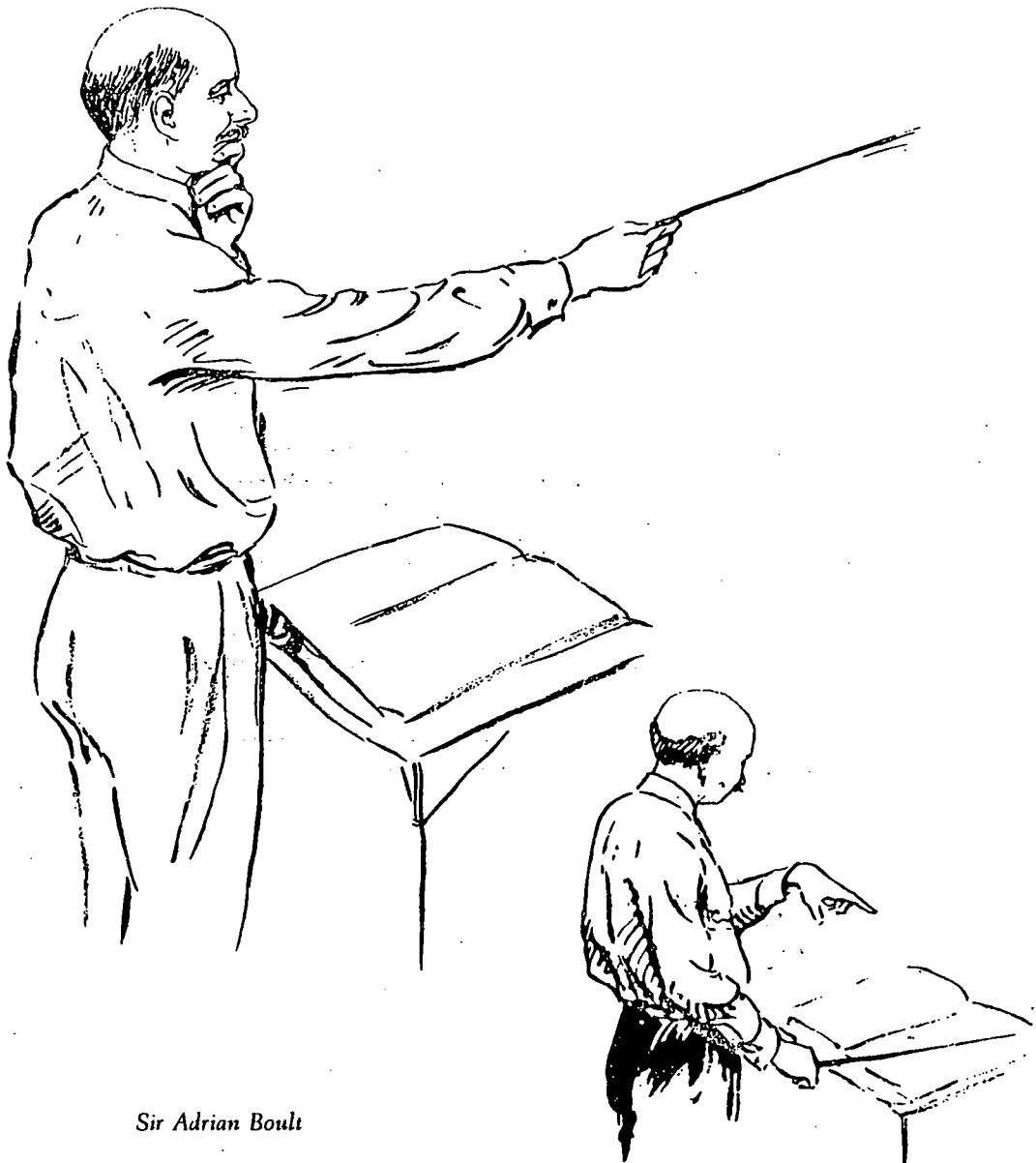
MAY 1983  
Vol. 3, No.2

In the last few months music has lost some of its most distinguished exponents. Obituary notices will be found on other pages, but the loss of our founder-President, Sir Adrian Boult, is something we all feel keenly. His encouragement meant a great deal to us, particularly in the difficult early years. Abroad too his passing was noted with very great regret. The New York Times carried a long obituary by Edward Rothstein spread across three columns. A member in Toronto tells us that at the end of a concert in the new Toronto concert hall the conductor, Andrew Davis, turned to the audience and informed them of Sir Adrian's death. He then conducted the orchestra in tribute in the slow movement of Elgar's *Serenade for Strings*. Despite the sadness inevitable at such times we should remember that music is for all time, and I have no doubt that Sir Adrian would wish the Society to look forward rather than back;

We have much to consider in the future. This year we shall be planning activities and assisting in putting on concerts in 1984 to mark the 50th anniversary of Elgar's death. On another page you will read of the concert to be given in the Festival Hall in February, 1984. On the same day in Worcester another Elgar concert will be given, and other events will follow in various parts of the country. The Society now has a branch in South Wales - and we wish them well. Abroad too things are stirring, and the splendid two day Elgar Festival in Utrecht will, we hope, bring Elgar's music to a new audience.

As to the Journal, we shall be reporting what is going on, as well as continuing to provide articles of interest to scholars and enthusiasts. By the next issue we hope to have changed over to computer type-setting. This will greatly improve our appearance, but like most improvements it will cost a lot more. For this we shall have to ask the Society for more money, and that in turn will mostly come from the membership. So - if you want a better-looking and more easily read Journal it may be that it will cost a little more to belong. In a time of steadily increasing costs we have done everything possible to keep ours to a minimum, and if there is to be an increase I hope that you will think it worthwhile, and an investment in the future.

Ronald Taylor  
Editor



*Sir Adrian Boult*

[From "An Eye for Music" by M.B.Humphrey.(Teich & Co.Boston, 1949) ]

SIR ADRIAN BOULT, C.H.

Where does the uttered music go?  
When well-attempered mind and hand  
Have made the mortal clay to glow  
And separate spirits understand. JOHN MASEFIELD

Masefield's lines on the art of the conductor apply with especial relevance to Sir Adrian Boult, for they epitomize those cardinal principles of his practice and teaching: economy of means and eloquence of expression.

In 1920, the year of his first remarkable performance of Elgar's *Second Symphony*, Boult produced a *Handbook on the Technique of Conducting*, the first book in the English language to set down the underlying principles of the 'well-attempered mind and hand', formed from watching the greatest conductors of the day, and in particular Nikisch. Perhaps the chief reason for Boult's outstanding position amongst exponents of Elgar's works, apart from that mysterious chemistry which lies beyond analysis, is that his interpretations were superbly balanced, emotional fervour and coherence of structure receiving equal attention from that eloquent stick, which guided the performance so that the composer's meaning was clearly understood.

It is, perhaps the influence of Sir Adrian's mind and character which has affected us most, for he was, quite simply, the greatest Elgarian of all. It would be hard, indeed, to over-estimate what the present revival of interest in Elgar's music owes to his inspiring interpretations, which penetrated to the essence of the composer's message.

For six decades Boult's performances of Elgar spoke to the hearts and minds of audiences with that feeling of authenticity and inevitability which is the mark of a great interpreter. What vivid memories we shall all retain of his evergreen performances of the *Variations*; the fresh light which he shed on *Gerontius*; the new beauties which he found in *The Apostles* at 'Turn Ye to the Stronghold'; his exceptional insight into *The Kingdom*, for which he had the greatest admiration; his sympathetic collaboration with great artists such as Casals, Tortelier, and Menuhin, in the Concertos; his brilliantly evocative interpretation of *Falstaff*; and, perhaps above all, his authoritative and sublimely inspired readings of the Symphonies. To see him from the middle of a concert-hall was to be aware of his consummate control of large forces, all working with united will to render the music; but those who saw him close to on those occasions will remember how his face lit up during such great climaxes as those in the first movement of the E flat Symphony, the difficulties of which he managed with such conspicuous skill and artistry.

Sir Adrian Boult, as well as being President of the Elgar Society from its foundation in 1951, was very largely responsible for its coming into being. No Society can have had a President who showed a

warmer interest in its affairs, and the support of both him and Lady Boulton has been a constant source of encouragement to the Officers and Committee over the years.

The passing of a great musician and much-loved President leaves a gap in the lives of us all; but we can count ourselves fortunate that it was Adrian Boulton who inspired our beginning, was at our head during the difficult years, and presided over us, with unique authority, during the time the time of Elgar's rightful recognition.

MICHAEL POPE

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SIR WILLIAM WALTON, O.M.

*What is this creature, Music, save the Art  
The Rhythm that the planets journey by?  
The living Sun-Ray entering the heart,  
Touching the Life with that which cannot die?*

MASEFIELD

When Sir William Walton accepted our invitation to become a Vice-President of the Elgar Society we felt much honoured, for his support for the cause of Elgar's music during the difficult years had been of great value, and in his own works he had continued the Elgarian tradition, in his own distinctive style, more than any other composer.

It showed considerable courage for a young composer, still in his late twenties, to add his signature to those of Shaw and other well-known artists in protest against the inadequate treatment of Elgar in a chapter contributed by a leading English writer to a continental work of importance, particularly when all the circumstances are considered; but Walton was always true to himself and his convictions, and he never veered from the admiration he had developed for Elgar's music, which led in due course to him becoming a member of the Elgar Society, and the Society's sole representative in Italy.

The Italian environment influenced Walton much, as it did Elgar; and the analogies between their works are so striking that Walton may justly be regarded as Elgar's heir. In one field, indeed, Walton was able to accomplish what Elgar had hoped to do; for *Troilus and Cressida* 'heroic and noble', as Elgar had wished, is one of the outstanding tragic operas of the age, and one of the few by any modern composer to bear comparison with those of Puccini. In *Troilus* and *Belshazzar's Feast*, the Concertos and the Symphonies, the film music, choral pieces, and Marches, the chamber works and the Variations, Walton's music has entered the heart like a living Sun-Ray, and has enriched us all with that which cannot die.

MICHAEL POPE

HERBERT HOWELLS, C.H., C.B.E.

1892 - 1983

The death of Herbert Howells removes from among us another link with Elgar, as well as a distinguished composer. A pupil of Herbert Brewer in 1905, he devoted himself to composition from 1911, and, although self-taught as far as this branch of music was concerned, he was skilled enough to obtain an open scholarship to the Royal College of Music. He studied under Stanford, and his *Mass in the Dorian Mode* was conducted by Terry at Westminster Cathedral in 1912. His first orchestral work - *Concerto in C minor for piano and orchestra* - was conducted by Stanford in 1913. Howells appeared to have a glittering career ahead of him, but during the first world war his health broke down and he spent some years in and out of hospital. In 1920 he began teaching at the RCM, and resumed composition. Several of his pieces were performed at the Proms under Henry Wood, and he was a regular contributor to the Three Choirs and other music festivals. Howells' music was distinguished by an 'Englishness' which did not have its roots in folk-song as did that of some of his contemporaries. He was, in fact, a 'modern' composer who believed in utilising all that was best from the past. In 1936 he was appointed Director of Music at St. Paul's School for Girls, a post previously held by Gustav Holst. His published works are surprisingly large in number, and cover a very wide range. In 1950 the first public performance was given of his *Hymnus Paradisi*, written many years before, a work which created a great impression, and confirmed Howells as a master of his craft. He was a famous adjudicator at festivals, and gained the affection and respect of many musicians. There is little doubt that future scholars will place him in a higher place in music history than he perhaps achieved in his own time.

NEMO

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EDGAR DAY

1891 - 1983

Edgar Day, who died on the 16th March, was assistant organist of Worcester Cathedral for 50 years. He became an articled pupil of Ivor Atkins in 1909, becoming assistant organist, choirmaster of the voluntary choir, and for the next half-century made an outstanding contribution to the musical life of the Cathedral and City. As accompanist and sub-conductor of the Worcester Festival Choral Society he helped prepare the chorus for the Three Choirs each year, and worked at rehearsal with such giants as Parry, Elgar, Holst, Vaughan Williams, Saint-Saens & Kodaly. His death deprives us of one of the last remaining links with Elgar, with whom he enjoyed a lasting friendship. His recollections of working with the composer on *Gerontius* during rehearsals were printed in an invaluable article in "Musical Times" in 1969, and is essential reading for any conductor preparing the great work. He composed a number of church pieces, and at his funeral, attended by a number of distinguished organists, the Cathedral Voluntary Choir sang Croft's Burial Sentences and Psalm 121 to his own chant.

PETER SMITH

# News Items

HAVE YOU EVER WISHED YOU COULD STAY in one of Elgar's houses? Well, the opportunity is here at the moment, and you have a choice of two! Napleton Grange, Kempsey, nr.Worcester(tel:Worcester 820697) are doing bed and breakfast, weekdays only. Please ring first!(Mrs.J.Coldbreath) Then, Birchwood Lodge, Storridge, Nr.Malvern(tel:Suckley 366) until the house is sold(any prospective buyers among readers, unless the house is sold already?). Please ring Mrs.M.Lyon first!

JOHN HUNT'S PLAY "ROSE IMPERIAL", a play based on the life of Elgar, with Elgar's music is being presented around the country by The Masque Players of Surrey. In April it was presented at Clandon Park, and will go to other National Trust Houses in due course. It will be presented at Malvern on May 28th & 29th coinciding with the Malvern Festival. Further details from Guildford 893688. Profits from the productions will be shared between the Elgar Birthplace Appeal and the National Trust.

Mr. John MORRISON again draws attention to the remarkable collection of Elgar's music which he has for free loan to any interested persons. It is designed to encourage performance of the music, both orchestral and choral, and there are many instrumental pieces too. Some of the music is suitable for school choirs and orchestras. All that Mr. Morrison asks is that you pay for postage and packing, state when it is to be returned and return the music in good condition. Although comprehensive, and with multiple copies of many pieces, the collection is always anxious to add to its titles, and offers of music or songs would be gratefully received. Write to: 28 Westwood Road, Barnes, London, SW13 0LA.

ALTHOUGH IT IS A LONG TIME HENCE, members may like to know that the 1984 annual meeting will be held in Worcester on Saturday 2nd June. In the evening a commemorative dinner is planned at which the guest speaker will be Vernon Handley. Full details of this and other events will be published as time goes on.

THE INTERNATIONAL INSURANCE BROKING COMPANY, The Hogg Robinson Group, has generously agreed to sponsor, in association with the Elgar Society, a concert in the Royal Festival Hall on 23rd February, 1984. We are most grateful for this support which has enabled a programme to be organised worthy of the day that commemorates Elgar's death fifty years before. The concert will include:

*Incidental Music and Funeral March from Grania & Diarmid*  
*Sea Pictures*  
*Symphony no.1 in A flat*

Dame Janet Baker will be the soloist, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra will be conducted by Vernon Handley.

THE NEW CURATOR OF THE BIRTHPLACE has been appointed. He is Mr.A.J. Bennett, and we extend our welcome, and look forward to meeting him in due course.



### THREE CHOIRS FESTIVAL

The festival will be held this year at Gloucester, 20 - 27 August. Many orchestras and artists, including the RPO, the City of Birmingham SO, London Sinfonia, etc. and soloists Alfreda Hodgson, Wendy Eathorne, Brian Rayner Cook, Penelope Walker, April Cantelo, Kenneth Bowen and others. The Elgar items this year include performances of "Sea Pictures", and "The Music Makers", as well as Elgar items in a concert by the St.Cecilia Singers on 26th August, and a concert by the Three Counties Radio Orchestra on the same day. An additional item will be the lecture-recital by Brian Rayner Cook on 'Elgar's Songs - a Personal View' to be given in the Crypt School Hall, Podsmead, Gloucester, on 25th August.

Full details of the programme can be obtained from the Festival Secretary, Community House, College Green, Gloucester. The Box Office phone number is 0452 50396.

#### ELGAR SOCIETY TEA.....

This popular event will take place after the opening service on Sunday, 21st August, from 4p.m. to 6p.m. As before in Gloucester it will be served in the Raikes Room (upstairs), St.Mary's Schoolroom, attached to St.Mary-de-Crypt, Southgate Street - only a few minutes walk from the Cathedral. The cost will be 75p per person, and although prior payment is not required it would aid the organisers greatly if they could know numbers attending. If you intend to be present could you advise Ron Bleach, 54 Clarendon Road, Redland, Bristol, as soon as possible.

We look forward to meeting members in the pleasant social atmosphere of this traditional Elgar Society event.

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### MALVERN FESTIVAL

22 May - 4 June.

Full details of this year's festival are not to hand at time of writing but they can be obtained by return from M.C.Creswell, Winter Gardens, Malvern. Tel: 06845 66266.

Music items of interest to Elgarians are as follows:

- |                          |   |                                   |
|--------------------------|---|-----------------------------------|
| 26 May, Malvern Priory.  | Introduction & Allegro.                                 | Vivaldi Chamber Ensemble          |
| 28 May, Winter Gardens.  | Violin Concerto   | Nigel Kennedy & RLPO              |
| 29 May, Malvern College. | Items by Elgar and others.                              | Aldwyn Consort & Fine Arts Brass. |
| 30 May, Winter Gardens.  | Evening of Light Music, by Elgar, Strauss, and Gershwin |                                   |
| 4 June, Winter Gardens.  | Dream of Gerontius.                                     | Woolam, King & Rippon, RLPO       |

## TWO MEMORABLE CONCERTS

The Philharmonia Orchestra's Gala Concert on December 7th attracted a capacity audience to the Royal Festival Hall for the second performance within two days of *The Dream of Gerontius*. The Prince and the Princess of Wales graced the occasion, and afterwards attended a reception in the Waterside Restaurant. It was a glittering and memorable evening, the fare provided giving a possible hint of the paradise to which Gerontius had looked forward a few minutes earlier.

Andrew Davis conducted a vigorous and virile performance aided by the splendid orchestra and Philharmonia Chorus in outstanding form. The semi-chorus was one of the best I have heard, maintaining its pitch throughout, and articulating accurately. But, why can't anyone play really softly any more? What has become of *ppp*? The opening Kyrie (for example) should steal in imperceptibly from nowhere, making the listener gradually aware. Here it arrived obviously, interrupting the seamlessness of the music. There are other examples, but performers must remember that the dynamic range in *Gerontius* is enormous; but it is not all from *mf* to *fff*. The solo singing was also varied. Robert Lloyd was a splendid Angel of the Agony and Priest, but he began the *Profiscere* too loud again. It is clearly *f* and not *fff*. Ryland Davies was suffering from a throat infection which inhibited his performance. Dame Janet Baker dominated the proceedings with her serene, experienced performance of the Angel, but she has been in finer voice and the part does not lie quite as easily for her as it once did. The sum of the parts though added up to a splendid evening, which served the music of Elgar well and did the Elgar Foundation proud.

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On the 1st February at a Campus Concert in the University of Reading, Dr. Christopher Kent presented a remarkable programme of what he had called "Elgar Oddities". In a sense they were since most were totally unknown to the audience. Musically however they were fascinating. Two 'Shed' pieces, from 1879 and 1881 - not the woodwind pieces now on record; a delightful little fugue for oboe and violin of 1883; the only piece familiar to the writer, the Duet for Trombone & Double Bass (a joke wedding present to a friend); and most important, the Queen Alexandra Memorial Ode, with words by Masfield, dating from May 1932. This was performed by members of the University Choral Society, with Melania Bentley at the piano. The original band parts for this are still lost, though the search goes on!

Dr. Kent is to be congratulated in putting on this historic concert, and his players - all university students - are to be congratulated on the fine way they performed completely unfamiliar music. Dare we hope that Christopher Kent will give us a permanent memory of the occasion and tell us that there is a recording for the archives...? If not, let some public-spirited soul arrange that something be done while the enthusiasm is still there - and the players also!

## JACK MCKENZIE

At the end of March Jack McKenzie officially retired as Curator of the Birthplace Museum. In the decade in which he has held that position he has made a great contribution to the further appreciation of Elgar. Jack took over from Alan Webb, a man who had known Elgar and who had established a considerable rapport with visitors. It was a difficult act to follow, but the appointment of Jack McKenzie coincided with an upsurge in interest in Elgar. Really the museum was not equipped to deal with such an influx of visitors, which went up each year, but Jack coped, and coped incredibly well. Indeed visitors sometimes remarked that he seemed to enjoy a "full house" as though he was being tested as to how many the tiny cottage could satisfy at any one time. Scholars too were using the reference materials in growing numbers, and all too often this cut into Jack's private life. But to everyone he was helpful, pleasant and generous. School parties were catered for, people on a 'project', visitors who didn't seem too clear who Elgar was anyway, and an increasing number of overseas visitors found their way to Broadheath.

Various Royal and distinguished visitors came to call, and the Prince of Wales attended several times. All were impressed by Jack's courtesy and discreet assistance. In much of his work, outside hours as well as in, Jack was partnered by his wife Vivienne, and no-one can calculate the hours they must have put in tending the house, the garden, answering phone enquiries, ferrying elderly visitors to nearby points, and generally encouraging people to present interesting items to the museum. As if that were not enough they could often be seen at concerts, sometimes as far away as London, and they visited several Elgar Society branches. Jack was also responsible for the great increase in sales of mementoes, records, books and scores through the tiny counter on the ground floor. Where the stock was kept we just couldn't imagine! Latterly the Birthplace Trust purchased Rose Cottage next door, and after repairs they were able to move in to a more pleasant existence, not quite so hemmed in by memorabilia. They also coped with storms, snow, dry rot, collapsed ceilings, etc - in short all the usual hazards of country living! Yet always things seemed well to the outsider. Those of us who lived a long way off often wished we could make more visits, if only to add to the 7,000-odd visitors at the peak. To Jack and Vivienne we can only say - "Thank You." Wherever you go you know that you now have a multitude of friends, fellow Elgarians, who will always be in your debt.

RONALD TAYLOR

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A PRESENTATION FUND has been set up as a mark of appreciation to Jack McKenzie, and the presentation will be made on Elgar's birthday, June 2nd, at the Birthplace. Members who would like to contribute are now invited to send a donation as soon as possible to: Mr.A.K.Cooper, 4 Captains Close, Compton Road West, Wolverhampton, West Midlands, W93 9EA, with cheques made out to The Elgar Foundation J.G.S.M. account.

# Madame CLARA BUTT Records "THE DREAM of GERONTIUS"



MAURICE D'OISLY

CLARA BUTT

HENRY J. WOOD

A GREAT MUSICAL EVENT

Mme CLARA BUTT  
Sir HENRY J. WOOD  
& Mr MAURICE D'OISLY  
in a special Production of  
THE DREAM of GERONTIUS  
By Sir EDWARD ELGAR  
*Recorded only by*



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12 inch, single sided, 9/- each.

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Duet: CLARA BUTT and MAURICE D'OISLY.  
With Orchestra.  
Conducted by Sir HENRY J. WOOD.
- 75006—"I see not those false spirits"  
Duet: CLARA BUTT and MAURICE D'OISLY.  
With Chorus of Angelicals and Orchestra.  
Conducted by Sir HENRY J. WOOD.
- 75007—"We now have pass'd the gate"  
Duet: CLARA BUTT and MAURICE D'OISLY.  
With Chorus of Angelicals and Orchestra.  
Conducted by Sir HENRY J. WOOD.
- 75008—"Softly and gently, dearly ransomed soul"  
Solo: CLARA BUTT, Contralto.  
With Chorus of Angelicals and Orchestra.  
Conducted by Sir HENRY J. WOOD.

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Columbia Records are more faithful to the original, whether the human voice or instrumental music.

There is in the indulgence of collecting a consuming fascination that can only be fully comprehended among collectors: the pursuit and capture of the rare and estimable, be it china, furniture, book or postage stamp. Yet while it is possible to extend the list of collectable articles almost endlessly among inanimate objects, the collecting of gramophone records offers a reward that is surely unique - they can be brought alive on a gramophone. A voice - perhaps long dead - can be resurrected and heard again and again. Books will engage the mind and pictures the eye, but records alone can answer back. Furthermore, it is the old-fashioned "78" rpm records which, short of actually breaking or sustaining damage to their surfaces, score in longevity over the modern LP discs. Deprive one of the latter of its sleeve and the vinyl material will soon succumb to abrasions that the old shellac could withstand, and indeed many of the oldest survive in acceptable playing condition today.

A glance at the pages of John Knowles' discography 'Elgar's Interpreters on Record' will give some idea of the enormous output of records that have been made of the composer's music during and since his lifetime. For the collector of repertoire, for whom a reliable performance and fine quality of sound are paramount, the choice of recordings continues to grow. How the collectors of former years would envy him, for, as we shall see, there were lean years with many gaps in the catalogue that would cause an outcry today!

Elgar's long and fruitful association with the Gramophone Co. (HMV), during which he conducted most of his important orchestral works for posterity, is now widely known thanks to the enterprise of Jerrold Northrop Moore in arranging for all the known output to be transferred to LP format. No-one interested in the composer's interpretation of his work can afford to ignore these unique manifestations from the past, and their technical imperfections (greatly reduced in the transferring process) do not detract from their great interest and insight. Emboldened by the venture, the Elgar Society went a stage further by bringing together, on an LP record, a selection of transfers from 78s by other important performers of the past. The appeal of the early records undoubtedly lies in the performers who made them: singers or instrumentalists known to Elgar or who were to achieve eminence in his music later on. Why else should a collector allow himself to be distracted from the temptations of hi-fi and allure of digital stereo? Of course many 78s will not be worth pursuing or may disappoint upon hearing, notably some of the more obscure arrangements such as those of *Salut d'Amour* (whistled, no less, by Margaret McKee on HMV B 1267) or *Land of Hope and Glory* rendered (?) by Foster Richardson and the Corona Babes on Rex 9029. Nevertheless, copies of these records are presumably still to be found somewhere and there are no rules to the game of collecting!

Foremost of the records with artist appeal, of course, are Elgar's own performances which, despite transfer to LP, will always

have intrinsic 'first edition' appeal to collectors. Most frequently found in junk shops, jumble sales, auction rooms or dealers' lists will probably be the later, electrically recorded, versions of the *Pomp & Circumstance Marches*, particularly the coupling of nos.1 and 2 on HMV DB 1801, which was recorded in 1932 and survived until 1956, as did *Cockaigne Overture* recorded a year later on DB 1934/5 together with the *4th March*. Much harder to find however, will be the two records of *Froissart Overture* on DB 1938/9, recorded in the same year as *Cockaigne* but, presumably because of anticipated limited appeal, made their appearance in the pages of HMV's Connoisseur Catalogue (available to special order only). By 1938 they had retreated even further to the HMV Historic Catalogue from which they were finally withdrawn in 1942. A knowledge of the currency of these two overtures will therefore help to explain why dealers will part with copies of *Cockaigne* for a pound or two whereas *Froissart* has been noticed in a recent dealer's list priced at £25!

It is not easy to offer advice to collectors(who, in any case, are usually obstinate by definition!) or - more importantly - to potential collectors, concerning the particular records they should seek. A copy of 'Elgar's Interpreters...' admirably sets the scene and visits to secondhand shops will not infrequently produce a specimen for the outlay of a few pence. One can only urge diligence though the way be weary and the going hard, particularly if one discovers only parts of a complete work. This is an irksome reminder of the limitations of 78s to only 4-4½ minutes playing time to a side - a fact that is concealed in transfer to LP, but which, nevertheless, ought not to deter the resolute collector.

It was no doubt the prospect of marketing a recording of a long work, which would entail the purchaser having to turn the records over many times to achieve continuity, that discouraged companies in the early days from producing uncut versions of the longer works. Only Elgar's own recordings of the large-scale orchestral works seem to have escaped this embargo. He never recorded more than excerpts from the great choral works however, and one presumes that the expense of mustering a complete cast was more than the companies were prepared to risk. Turning aside from Elgar's recordings, which have been thoroughly documented already, it is interesting to consider the recordings of major works, and excerpts from them, by conductors other than the composer, together with the chamber works in none of which Elgar took part.

Columbia issued a set of the *Enigma Variations*, conducted by Sir Henry Wood in 1925(L 1629/32), and he re-recorded the work for Decca in 1936(K 837/40). (It was Wood who rehearsed the orchestra for Richter's first performance of the *Variations* in 1899). This latter version had been deleted from the catalogue before the company issued a replacement recording, conducted by Sir Malcolm Sargent(K 1351/54) in May 1948. Columbia on the other hand were less prompt in replacing the early Wood recording, which had long departed by the time they issued the version played by the Halle Orchestra under Sir Hamilton Harty(DX 322/25), and which included a performance of *Dream Children* as

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RECORDS



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Choir.

(Under the direction of Dr. R. E. Terry,  
Musical Director, Westminster Cathedral.)



12-inch Records, 5s. 6d.

O Salutaris Hostia

Sir Ed. Elgar

04795

NO modern composer is so happy in his treatment of voices as Elgar, particularly in part-writing. In this "Salutaris Hostia," which reproduces the beauties of the old Church music in no small degree, the voices enter separately, although the composition takes the form of a pure hymn-like melody, which has a most exquisite effect as sung by the highly trained voices of the Westminster Cathedral Choir. Every choralist in England should hear the wonderful singing of this choir as here reproduced. (Speed 80.)  
*Published by Gramophone Co.*

a 'fill-up' on the last side. This set was available from 1932 to 1952, by which time long-playing records were taking over. In the HMV catalogue the pioneer records by the composer, dating from 1921 and made by the pre-electric process, were replaced by the set on D 1154/57 in 1926. This was one of Elgar's first recordings by the new electric process, and it survived until as late as 1942, having been available concurrently with the performance by Sir Adrian Boult (DB 2800/02) for the last years of its life. The Boult recording, made in 1936 lasted until the coming of LP, and was joined in 1948 by a recording by Sir John Barbirolli (C 3692/95).

The only records of the *Symphonies* on 78s not conducted by Elgar were both made for HMV by Boult to replace the composer's own recordings. The *Second Symphony* (DB 6190/95) was the first to be substituted, appearing in 1945 but it was withdrawn at the

Christmas 1911 Supplement announcing the first recording of *O Salutaris Hostia*.

same time as the Boult recording of No. 1 (DB 21024/29) which had a very short existence (1950-1954 only), before being transferred to LP (ALP1052). A similar situation obtained in regard to *Falstaff*: Sir Adrian Boult providing HMV with the substitute (DB 9603/06) for Elgar's own version, but there was an interval of two years between the two recordings. Boult's championing of Elgar's music needs no comment here; these works, and happily many more by him, are preserved in more modern LP recordings still available.

There was an early, much abridged recording of the *Violin Concerto* by Sammons and Wood on Columbia L 1071/72 issued in 1916, just before the likewise abridged performance given by Marie Hall with the composer for HMV. Sammons' renowned reading of the work fared better in the issue by Columbia in 1929 (L 2346/51 (transferred to LP on HMV HLM 7107)). In its 78 form the Sammons version stayed in the catalogue until 1946. The celebrated recording by Menuhin, with the composer, made in 1932 was available until 1955, being deleted at the same time as the Heifetz recording with Sargent (DB 9533/37) made in 1950. Both were revived in LP transfers.

Columbia produced their recording of the *Cello Concerto* in 1932 played by W.H.Squire, and conducted by Harty(DX 322/25). To modern ears Squire's playing, with much *portamento*, may not be easy to appreciate at first hearing, but the performance is a fitting tribute to Harty who earned Elgar's praise for many performances of his music. HMV's version, with Beatrice Harrison conducted by Elgar, outlived the Harty recording being replated on that label by a performance by Casals (DB 6338/41) in 1946. A version by Anthony Pini, one-time principal cellist of the LPO, appeared on Decca(AX 416/9 in 1950. Accompanied by his former colleagues the performance was conducted by Van Beinum - later transferred to LP with *Cockaigne* and the *Wand of Youth* suites, also conducted by him. "An almost ideal performance" said the Record Guide, "far more authentic than Casals."

Albert Sammons, besides being identified with the *Violin Concerto*, had taken part in the first performance of the *String Quartet*, and his association with Elgar's chamber music is commemorated in a fine performance of the *Violin Sonata*, with William Murdoch(Columbia LX 379/91, who had also played in the premiere of the *Piano Quintet*. This was the only complete recording to be issued on 78s(an abridged version had been available on HMV played by Marjorie Hayward and Una Bourne for a few years from 1920), and it remained in the Columbia catalogue until 1944. A 1934 Supplement to the HMV catalogue announced that during Elgar's last illness, "knowing how he delighted in hearing his own works, it was arranged that as a surprise Christmas present to the composer 'His Master's Voice' should record his *String Quartet* and *Pianoforte Quintet* by the players he most admired." Fred Gaisberg of HMV had asked Elgar to recommend who should perform the *Quintet* and Elgar replied "Harriet Cohen and the Stratton people understand it better than anybody" and so the records were released: the *Quintet* on DB 2094/97 and the *Quartet* (by the 'Stratton people' on their own) on DB 2139/41. No doubt anticipating limited appeal, the two works were issued in the Connoisseur Catalogue(suggesting perhaps that their appearance was more a gesture to the ailing composer than an admiring public, for by 1938 they were both transferred to the Historic Catalogue, to keep company with *Froissart*, *Severn Suite*, and the *Caractacus* excerpts, among other refugees). The only other recordings of the *Quartet* and *Quintet* were respectively by the London String Quartet on Vocalian D 02026/7, an acoustic recording much abridged, and the Spencer Dyke Quartet with Ethel Hobday, recorded for the National Gramophonic Society in 1926. Both were short-lived and are rarely encountered today.

Elgar's recording of *Sea Pictures* with Leila Megane(now on Pearl LP GEM 115), was recorded in 1923 but deleted after 1926. One likes to think that Columbia felt the loss when they produced the version by Muriel Brunskill, with an unnamed orchestra, the following year (9170/72). This performance has much to commend it, being less ruthlessly cut as well as being electrically recorded, but it presumably failed to sell, and was deleted after only two years. Some of the individual numbers enjoyed separate existences as a glance at the Discography will show, and of these the two most collectable are probably the two recordings of *Where Corals Lie* by Clara Butt for



HMV (03299) and Columbia (7246 or 7320). The HMV version was made in 1912 - thirteen years after the premiere and, listening to it, it is perhaps difficult to imagine Dame Clara 'dressed like a mermaid' as Troyte Griffith described her to Jaeger at that first performance. After the disappearance of the Brunskill recording on Columbia, 23 years were to elapse before a further complete recording was attempted and this was to be by Gladys Ripley, with the City of Birmingham Orchestra conducted by George Weldon, but issued in 1946 this set was not destined to fare better than its predecessors, being deleted in 1950. Gladys Ripley was, however, the first singer to record *Sea Pictures* on LP, once more with George Weldon conducting.

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Part Two of THE ARCHIVE ANSWERS BACK will appear in the September issue  
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ELGAR FESTIVAL - UTRECHT June 1983

The festival is being organised by AVRO Radio, and will be held over two days, 17th - 18th June. Full details for those wishing to attend from the United Kingdom can be obtained from Ian Lace, 20 Quarry Hill, Haywards Heath, Sussex, RH16 1NQ.

The items to be performed include *The Dream of Gerontius, Piano Quintet, One of the wind quintets, Severn Suite, various songs, In the South, Violin Sonata, Caractacus, Cockaigne, Part-Songs, Wand of Youth suite no.1, The Music Makers, Pomp & Circumstance no.1.*

A veritable feast of Elgar and an historic occasion for Elgar's music in the Netherlands. Special arrangements will be made for accomodation of British visitors, so please contact Ian Lace as soon as you can.

Our thanks are due to our Dutch friends for all their efforts to make this festival possible.

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On October 29th, 1983, Dr. Melville Cook of Toronto is to conduct a performance of THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS in Toronto. In connection with this he is planning to give a preparatory illustrated talk, and he is anxious to use suitable slides during the talk. Are any members aware of where such slides could be obtained, or indeed has any reader slides which he would be willing to lend to Dr. Cook. An early reply to this request would be much appreciated. Offers directly to Dr. Melville Cook, 6 Glen Gannon Drive, Toronto, Ontario, M4B 2W4. CANADA.



# EDWARD ELGAR and the CARILLON

by James R. Lawson

*The following article first appeared in the Bulletin of The Guild of Carillonners in North America, Vol. XIX, April 1968. Our attention was drawn to it by Dr. Melville Cook of Toronto, and we reproduce the whole article here with full acknowledgement to the Bulletin of the Guild. At the time of publication Mr. Lawson was Carillonner of the Riverside Church, New York City.*

In the London *TIMES* for July 19, 1923, appeared the following notice:

"Carillon recitals will be given by Chevalier Jef Denyn of Malines...on Sunday and also every evening till July 29. The most important item to be played by M. Denyn at the dedication service is the latest composition of Sir Edward Elgar, 'Memorial Chimes', composed for the occasion, specially written for the carillon, and inscribed to William Wooding Starmer, Tunbridge Wells."

The carillon concerned was a 47-bell instrument placed in a 151 foot tower in Queen's Park, Loughborough, England. The tower and bells were erected, according to an inscription over the entrance, "in Grateful Memory of the Men of Loughborough who gave their lives for freedom in the Great War, 1914-1918." On the largest bell were inscribed the names of three members of the Taylor family killed in action in France together with the name Edmund Denison Taylor, founder of the bells and donor of the Bourdon.

Loughborough was one of the first communities to select a carillon tower as a war memorial. The choice was appropriate for Loughborough was the home of the Taylor Bell Foundry. Inscribed on the second largest bell were the names of town officials involved in planning the memorial. Among them appears: Hon. Campanologist, William Wooding Starmer, FRAM.

Starmer (1866-1927), a fellow of the Royal Academy of Music, served as organist at St. Mark's Church, Tunbridge Wells. He was fascinated by bells and became a recognized authority on campanology, contributing articles on the subject to Grove's Dictionary of Music and Musicians. In 1925 he was appointed Professor of Campanology at the University of Birmingham. From 1893 to 1925 he conducted the Tunbridge Wells Vocal Association, in which capacity he took every opportunity to perform the works of Sir Edward Elgar. Starmer's affection for both bells and Elgar resulted in one of the all too rare compositions for carillon by a composer of international stature. In answer to a request from Starmer that he compose something for the Loughborough dedication, Elgar replied:

Kempsey, Worcester,  
June 2 (1923)

Dear Dr. Starmer: Many thanks for the invitation to write for the new carillon at Loughborough. I do not feel that I am equal to the task but would like to do something for you. Will you send me

something - anything - written for carillon. I thought of something like the enclosed few bars, but would like to know more of the 'position' of chords, etc. I have heard no carillon since the old days in Bruges and in the state the machine was then the 'music' was unexhilarating. In great haste, yours sincerely,

Edward Elgar.

What Starmer sent is not indicated in the Elgar correspondence, but Starmer had attempted to compose for the carillon himself. His "Aria et Varia" is mentioned in Rice's last edition. (1) In any event Elgar wrote again on June 26:

Dear Mr. Starmer: Many thanks. I return your ms. (I will send mine later). I am glad to gather from your letter that the piece will 'do'. I wish I could have seen the instrument. I might have done better.

In writing it out 'fair' please use the square mark for the triplets. They are not slurred. I should like the cadenza passages in small notes.

On (your) page 3, last line, you will see I ask for the sound of A - I leave this to you.

In the adaptation of the semiquaver passage (page 1, last line) I do not like the 'passing notes' (or appoggiatura sort of things). Cannot we compromise thus?



If this will not do, your second emendation of the same passage (p.3) likes me better except the group I have marked in green. If this could be



then this passage on page 3

would do for both occasions.

The group on page 2 (also in green) likes me not. Could not the arpo. descend thus: and land on the A in the L.H. - the 'C' could be omitted. I have lengthened the cadenza passage on page 2 a little (see back of page 1) but this elongation may be ineffective. By all means accept the dedication. Please put 'Inscribed to W.W.S. - Mus.D., or Dr. First as you like best. In great haste, yours sincerely,

Edward Elgar

P.S. It is very kind of you to suggest my going to Loughborough. I cannot say just at present if I can get away for the 22nd I have some rehearsals around that date. It is understood that the copyright remains mine. I think I shall arrange it for organ. On second thoughts I enclose the first version which is longer than the ms. I sent to you. This is more satisfactory musically, but I do not know how far it can be arranged for carillon.

Percy M. Young who edited the Elgar correspondence (1956) commented: "The letters to Dr. Wooding Starmer show how concerned Elgar was - even

in respect of a small and necessarily ephemeral piece - that his craftsmanship should be adequate."

Behind the writing of Elgar's only carillon composition were two other bell-inspired pieces. In Elgar's music for a child's play, *The Wand of Youth* (1907-1908), is a section titled "The Little Bells". (Opus 1b). Six years later appeared *Carillon* (Opus 75), an orchestral setting of a patriotic poem by Emile Cammaerts. The music is constructed on a repeated bell clock chime tune of four notes. A pianoforte solo edition was published by Elkin & Co. in 1914, and reprinted with English and French words ad lib in *King Albert's Book* (1915).

Elgar's "Memorial Chimes" (Opus 86) may have encouraged other English composers of the twenties to write for bells. Less than a year after the Loughborough dedication, Granville Bantock composed a work for carillon and choir, "Ring Out, Wild Bells" (Boosey & Co. no. 442). It involved a carillon in alternation with voices singing the Tennyson poem and was first performed in Bourneville, June 28, 1924, with Anton Brees of Antwerp at the clavier.

Sir Hamilton Harty, conductor of the Halle Concerts Society, Manchester, contributed "A Little Fantasy and Fugue" for the carillon sent to Sydney, Australia, in 1927. This work was published by the University of Sydney.

Following the first performance of Elgar's "Memorial Chimes" in 1923 the work was rarely heard. It was never arranged for organ. William Gorham Rice, perhaps echoing Jef Denyn, found that it neglected "certain technical problems". The Societas Campanariorum decided, nevertheless, to attempt to add this work to its list of contemporary carillon compositions. An enquiry concerning the location of the original manuscript was addressed to Mrs. Carice Elgar Blake, daughter of the composer. She replied: "...though I tried very hard after my Father's death to find the original M.S. I never succeeded. Mr. Starmer died a long time ago now, and no one in Loughborough knew anything about what happened to it."

In 1960 Mrs. Blake and the Trustees for the Elgar Estate permitted the Societas to publish an edition of "Memorial Chimes" based on a copy of the work in the library of Clifford Ball of Bourneville<sup>(2)</sup>. Spared from oblivion, the work now stands for judgement by a later generation. It remains a unique attempt by a great composer and a musical memorial to the carillon in the 1920s.

Notes: (1) Rice (William Gorham) Carillon Music and the Singing Towers of the Old World and the New. New York: Dodd, Mead, 1930.

(2) At the time of the writing of this article the music could be obtained from the Societas Campanariorum, The Riverside Church, 490 Riverside Drive, New York, N.Y. 10027, U.S.A. We do not know if this address is still active, nor do we know the present cost of the music.

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# Book Review

AN ELGAR COMPANION. Edited by Christopher Redwood.

Sequoia Publishing, £9.95

In 1976 Mr. Redwood edited "A Delius Companion"(pub. John Calder), which was a collection of essays on the work and life of that composer. Now comes a similar volume on Elgar. Since Mr. Redwood was for long a leading member of the Delius Society, and edited our contemporary, the Delius Society Journal, we wondered if he would bring the same enthusiasm and skill to a volume on Elgar. Well, the answer is certainly an affirmative one.

In most cases the essays have been published before, though in one or two cases there has been some revision. A few essays were specially commissioned too, but great skill was needed to bring them together to make a harmonious whole. The sources are very varied and some very scarce, and we must congratulate the editor in not 'editing out' those references in an article or essay which deal with other composers than Elgar. Particularly in reading opinions from the past it is necessary to put Elgar in his correct context - to do this we should always consider his contemporaries. There are photographs too - many unfamiliar.

The book is divided into sections: Early Years, the *Enigma* (almost inevitably!), the *Gerontius* debacle, Elgar at Home, Memories of Those Who Knew Him, Elgar and other Composers, Elgar and the Theatre, Elgar's Art Examined. This is an excellent scheme, and gives coherence to the items selected. Some of the sources will be unfamiliar to most readers - a contemporary review of the first performance of *The Black Knight* in the Worcester Daily Times, a Daily Telegraph review of the 1896 *King Olaf*, *Caractacus* reviewed in the Musical Standard of 1898, items from many musical journals, the Strand Magazine, our own Journal (and the earlier Newsletter), Radio Times, as well as many chapters by well and not so well known writers. This is a really first-class compilation, and Elgarians should certainly add it to their collection, for it is unlikely to duplicate much which they have already, and there are over 300 pages of engrossing reading. Mercifully, the book has an index - very necessary in a book of this kind. Printing and production are very good indeed, and it is unreservedly recommended.

R.P.T.

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AN ELGAR COMPANION. Mr. Redwood, through his publisher SEQUOIA PUBLISHING, 28 Bridgford Road, West Bridgford, Nottingham, NG2 6AB., is offering special terms to members of the Elgar Society. Orders should be sent DIRECT TO THE PUBLISHER, enclosing £8.25 plus 75p. post & packing. Please give your name and address in block capitals. This offer is for a limited period, so send your order in now!

# Record Reviews

ENIGMA VARIATIONS; *Pomp & Circumstance Marches nos.1 & 2; Crown of India - March of the Mogul Emperors.*

BBC Symphony Orch/Leonard Bernstein.

DG 3302 067

Elgar's 1929 recording of 'Nimrod' ends three and a quarter minutes earlier than this performance by Bernstein; or, to put it another way, it takes three and a quarter minutes longer than Elgar! This will horrify most readers unless they enjoy every note of Nimrod examined in detail and the piece played as the ultimate funeral hymn. There are many eccentricities in this recording, a stifled jerky 8th variation, and a long drawn out ending prolonging the music to breaking point, for example. There are, however, some qualities which make it worth considering as an alternative to a much loved performance. It does not have the classic consistency of approach which, say, the recordings of Monteux or Toscanini have. I have only heard the cassette tape, but it is an outstanding recording having a natural sound which shows the BBC Symphony Orchestra to be playing as well as I imagine they have ever played. Just listen to the second violins in Troyte and Nimrod. The detail elsewhere is so precise that even with this widely heard work new aspects become clear for the first time.

The performances of the Marches are outstanding, the organ in *Pomp & Circumstance no.1*, as in the variations, ideally balanced with the orchestra. The March of the Mogul Emperors (incorrectly called the *Crown of India* March on the front of the sleeve) shows how well Bernstein has persuaded the BBC orchestra to play at their best for him. He plays the music for all it is worth, and makes it appear better than it probably is.

Bernstein will occupy a place of some distinction in 20th century music. It is sad to think that this might be for the eccentricity rather than the integrity of his style. This recording demonstrates his finest and his worst qualities, the latter entirely to the detriment of his reputation.

A.H.A.N.

## INTRODUCTION & ALLEGRO.

John Barbirolli Chamber Orchestra

Barbirolli Society SJB 104

It was Barbirolli who, in 1927, made the first records of the *Introduction and Allegro* for Compton Mackenzie's National Gramophonic Society, and Mackenzie sent copies to Elgar for his comments. The composer's reply (quoted in full in Jerrold Moore's 'Elgar on Record'), skilfully evades any real critical assessment, but he does conclude: "...I know that Mr.Barbirolli is an extremely able youth, and very properly, has ideas of his own, added to which he is a remarkably able conductor..."

The work became a Barbirolli speciality, and he made six recordings of it in all. The one on this new issue is the second, made for HMV

within two years of that premiere recording. They make interesting comparison. Although the watch tells me they differ by less than 5 seconds, the HMV *feels* faster. From the opening bars it is more imaginatively phrased, in a way that is immediately absorbing. The NGS sounds too cautious and deliberate as if the players were finding the piece technically demanding (they probably were, it wasn't often performed in those days). The HMV performance flows in a way that makes the earlier one sound very hesitant. In many ways I prefer this recording to the more celebrated 1962 one. It certainly brings to mind the vivacity of Sir John's performances in the concert hall. The transfers are good and there are informative notes by Michael Kennedy, but it is surprising that neither matrix nor original catalogue numbers are quoted on the sleeve. The record also includes the Haydn *London Symphony* and *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik* recorded at about the same time.

J.G.K.

[The Barbirolli Society are happy to supply Elgar Society members direct at a special price of £4.10p, inclusive of P. & P. Orders to: Miss Pauline Pickering, 8 Tunnel Road, Retford, Notts DN22 7TA.]

*Sir Adrian Boult Conducts Elgar.* HMV 4 record set. RLS 7716  
(also available on cassette)

Originally scheduled as a 94th birthday tribute, this issue comes now, alas, as a memorial. HMV have collected all the Elgar recordings made by Sir Adrian with the LPO in the years when he was their chief conductor, 1950-1957. These were the records that kept the flame burning during that decade when interest in Elgar's music hit rock bottom, and it is interesting to compare these recordings made by Boult in his sixties with the later stereo ones when he was 'rediscovered' in his eighties.

Although all the performances were recorded on tape, the two earliest were first issued as 78s, the *First Symphony* in 1950 and *Falstaff* in 1951. With 10 recordings of the symphony currently available and nearly as many of *Falstaff*, it is hard to remember that neither was available in 1950, as the only previous recordings (conducted by the composer) had been deleted. These then were only the second recordings of these scores. Both performances are splendidly virile and above all sound instinctively right. Whereas the *Symphony* later appeared on LP, not so this *Falstaff*. No doubt economically that was shrewd but it has meant that an excellent performance has been overlooked until now. The *Enigma Variations*, coupled with the first *Wand of Youth* suite, was recorded in 1953, followed in 1955 by the *Pomp & Circumstance Marches* recorded for the first time by a single conductor and orchestra for issue as a set. With them came *Dream Children* and a performance of *Froissart* that has long been a favourite of mine. It conveys so much more of the exuberant confidence of the young composer than Boult's 1972 remake.

Paradoxically, it is the most recent recordings in the box that are possibly the least familiar. The coupling of *In the South* and the *Nursery Suite* was first issued in 1956, but presumably lack of public interest, and the arrival of stereo, caused it to be deleted within a



very short time. More's the pity for this was to be Sir Adrian's only record of the *Nursery Suite* and, as with *Froissart*, this swash-buckling account of *In the South* far surpasses the stereo replacement.

As you will have gathered this box has given me great pleasure. Not a dull performance on it, and amazingly good sound quality. Michael Kennedy's perceptive notes quote this entry from Lady Elgar's diary: "Mr. Boulton to tea. Quite a nice quiet young man...he seemed really to understand!" I doubt if even Lady Elgar could have imagined how vital a component in public appreciation of Elgar's music that quiet young man was to be.

J.G.K.

*Te Deum & Benedictus; O Hearken Thou.* (reverse side devoted to church music by Lennox Berkeley)

Choir of St. Alban's Abbey/Stephen Darlington, with Andrew Parnell(organ)/

Priory PR 124

Elgar's *Te Deum & Benedictus*, written in 1897 for the Three Choirs Festival, must be one of the most unfairly neglected of his choral works. It shows for the first time his distinctive mastery of choral writing- and in this respect for me it shows a considerable advance in technique and individuality over *The Light of Life*, written the previous year.

*Te Deum & Benedictus* has, of course, been recorded before - in 1969, by the Worcester Cathedral Choir, under Christopher Robinson. Comparison is unnecessary as that recording disappeared from the catalogue several years ago, and this new recording fills the gap in a most welcome manner. The choral singing is marginally less self-confident than the Worcester choristers of 1969, but is helped by absolutely outstanding recorded sound. Indeed the small Priory company deserves grateful thanks not only for an enterprising programme but for having taken infinite pains over the whole production - my review copy had outstandingly silent surfaces.

*O Hearken Thou* has competition from the current Worcester Choir under Donald Hunt, who included it in their excellent Elgar church music disc on Abbey 822. By comparison with the St. Alban's singers, those at Worcester sound a trifle matter-of-fact, and the rather close and unatmospheric recording perhaps exaggerates this impression.

Although outside the scope of this review, the Lennox Berkeley side is again of very great interest. Not only is this an outstanding Elgar issue, but I regard it as one of the most enjoyable choral records I have heard for a long time.

G.H.L.

## NEWS from the BRANCHES

There is news from most of the branches this time. First LONDON. A fascinating evening, in March on Barbiroli & Elgar by Malcolm Walker. In April the long-awaited trip to Brinkwells in Sussex, led by Michael Pope. For some time the branch has been planning an Annual Dinner and the first is to take place on Saturday, 18th June, at the Strand Palace Hotel. This is the same day as the branch AGM. Members of the branch should have had details of the dinner and an application form for tickets, but if you would like further details please contact Garry Humphreys (address on p.32)

This season the EAST MIDLANDS branch has had a series of excellent meetings, even if the November one was blanketed by fog! Speakers have included Michael Pope, Jerrold Northrop Moore, and Denham Ford. 1983 meetings so far have included Wulstan Atkins' "Personal Reminiscences of Elgar", Michael Kennedy on Benjamin Britten, Ian Lacey on 'Elgar's London'. We understand that the branch has had its AGM and that they have a new chairman, Stephen Crane, and a new secretary, Derek Mear. We wish them both good luck, and our thanks to their predecessors for the splendid efforts for the society.

From YORKSHIRE we hear that their Christmas social evening was a great success, with enormous quantities of food and drink supplied by members! Branch vice-chairman, Lane Tufnell, gave a music recital on the Steinway which was much appreciated. In January Margaret Glover, Senior Lecturer at Leeds College of Music, delighted everyone with a talk on the effect of environment on Elgar's music. The weather let them down in February - snow at tea-time caused a hurried meeting cancellation. Unfortunately the March meeting was also cancelled as a benevolent council decided to redecorate the "Willows". The premises are modern and with good facilities, and are now also in splendid decorative state. We hope that meetings are now back to normal. In May we have a visit from Brenda Hawer, Yorkshire Evening Post music critic, who will talk about - and play - her favourite Elgar.

WEST MIDLANDS held their AGM in March, and after some delightful music Carol Holt was elected Chairman, in succession to Michael Trott. He was presented with a cheque as a mark of the branch's appreciation. Members also presented a cheque to Jack and Vivienne McKenzie on their leaving the Birthplace. On Saturday, May 7th, there will be a Music, Wine and Cheese Party at Dean Close Junior School, Lansdowne Road, Cheltenham. Malvern Male Voice Choir, with a variety of songs incl. Elgar, and Tim Tozer in a piano interlude of Elgar pieces. Tickets £2.50 (incl.) or £1.50 music only (children 50p.) Or ring Alan Boon, 08866-527.

Sunday, June 5th, at 4 p.m. in Worcester Cathedral. Elgar Evensong, followed by laying of a wreath on behalf of the Society at the Elgar Window. Followed by sherry and birthday cake at the Birthplace. Let us hope for a large attendance of members and friends.

The SOUTH WEST branch meets regularly in The Octagon, Bristol Polytechnic, Frenchay. Meetings this season have included Steve Race on "Discovering Elgar", and more talks on composers who knew Elgar. Michael Pope on Elgar and Walton, Arthur Hicks on Elgar and Bantock, Andrew Guyatt on Bliss and Goossens. A survey of all available recordings of the *violin concerto*, with a surprising result, and Denham Ford on "Elgar - the Beecham Connection." This gave an opportunity to hear some rare recordings. In April our branch chairman Derek Johnstone gave a talk on *The Music Makers*, this was in place of Clifford Harker, who will talk to us on *The Kingdom* next session in conjunction with a Bristol performance. On May 21st Ron Taylor visits us with his "Music all around Us - Elgar and the BBC" talk. Branch AGM is on June 18th. We hope that as many members as possible will attend, refreshments & live music too! Finally - the Elgar Day-School was held as usual at Bristol University. This year's lecturer was Dr. Percy Young, well-known Elgarian and author of several books on the composer. The meeting was well-attended and we were all held spell-bound by Dr. Young's lecture "Elgar and Tradition". His rare ability of communication, his enthusiasm, left us in no doubt of the fact that Elgar was the outstanding composer of his generation.

EAST ANGLIA - At the AGM in January Bernard Ward was elected Chairman in succession to Alan Childs, who felt it was now time to hand over the reins. It was Alan who, back in 1978, was largely responsible for getting the branch "into orbit". Happily he remains on the committee. In February our Winter Party, and in March we welcomed Michael Nicholas who gave a typically comprehensive and well-illustrated talk on British Choral Music of that glorious period 1880-1910. Late in March the A Capella Singers (15 singers from North-East Suffolk) braved the vilest weather to come and entertain us with some unaccompanied choral works by Elgar and his contemporaries. A relaxing evening, proving there is no real substitute for 'live' music. On April 29th we welcomed Diana McVeagh to our branch to give her talk on Elgar and Finzi. On May 27th Prof. Ian Parrott will reveal to us his once-and-for-all solution of the Enigma, thus disposing of those cynics who maintain that the composer was all the time "having us on"! Finally, on June 24th Reg Dorow, amateur musician and now trombonist with the Huntingdon Philharmonic Orchestra, will present *The Severn Suite*.

The SOUTH WALES branch was inaugurated on 15th January in Cardiff, and officers and committee elected by the members present. A programme of activities has been planned, and the first meeting was addressed by Prof. Ian Parrott on Elgar's "Enigma". On the 7th May, Kenneth Loveland will be giving an illustrated talk "The Elgar Story". Plans are not yet complete for the Autumn season, but the Secretary, Terry Jenkins, (address on p.32) will be pleased to give details to all those interested. A Newsletter was issued in February and this had the happy effect of increasing the branch membership. We hope for news of a really successful beginning from the branch in due course. Meetings will generally be held in Cardiff or Swansea as these seem to be the most easy of access for members. Good luck South Wales!

# Letters

From Professor IAN PARROTT

I send you the answer to the Quiz (January issue). The quotation comes from a Dialogue for Shepherd and Shepherdess (soprano and bass) near the end of the Masque in Dioclesian by Purcell. It is, of course, much closer to Elgar's theme than many of the tunes put forward, but I do not think it is anything other than a coincidence.

If the idea appeals, here is a second quiz for readers. What are these two quotations? One has been transposed and has had the note-values doubled. Expression marks have been removed.



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From GEOFFREY HODGKINS

The Elgar Fugue Competition arose out of an interview Elgar gave to Percy Scholes at Severn House, for the August 1916 Special Elgar Number of "The Music Student" (of which Scholes was editor). During the interview Scholes was shown some early compositions, and wrote (using the editorial 'we'): "We turn over a pile of these lying on the top of the grand piano, and beg permission to take away with us an unfinished fugue, written about the age of fifteen. Sir Edward looks it over with interest, and opening the piano, plays it through. "Quite good stuff", he murmurs approvingly... Now, why should not that fugue be finished? Which of our readers will attempt it? To encourage the endeavour we will offer a first prize of a guinea and a second prize of half a guinea for the best completion... And, if we could only persuade Sir Edward, when we have picked out, say, the best five sent in, to decide which of these are most worthy, why there would be an additional encouragement for such fuguists as are not at war to set their contrapuntal brains in motion. Perhaps, too, we shall get a few attempts from the trenches..."

A facsimile of the fugue, which was some fourteen bars long, appeared on the following page. The closing date for entries was given as September 15th, and the results announced in the November issue. The best five entries were submitted to Dr. H. W. Richards of the Royal Academy of Music, who unhesitatingly chose as the winner one 'John Smith' of Eastbourne for "a magnificent organ composition embodying all possible contrapuntal and harmonic resource - very difficult for the performer, but... a magnificent experience for the listener." 'John Smith' was asked to identify himself, and was unmasked the following month as none other than Dr. Edward Bairstow, organist of York Minster, who donated his prize to the magazine's funds. Second prize was awarded to

Winifred M. Ivens of Eastbourne, and the other three finalists were Dr. Arthur W. Marchant of Stirling, Dr. Cecil Hazlehurst of London, and Captain Arthur Bliss, whose letter was quoted in full (Michael Rostron gave the relevant part in the January JOURNAL). Bliss's entry was uncompleted as he had recently been wounded on the Somme and did not feel like "working overtime"; however, the "Music Student" added: "We sincerely hope that Captain Bliss will one day finish his quartet. The opening of the second movement (which only got as far as its first twenty bars when it had to be laid down) is suggestive of interesting possibilities. It is a Scherzo, and the dignified subject of the Fugue of the first movement is made to cast aside its solemnity and frisk and gambol in 'diminished' form."

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From REG WILLIAMSON

Let me be honest, there was some upper lip curling when the cassette of Elgar's Dream arrived from the USA just before Christmas last year.

I mean, would Jesse Norman be one's first choice for the Angel? But it was the Boston Symphony Orchestra under Sir Colin Davis.... Well, it turned out to be a revelation, and a first-class performance from the first note to a beautifully controlled diminuendo at the end. Norman gave a highly sympathetic and sensitive performance, complemented by Stuart Burrows and John Shirley Quirk. The interpretation by Sir Colin was equally realised by with the support of the orchestra and the Tanglewood Chorus. My surprise was even more enhanced when I realised that my pleasure was far greater than that for a broadcast performance of The Dream from the RFH about the same time, under Sir Colin's younger namesake Andrew Davis. At the time, I thought it was a bit of a disaster and still do.

Anyway, I'd like other Elgarians to share my pleasure and Leo Black at the BBC has undertaken to see if the Boston Transcription Trust will release a tape for UK broadcast. Do watch out for it.

---

From DAVID BURY

I greatly enjoyed reading Gareth Lewis's fascinating and detailed article on Henry Coward, but when he suggests that Muriel Foster appeared for the first time as the Angel at the Sheffield performance of October 1902, he is surely forgetting the second, great, Dusseldorf performance of 19th May 1902, which led to Richard Strauss's tribute to Elgar "the first English progressivist."

Incidentally, though it is often misreported in the standard works (see Kennedy, 2nd Edn. p.132) Foster also substituted for an indisposed Brema at the Worcester Three Choirs' Festival in September of that year. "The Manchester Guardian", for instance, recorded that "Foster gave a rendering of the part of the Angel so rich in the noblest artistic qualities that she need not fear comparison with any rival" in its issue of 11th September, the very day that Foster signed Alice Elgar's autograph book in company with Ivor Atkins - it is

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TO MY FRIEND NICHOLAS KILBURN.



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open on the actual page at the Birthplace.

The Sheffield Gerontius was, thus, Foster's third appearance as the Angel, though Coates and Ffrangcon-Davies were indeed singing the work for the first time.

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From CHARLES BAIGENT

I cannot agree more with R.M. Plant's letter in the January issue about naming a B.R. Diesel loco after Sir Edward Elgar. I expect the loco Mr. Plant refers to is the GWR 'Castle' Class which was withdrawn in the early sixties. I think it an excellent idea for the Society to approach British Rail with the suggestion of naming a Western Region Class 47.

As so much of Bax's music is associated with Scotland, maybe we could persuade British Rail to name one of their Class 37s that work the Glasgow to Mallaig line "Sir Arnold Bax."

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From P.M.W. GREAVES

I was interested in the Journal's reproduction of the programme cover for the 1899 Norwich Music Festival at which SEA PICTURES was given its first performance.

You will recall that Ada Crossley sang two of the songs at Balmoral Castle on 20th Oct. 1899. Is it known that an illustration in colour of the programme for this concert exists? I can give the reference: it is reproduced in:- "Louisa, Lady in Waiting" (p.56) - The Personal Diaries and Albums of Louisa, Lady in Waiting to Queen Victoria and Queen Alexandra. Compiled & edited by Elizabeth Longford. My edition was published by Mayflower Books, New York, although I believe it was originally published by Jonathan Cape.

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From DR. L.F.W. EICKHOFF

A memento of Sir Adrian Boult (see illustration). It was fitting that his last public appearance should have been to conduct at Worcester Cathedral, on Sept. 24th, 1977. The Cello Concerto, with Tortelier as soloist, and The Music Makers, with the Worcester Festival Chorus, of which I was a member. He had earlier conducted the latter in Worcester in 1970; on that occasion he had interrupted the rehearsal to tell us how to make every word clear although we were singing ppp. Sir Adrian was, in Sept. 1977, so frail he had to conduct from a seated position, but this in no way impaired the authoritative strength of his baton. Tortelier broke a string, reached behind him for the BSO's cellist's instrument in exchange, Sir Adrian murmured a bar number and the concert proceeded as if nothing had happened. It was obvious that Sir Adrian was far more disturbed at the burst of applause at the end of the work. Obviously no-one had explained that the old rule of silence that let music 'vibrate in the memory' had been abolished since his earlier visit. Sir Adrian retired after the concerto, feeling unable to continue.

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