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EDITORIAL

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It is heartening to read that sales of "classical" music have increased markedly over the last decade or so. Various reasons have been proffered : the poverty-stricken nature of the bulk of the "pop" industry; the popularity of Pavarotti's *Nessun Dorma*, and of the Three Tenors concert; the effective marketing of performers, including their appearance, eg. "Nige" Kennedy, and the Brodsky Quartet; the desire to have recordings that would show off one's CD equipment, etc,etc. Research has shown that there are two main buying patterns : well-known artists, and standard repertoire. No doubt Elgar has benefited from both - Menuhin, Kennedy, and du Pre in the first; the *Variations*, and *Pomp & Circumstance* in the second. Research also found that much of the standard repertoire benefits from having a name, eg. *The Planets*, the *New World Symphony*, the *Fireworks Music*, and so on. It still grates, though, to see discs entitled "Mozart's 'Elvira Madigan' Concerto" and "Beethoven's 'Fate' Symphony". Let us pray that we be spared "Elgar's 'Massive Hope' Symphony", despite its recent popularity.

Longstanding members of the Society will be shocked to hear of the untimely death of Gareth Lewis, our chief record reviewer. My predecessor has written eloquently of him elsewhere, but I must pay my own tribute. I met Gareth about the same time as I joined both the Society and the London Philharmonic Choir. I shall particularly treasure memories of post-concert curries stretching into the early hours which gave Gareth time to entertain us with his tales of music and musicians. Due to pressure of his medical practice his attendance record at rehearsals was often not as complete as it should have been, but it took a brave voice rep to reprove someone of Gareth's build and height! (though in fact he was the mildest of men). I think what was so refreshing about him was the complete absence of side and cant, plus his concern for people, to which Ronald Taylor also refers. A few years ago, when I contributed an article to the JOURNAL about the Boult recording of *The Apostles*, he wrote to me: "Having been there, and, sharing your feeling that it was a very special occasion which we will both treasure for the rest of our lives, your detailed account of the sessions not only brought it all back (including much that I had forgotten) but moved me more than is probably good for me!"

Rest in peace, Gareth.

GEOFFREY HODGKINS

ELGAR AS A CONDUCTOR

William Alwyn

(William Alwyn was born in 1905 and after studying at the Royal Academy of Music joined the staff there. He was one of the first composers to write for films, but his prolific output included symphonies and operas as well as chamber music and songs. He died in September 1985 at the age of 79. Sadly his music is at present greatly neglected, although recently Chandos have begun a major new cycle of recordings conducted by Richard Hickox.
On 6 October 1975 Dr Alwyn gave a lecture to the London Branch entitled *Elgar as a Conductor*. As a young man he had been a member of the London Symphony Orchestra, and he shared some fascinating experiences of those days. But his lecture was also valuable for his wider comments on Elgar and his time, and his place in musical history. It lasted over an hour, and the session after the interval consisted mainly of extracts from recordings. The article is based on the composer's notes for the lecture; his rehearsal tape; and a tape I made of the lecture itself.
I am grateful to Mrs Alwyn for permission to publish the lecture, and to Miss Anne Surfling of the Alwyn and Britten-Pears Archives for her invaluable help).

Part I

I have come here this evening to pay my tribute to Edward Elgar : to Elgar the composer; to Elgar the man; to Elgar's memory; and as far as I am able (for memory is the *least* reliable of witnesses) to Elgar the conductor, as I knew him, having played under his baton in most of his greatest works, including *Gerontius*, the *Cello Concerto*, the *Violin Concerto*, *The Music Makers*, *Cockaigne*, the *Second Symphony*, etc.etc.

All of this of course made an indelible impression on my mind. I was then a very young man, at an age when one's adoration of the great is this side idolatry, and the gap between immaturity in oneself and complete mastery seems absolutely unbridgeable. Also, with the *Cello* and *Violin Concerti*, I had the good fortune to experience the authoritative readings of Beatrice Harrison and Albert Sammons. To me these soloists and the London Symphony Orchestra of which I was a member as third flute and piccolo (I nearly said humble member, but I could hardly call myself a humble member because the piccolo, though small, is the most strident and ear-piercing unit in any symphony orchestra, and can hardly be forgotten); these soloists and the LSO are still to me the supreme interpreters of Elgar and their style was, in every sense of the word, truly Elgarian.

In my lifetime I have been fortunate enough to hear Casals and Jacqueline du Pre at her best, and many other famous virtuosi interpret the solo cello part; but Casals' warm-hearted and eloquent performance somehow stole from Elgar something of his Englishness, and Jacqueline's hyper-sensitive and exquisite rendering had almost a Delius-like flavour - a sentiment foreign to Elgar, who although the most romantic of romanticists was fundamentally classical in his roots, especially in his acceptance of traditional formal design (I mean his adherence to the Haydn-Mozart-Beethoven form, sonata form, rondo form); and above all (for this comprises my main thesis tonight) his *classical* approach to conducting and the interpretation of his own works.

In paying homage to Elgar you must allow me to make a few points of criticism. No genius is without his faults, and the measure of genius is his ability to rise above them. In fact, it is the very combination of exceptional virtues and minor faults (or rather idiosyncrasies) which together make the individual quality of genius; that make Beethoven truly Beethoven, and Elgar uniquely Elgar.

I should say at once that I am not referring to Elgar the man, but to the music of Elgar. The biographical facts about a man's life are of absorbing interest to those who want to discover the man behind the music; but I should stress that it is dangerous to draw parallels, and utterly misleading to believe that a creative artist's character, actions and circumstances have any direct bearing on his art. Wagner was a supreme egoist and sybarite, but that did not prevent him from writing music of the utmost purity and simplicity in his opera *The Mastersingers*; and the greatest of French mediæval poets, François Villon, who was capable of writing poems most musical in their magic (for example : "Où sont les neiges d'autan?" or, as Rossetti put it, "Where are the snows of yesteryear?") - Villon was a thief and vagabond who robbed his kind uncle, the bishop, and probably ended his miserable scoundrelly life on the gibbet.

In my own case I well know that probably the most extrovert and happy work that I have written is my *First Symphony*, and I wrote that when I was seriously ill with an undiagnosed something, in great pain, and I finished the composition knowing that I had got to undergo an operation with a fifty-fifty chance of survival. But that isn't shown in the music at all; it is most surprising to find that it is happy music!

I think people do concentrate too much on character. It is interesting, the character, but they expect the music to conform to that character. Personally, I don't read biographies, but judging by the reviews I do read in the Sunday papers most biographers nowadays seem obsessed with the idea that any great man must automatically be of homosexual tendencies. I hasten to add that I myself would repudiate and deplore the bare suggestion that Elgar was a homosexual : but doubtless some future biographer will follow current fashion and attempt to explain his music by recourse to such an unlikely theory. And what better fodder could he have than the enigmatic *Enigma Variations*?

In passing I should say that as a man Elgar was not much liked by his colleagues I told you that I was going to make a few points of criticism. I don't back these up at all with my experience of Elgar - what little association I had with him was of the happiest - but I remember my old professor, Sir John MacEwen, talking about attending a Royal Philharmonic rehearsal for a performance of his new symphony where Elgar was rehearsing, I think, his overture *In the South*. Elgar, oblivious to time, and to the fact that McEwen was waiting, went on to a quarter to one and then turned round to McEwen and said, "I suppose you want a little time now, McEwen; well, here you are then". Poor McEwen had only a quarter of an hour to rehearse his whole new symphony! It was a very unfortunate day for him because he told me that he and his wife had been working on the parts of this symphony right up to the previous night (they were then living out at Hatch End). They arrived at Paddington station (in the days of the hansom cab), got into a cab, drove up Praed Street, and put the heavy weight of parts on the floor of the cab. Halfway up Praed Street, to his

horror, the floor opened and out went his parts!

Then there was my very old and dear friend Dr William Wallace, who was one of the most remarkable men I have ever met. He was senior eye surgeon to the British Army during the First World War, and one of the first English composers to write a symphonic poem. He was a painter, a sculptor, and everything else you could think of. He was a curious sort of man : he always seemed to get the right idea, but hit the wrong nail on the head. I remember him coming into Duke's Hall at the Royal Academy of Music when Sir Henry was rehearsing *Cockaigne*. I saw Dr Wallace come in; he stood there a few minutes and then gave an almighty sniff and said : "It's all sequences - the man can't compose", and strutted out. Well, it *is* all sequences; but Elgar had the unique genius which could convert those sequences into something which was completely new.

But there *was* this feeling of antagonism towards Elgar, possibly due to jealousy, because of his success; more possibly, because of his celebrated aloofness. On the other hand, those who knew him personally loved him. His orchestral players, particularly his beloved LSO, adored him; and great men loved him, too. One of my happiest memories of the 1927 Three Choirs' Festival was of seeing him in earnest conversation with the great music critic, the playwright George Bernard Shaw.

Forgive the digression, and let me return to my thesis : the fundamental classicism of Elgar's approach to music.

First let me examine what I mean by "Elgar's classical acceptance of traditional formal design". Right through the nineteenth and well into this present century formal design and mastery of form meant the unquestioning acceptance of these stereotyped forms. After Beethoven, who gave a new meaning to the development section, Schubert, Schumann, Chopin, Brahms, Dvořák, Tchaikovsky and to a large extent Elgar himself, found the classic forms a convenient mould in which to shape their music.

Indeed, when I went to the Royal Academy of Music in 1921 at the early age of fifteen, the idea that form in music could conceivably exist in any other shapes was not merely treated with scorn, but condemned out of hand. Wagner was still the apostle of the music of the future; and to some of the more pedantic on the RAM's composition staff, music with no future. Incidentally I should add that there weren't even composition professors at the Academy then. They were called, forbiddingly, professors of Harmony and Counterpoint. In fact I began teaching at the Academy as a Professor of Harmony and Counterpoint. I might tell you that, on the side, I taught composition!

The Principal of the Academy then was Sir Alexander Mackenzie, and he wouldn't permit Debussy to be performed at Academy concerts, for to him Debussy was the supreme example of musical anarchy. Elgar's contemporaries, Stanford and Parry, were so firmly rooted in tradition that these roots were in an advanced state of decay.

Now it has always seemed strange to me that composers as romantically minded as

Brahms, Dvořák, Tchaikovsky and Elgar should have persisted in the apparently blind acceptance of one rigid dictum - that the first movement of a symphony, a piano sonata, or a string quartet must be in sonata form; that is, an exposition section, a development section and a recapitulation of the principal subjects, with perhaps a coda to bring the movement to a close. Not only this, the music had to conform to a rigid pattern of related tonalities.

The traditional exposition and development sections are understandable. Any composer rightly believes in the clear statement of his material, and it is equally natural that he should want to explore the infinite possibilities of his themes by developing them. But how can the first flush of a romantic idea, a romantic inspiration which has sprung from the heart rather than the mind, how can it bear the harsh limelight of repetition, of saying the same thing all over again? Is there any kiss as thrilling as the lover's first kiss, or was there any emotion as wonderful as I felt in my own case as a boy of eleven when I first saw a mountain?

That this was honestly and I believe strongly felt by the composers I have mentioned is evidenced by their ingenious efforts to vary the presentation of their subjects, to *re*-present them in the recapitulation section, and to extend them by further development in the Coda. To me it is a constant wonder that they should have strained under the yoke at all. This in spite of the fact that the dominating musical personality of the nineteenth century, Franz Liszt, had already pointed the way to freedom in his tone poems and concertos. But Liszt, in the latter part of the century and certainly in the first thirty years of this century, was regarded as something of a musical mountebank. I remember quite well that at the time when I first started orchestral playing that the only works of his remaining in the orchestral repertoire were *Les Preludes* (which is one of his worst works) and the *E♭ Piano Concerto* - nothing else.

The great turning point in my own musical development was my discovery of the scores of Liszt's *Faust Symphony* and his symphonic poems in the Academy library when I was a young man. (And incidentally I first met that very fine musician and composer Constant Lambert down there on the same hunt. It started a friendship which I look back on with great pleasure. He could have been one of the finest composers we have ever had in this country; he was certainly one of the most musical men I have ever met).

Although I had been told flatly that a symphony could not be a symphony unless the first movement was in sonata form, here was evidence in Liszt's works, before my very eyes, that symphonic development could proceed along other lines; that romanticism need not be hidebound by classical forms; and I myself was, and still am, an unregenerate romantic.

"But", you will probably say, "what about Richard Strauss?" His works were a development of the Lisztian technique. Strauss's symphonic poems, his *Domestic Symphony*, and later his *Alpine Symphony* were constantly played, and was not Elgar himself strongly influenced by Strauss's programmatic methods in *Falstaff*? Of course he was. But Elgar, unlike Strauss, would never have considered his masterpiece *Falstaff* as a symphony, regardless of the fact that in its masterly sweep

and its symphonic sense of structure it is as truly a symphony as any symphony by Sibelius or by the monumental Mahler. He calls it a "symphonic study", but there again he couldn't accept as a fact that it didn't conform to symphonic shape. It didn't have a proper first movement, slow movement and so on, so it couldn't be a symphony. I also feel equally certain that had Elgar completed his *Third Symphony* the first movement would have run completely true to form, and the whole would have been firmly cast in sonata form, as before.

Elgar's attitude to contemporary music was conservative in the extreme. I doubt whether he was even aware of the existence of Schoenberg, and certainly I very much doubt that he would have done as Puccini did when, although already a very successful composer - of *Bohème, Butterfly* and so on - he made a special journey to Florence to hear a performance of *Pierrot Lunaire.*

(To be continued).

BEATRICE HARRISON and the ELGAR *CELLO CONCERTO*
A centenary appreciation

Julian Lloyd Webber

When Guilhermina Suggia asked for rather too much money to make the first recording of Elgar's *Cello Concerto*, Dame Fortune was smiling kindly on the composer. For the honour then passed to a young cellist - nominated by the Gramophone Company - called Beatrice Harrison and, as with the *Violin Concerto* and an even younger Yehudi Menuhin, their choice of soloist proved to be inspired. Like Menuhin, Beatrice also showed an immediate, instinctive affinity with the mercurial temperament of Edward Elgar.

Beatrice Harrison had just turned twenty-seven when she first recorded the concerto in December 1919. (Why, I wonder, have so many of the most searching interpretations of Elgar's concertos come from very young performers? Could it be that that marriage of innocence, idealism and intense passion is best captured in youth?) Whatever the reason, it is unlikely that the temperamental Portuguese, Madame Suggia would have given such an affecting account of the work as young Beatrice. Yet I can't help feeling sympathy for the concerto's first interpreter, Felix Salmond. Salmond was a marvellous cellist (his recording of Grieg's *To Spring*, which he added as a 'filler' to the Grieg *Sonata*, is one of my favourite cello records) and, by all accounts, the comparative failure of the concerto at its première was no fault of his. In fact, Salmond's careful preparation of the solo part is often cited as one of the chief reasons behind Elgar's decision to proceed with the ill-prepared performance, after Albert Coates had used up more than his fair share of rehearsal time on "Waldweben" from Wagner's *Siegfried*. But the première hardly enhanced Salmond's reputation and I do not believe that he ever played the concerto again. Not long afterwards he left Britain for America, where he continued his solo career and built a fine reputation as a teacher - most notably at the Juilliard School. His

pupils recall that he never taught the Elgar concerto and indeed never referred to the work at all. Nevertheless, had Salmond been a Gramophone Company artist, it is quite possible that *he*, and not Beatrice Harrison, would have made its first recording.

Born on 9 December 1892 in the foothills of the Himalayas, Beatrice Harrison was the second of a quartet of musical daughters. Her father, Colonel John Harrison, belonged to a distinguished military family, her mother Annie was an attractive raven-haired Celt whose own singing ambitions had been thwarted. Both parents were determined to ensure that their talented children would have the best training possible and Colonel John made the extraordinary decision - for those days - to abandon his own military life to concentrate entirely on his daughters' musical upbringing. The sisters - May, Beatrice, Monica, and Margaret - went on to make a unique family contribution to British musical life. Aside from Beatrice, May, in particular, enjoyed great success as a violinist, and Margaret proved equally adept on the violin and the piano and accompanied Beatrice on several of her recordings.

By 1919 Beatrice Harrison had become the leading British cellist of her generation and, as such, was an obvious choice to record the concerto. She was intimately involved with the native contemporary music of her day (Delius had already written his *Cello Sonata* for her) and Bax, Ireland and Cyril Scott, amongst others, were all to write for her. But her association with the Elgar *Concerto* was the high point of her career (and it was to remain her only concerto recording).

After the severely cut 1919 acoustical version, Harrison and Elgar went on to make a complete electrical recording in 1928, and it is this performance which has won justifiable acclaim. But how does it compare with all the modern recordings? Well, those preoccupied with technical perfection and flawless intonation will not find it here. What they *will* discover is a touchingly simple, direct, expression, considerable technical panache (just listen to the demisemis at the start of the last movement!) and, most of all, the spirit of the work as Elgar himself heard and intended it.

However undesirable it may be to slavishly copy an earlier style of playing, I feel that many of today's interpretations have strayed dangerously far from Elgar's original conception (one obvious example being the first movement's famous scalic flight to the top E, marked *in tempo* the second time, yet nowadays nearly always heard played with a rallentando *both* times - destroying completely the sudden ecstatic momentum that Elgar surely desired and which is so thrillingly captured on his own recording). Having recorded the concerto with the composer, Beatrice Harrison remained Elgar's favoured interpreter of the work - playing it with him in London (at the Queen's Hall), Malvern (at the Festival), at the Three Choirs and elsewhere. It was before one performance in Manchester that, just before going on to the platform, Elgar took hold of Beatrice and said "Give it 'em, Beatrice. Give it 'em. Don't mind about the notes or anything - give 'em the spirit".

Beatrice Harrison, in her long association with the Elgar concerto, did just that.

ELGAR'S *THE MUSIC MAKERS*
THE PROBLEM OF AESTHETIC ASSESSMENT

Linda Maria Koldau

[This article was sent in by Dr Christopher Kent of Reading University, where Frl Koldau recently completed a year's study prior to returning to Germany to continue her studies at the Johannes Gutenberg Universität. Dr Kent calls it "a fine piece of writing from a young German lady who is not yet 21".]

It is remarkable how much the knowledge of a composer's personality can influence our interpretation of and judgment on his work. Biographical facts seem to help explain the origin and development of his best creations as well as the reasons for weaknesses and inconsistencies in inferior ones.

Yet with an increasing knowledge of its background it also becomes more difficult to give a definite aesthetic assessment of a work - a moment of personal crisis may well excuse a detail otherwise condemned, but is it at all justifiable to link a work so closely with its creator?

When studying Edward Elgar's work *The Music Makers* during my second term at university, I soon had to realise that there exist extremely differing opinions about this work : Michael Kennedy acknowledges *The Music Makers* to be "an original treatment of the poem, and one of Elgar's most endearing and unjustly underrated works"[1], whereas Diana McVeagh concludes that "the work fails to convince"[2]. What are we to think of a work so contrarily assessed? An explanation for these contradictions can only be sought in the biographical background of *The Music Makers*, as it is unlikely that two established critics would differ so crucially in a judgment on its purely musical aspects.

Indeed, Elgar's work asks for a highly personal interpretation, considering his feelings about the poem and the music he set to it. O'Shaughnessy's Ode expresses Elgar's very conception of the artist - "his own creed", as McVeagh puts it - and the numerous quotations in Elgar's work prove what a great variety of reminiscences the words evoked in his mind. We therefore have to see *The Music Makers* as an entirely personal work, an almost impressionist mosaic of musical ideas brought forth from the past.

A look at the Ode itself reveals why it appealed so strongly to Elgar : it is the word "dream" with its variations that recurs twelve times throughout the Ode, thus setting the atmosphere for the music. Dreams were of the greatest importance to Elgar, who was very concerned with the exploration and symbolisation of dreams (cf. the titles of some of his other works). Here the dream theme is linked with his personal belief in the artist's role as the moving creative force in the world. Evoking the earliest days of mankind's records (stanza 3) and spanning history into present

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[1] Kennedy, M : *Portrait of Elgar*, 2nd edn., O.U.P, 1982, p.254

[2] McVeagh, D.M : *Edward Elgar, His Life and Music*, Dent, 1955, p.116

time ("the life of each generation", stanza 4), the Ode creates a sense of organic, never-ceasing progress. Elgar interprets this as the continuity of art, a perpetual renewal (stanza 9) through the artist. He is painfully aware of the price for this responsibility, though, of the being "a little apart" and the "human scorning". The overall mood of his music is therefore one of deeply felt sadness, the suffering of the solitary.

Elgar's setting of the nine stanzas is through-composed, his refraining from altering the words shows how much they meant to him. However, he additionally emphasises the key words by inserting them as a refrain between sections of the Ode. The first two lines, "We are the music makers, and we are the dreamers of dreams" have become the motto of his work, framing it and dividing it into three sections of three stanzas. Thus Elgar sets the poem into a musical form of its own, interlacing the formal structures of music and poetry.

According to J.N.Moore, Elgar took *The Music Makers* as a chance to explain his Enigma Variations by setting them to appropriate words[3]. This may be true, as Elgar himself saw his Enigma theme as an expression of the loneliness of the artist, yet the variety of quotations used throughout *The Music Makers* rather serves as an illustration of the associative process triggered off in Elgar's mind when reading the Ode (eg. a quotation from *Sea Pictures* at "lone sea-breakers", or the Enigma theme at "desolate"). Most striking is this effect when it comes to more than merely visual (or audio-visual?) associations : in stanza five, Elgar clearly sees Augustus Jaeger as the personification of the "one man", who "wrought flame in another man's heart". Remembering his friend and invaluable mentor, Elgar sets these words to Jaeger's theme from the *Enigma Variations*. The theme of Nimrod is quoted at full length, outshining the surrounding musical ideas, glorifying the memory of a great man.

Equally, the setting of the last two lines of stanza 7 refer to another very close friend of Elgar's, Alice Stuart-Wortley, who understood and shared his creative personality. A quotation from the *Violin Concerto* - her work, created by Elgar in a sense of profound spiritual unity - thus evokes her presence. In *The Music Makers* Elgar clearly expresses his feeling of perfect harmony between their souls, a harmony that compensates for the artists' isolation from the world ("O men! it must ever be that we dwell, in our dreaming and singing, a little apart from ye").

It is Elgar's ample use of quotations that has been subject to the severest critical reviews of *The Music Makers*. However, this mosaic technique must not be seen as a lack of original ideas : it illustrates Elgar's technique of composing, rendering a

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[3] Moore, J.N : *Edward Elgar : A Creative Life*, O.U.P., 1984, pp.632-3. Moore's assumption is backed by the sketch Elgar sent to Alice Stuart-Wortley before setting *The Music Makers* : an "orchestral epigraph" for the Ode, with subjects which Moore claims to be derived from the *Enigma Variations*. Yet it remains questionable if the remote affinity between the outline of the Enigma themes I and II and the two themes of the Prelude is a deliberate one or if it is only a sign that Elgar's feelings must have been very similar when writing the respective works. More significant is Elgar's heading to the sketch he sent his friend, which may indeed refer to his *Enigma Variations* : "The complete understanding".

vivid image of his style. Elgar was a compulsive composer, jotting down musical ideas whenever they occurred to him, and saving them for the right occasion to come. Not only do we find well-known quotations from Elgar's works in *The Music Makers*; at various points there appear themes which are found in Elgar's sketches for other works, not used there and saved for another time. The whole-tone scale at "trample a kingdom down" (fig.25ff), for instance, is such an idea, originally destined for *The Apostles*. The same applies to the floating, chromatic sequence in the orchestra at fig.27, which was intended for *King Olaf*, used in a projected setting of Matthew Arnold's *Callicles* and finally re-integrated into *The Music Makers*. This interchange of material is typical of Elgar, whose style is marked by a distinctly mosaic character. Elgar would take short themes, even musical cells, arranging and relocating them in miscellaneous constellations. Fragments of the Marseillaise and *Rule Britannia* in *The Music Makers* reveal that this technique is more than a shortage of original ideas : the quotation of these popularised tunes adds a touch of sarcasm, music of a corrupted spirit that is soon swept aside by music more appropriate to the creative artist.

Elgar's kaleidoscopic musical idiom is further outlined by the harmonic structure of his music. Although a main key area (F minor) is established in the Prelude and throughout the first section of *The Music Makers*, the remaining impression is one of fleeting harmonies, a constant transformation of our harmonic awareness. This tonal instability is occasioned by Elgar's predilection for the sequence, avoiding the clear cadence (even in the passages where the tonality seems to be succinct), constantly refusing to settle down.

It is unjustified to criticise the musical quality of a work when it displays the very characteristics of the composer's style. *The Music Makers* is not a confused assembly of musical ideas, loosely linked together in fleeting tonalities, but a powerful setting of an Ode which strongly appealed to Elgar, so that he strove to enrich it with his best ideas. There are many good qualities in *The Music Makers*, ranging from sensitive motivic constellations to a highly sophisticated orchestration.

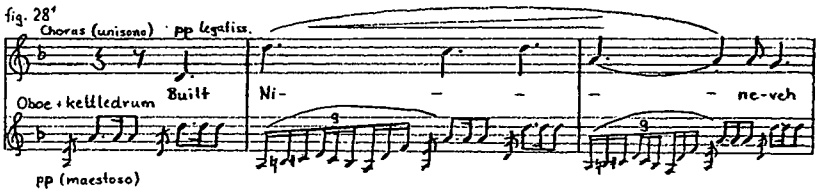
Kaleidoscopic as this work appears to be, the themes are skilfully re-related to each other and to the words they are set to. For instance, Elgar creates a new musical idea by combining the quotations from *Sea Pictures* and the *Enigma Variations* in lines 3-4 (fig.11), responding to the union of the words that evoked this association. Indeed, he regards words and music as equal in *The Music Makers*, for he alternatingly uses musical and textual fragments to recall earlier ideas (eg. stanza 9, where words from stanzas 7 and 8 are used).

Greatest tribute must be paid to Elgar's economic but effective orchestration of this work. Elgar's choral style is based on the orchestra, which distinguishes his choral works from those of his contemporaries. Indeed, *The Music Makers* is rather a symphonic work (cf.Elgar's doubts as to the musical designation of his work), displaying greatest subtlety in his use of instrumental colour and sonority. The texture is principally economical (eg. the three-part opening of the Prelude), while greatest sonority is achieved by means of carefully considered doubling. This device is refined at fig.4, when the doubling is applied but to motivic fragments, the instruments interlacing with each other and yet retaining an independence of their

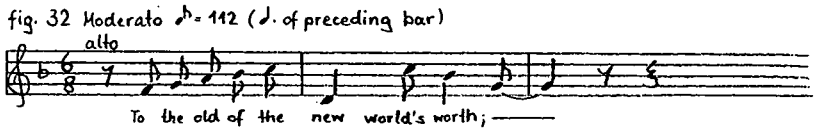
own.

The dynamics are as subtly differentiated as the sonority of the texture. Not only are there numerous dynamic shades and contrasts in the course of the music, these very differentiations are also applied to the vertical line of the score. The choir is frequently used as an "Instrumental body" integrated into the orchestra, thus contributing to the skilful shading of dynamic colour (eg. fig 53, where the soloist's *crescendo* contrasts the *decrescendo* of the orchestra and even the *piano* of the chorus).

A good example of outstanding musical quality and originality in *The Music Makers* is the setting of the third stanza. This evocation of "the buried past of the earth" is remarkably powerful, displaying an astounding musical variety. Within forty bars, Elgar combines sophisticated chromatic sequence, "primitive" modality, pentatony and the whole-tone scale, unison and imitative passages. The theme on "Nineveh" could have been written for a historical film : wide undulating choral gestures in ancient modality over a regular rhythmic pattern in the orchestra give life to the image of the building of Nineveh :



"With our sighing" is still set in unison, yet the fugal shifting of vocal groups provides an effect of multiplied sighs. After a contrasting interjection (*giocoso*, fig.29), the "Nineveh" theme is repeated, triumphantly *fortissimo* and supported by brass this time. But this is not the climax yet : tension increases greatly in a rising pentatonic *fugato* culminating in a sustained A". A wild chromatic rush followed by a more sophisticated whole-tone scale bring us back to a final victorious statement of the "Nineveh" theme. Vanished are the yearning *legato* and the slave-driving rhythm, the theme is proclaimed in marked, majestic unison. This three-stage development is followed by a sudden change of mood and tempo : Elgar opens with a new theme at fig.32, which - in contrast to the unique "Nineveh" - will be recalled throughout the work.



Preceded by a moment of utmost triumph, this theme creates a dreamy, languishing mood (corresponding to the words of the last three lines of stanza 3): the rising scale is held up by a dropping minor seventh, this yearning interval leaps up again to resolve pliantly into a tonally ambiguous chord of G minor/C major. In the following passage Elgar applies the same technique of selective doubling to the choir as he did to the orchestra in the Prelude, carefully interweaving the thematic fragments in

contrapuntal imitation. Passages like this prove that it is unjust to condemn *The Music Makers* as "tinsel" and "tawdry".

However, the widespread criticism of this work is justified in so far as *The Music Makers* indeed suffers from a lack of coherent musical development. The collective presence of Elgar's self-quotations seems to suggest a final synthesis for his music, an emotionally comprehensive summary, yet in the end this synthesis remains unachieved. The listener feels puzzled and eventually dissatisfied at moments like the opening of stanza 8 (fig. 78ff): the music recalls the theme of the refrain (penetrating the setting even without its words), then it is abruptly juxtaposed with the main theme of Elgar's *First Symphony*. Climactic as this moment seems to be, the quotation is given no organic place within the music, it is but a flashing inspiration vanishing immediately to make place for other ideas, reminiscences of what came before (fig.81ff). Equally, original ideas that promise development emerge but shortly, sinking back into the whirling kaleidoscope of thematic fragments and their interaction.

The Music Makers is a profoundly personal work and can only be understood as such. Similar to the stream-of-consciousness technique in literature, it depicts Elgar's mind, the floating, impressionistic associations and the abrupt changes of mood that are his emotional response to the Ode. Maybe this work is too personal to be understood by anybody else but Elgar and his closest friends; but then it should have remained private music in order not to be unjustly criticised. Elgar himself wrote in a letter to Alice Stuart-Wortley : "I have written out my soul in the Concerto, Sym.II & the Ode...in these three works I have *shewn* myself"[4]. How can we then assume to understand *The Music Makers*, unless we truly understand Elgar himself? This work escapes our aesthetic criticism, as it can be justified only through Elgar himself.

However, this is the very point of my personal criticism. As seen above, Elgar openly declared *The Music Makers* an image of his soul. It is not surprising to find that a work of music reflects the composer's innermost emotions, yet I disapprove of Elgar's deliberately explaining the psychological implications worked into *The Music Makers*. For me, this strongly psycho-biographical interpretation is a sign of romantic excess, the outworn cliché of the artist's unapproachable, unreproachable soul. When a composer makes clear that his work can finally only be understood by understanding *himself*, he focuses our attention on himself and not on the music. Where the artist's personality becomes more important than his work, the crucial point of music as a medium that can speak for itself is lost. The work is burdened with extra-musical facts that by no means contribute to its aesthetic quality. At this point, the listener longs to go back to times when the composer was of smallest importance to the aesthetic impact and understanding of his work. Maybe it was no accident that Elgar disliked early English music, rejecting it as too austere[5]. This music did not have the powerful emotional connotations which he found in the music of his time - the purity of early music seems to have been too impersonal for

[4] Kennedy, op.cit, p.254

[5] Kennedy, op.cit, p.23

Elgar's romantic mind. I am probably one of the "unsympathetic" mentioned by Kennedy[6], yet I can only emphasise my personal opinion that a true work of art must have a life of its own, disentangled from its creator's personality. I can sympathise with Elgar as a man who had to struggle through many severe crises and was painfully aware of his own deficiencies, yet I could appreciate *The Music Makers* to a higher degree had Elgar not striven to deliberately explain himself in this work.

ELGAR IN STEREO REMAINS A DREAM FOR ENGINEERS

Barry Fox

The British record company EMI has pulled the plug on an experiment which set out to prove that it is possible to recreate real stereo sound from recordings made in the 1920s, before stereo was officially developed.

The theory was first put forward by a Californian musician called Brad Kay ("Mono sound reveals stereo secrets", *New Scientist*, 19/26 December 1985). He showed that when making records in the 1920s, sound engineers often made two recordings for safety's sake. Kay believes that the two recordings can be combined to make true stereo sound. The first "intentional" stereo recordings were made by Alan Blumlein of EMI in 1934.

EMI Records has access to such pairs of recordings made by Edward Elgar in 1928 and 1933. EMI's Abbey Road studios have the digital equipment needed to test the recordings and restore them into stereo.

Last week, EMI's classical division received the *Gramophone* award for its first collection of restored mono recordings by Elgar, and was still promising that future releases would include a "previously unpublished true stereo version". But the company has now quietly abandoned its plans.

Richard Abram, who is in charge of compiling the Elgar material at EMI, says the decision to stop the project was taken on the strength of a technical paper written by an EMI engineer, Anthony Griffith. This argues that in the 1920s and 1930s EMI made its two recordings using only a single microphone connected to both recorders, so no stereo effect would be produced. "There is no point in carrying out the tests, because we know what the result would be - fake stereo", says Abram.

Michael Dutton, a sound engineer who worked on the prize-winning mono recordings, was getting ready to start work on the stereo material. He has now been taken off the job, but he wants to at least prove to EMI that recreating the stereo sound is possible. "If EMI will provide the original master recordings, I will spend my

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[6] ibid.

own time on analysing whether they are or are not true stereo", he says.

In the 1920s and 1930s, before the use of magnetic tape, engineers cut recordings directly on to wax discs and often cut two discs, with one as a spare. Kay discovered that they sometimes also played safe by using two microphones instead of splitting the output from one microphone between the two recorders. The result was a matched pair of recordings, each with a different sound perspective that could be combined as a stereo recording.

The recording industry was divided over whether this technique produced real stereo. Some engineers at EMI dismissed the idea, arguing that the stereo effect was just an illusion created by slight inaccuracies of synchronisation between the two recordings. This technique, called automatic double tracking, is often used to produce fake stereo versions of mono recordings. Other engineers thought the stereo sounded too real to be the result of synchronisation problems.

Dutton planned to use digital sound restoration equipment at Abbey Road to lock the two sound signals into perfect synchronisation, so eradicating any errors and revealing any stereo sound. But his way may now be permanently blocked.

(This article first appeared in *New Scientist* and is reprinted by kind permission).

GARETH HUGHES LEWIS
1938 - 1992

The death, at a comparatively early age, of Dr Gareth Lewis is grievous, not only for his family and friends, but it is a great loss to medicine and music. In particular Elgarians will mourn his passing, for his contribution to the Society's JOURNAL was almost without parallel.

Gareth Lewis was one of the first people to write to me when I took over the editorship in 1976 and he, typically, offered any help of which he was capable. We met shortly afterwards and soon became friends. Over the years he contributed many an article, always scrupulously researched, and a host of reviews of recordings. The initials GHL became very familiar to members, and from an editor's point of view he was a perfect reviewer (even if he did sometimes deliver at the last moment!) for he was always willing for his reviews to be edited down. "Slash 'em to ribbons, if you want. You're the editor!" Not only did he write and review at my request, but he very often produced records of which I had no knowledge. He also reviewed for Welsh journals, and regularly wrote for the *Western Mail*. He was born in South Wales, and was a fluent Welsh speaker.

His love of Elgar's music dominated much of his musical appreciation and performance (for he sang with the London Philharmonic Choir and local choral societies), but his musical expertise went far beyond Elgar's music. His knowledge of choral and orchestral music was profound, and he was an undoubted expert on Welsh music. With the LPC he took part in the Boult recordings of *The Kingdom*, *The Apostles* and *The Dream of Gerontius* : *King Olaf* with Handley, and *The Kingdom*

again with Slatkin.

In medicine he served his patients with skill and dedication. After his name came the letters MBBS, D Obstr, MRCGP, and Dip Med Aviation. He could doubtless have had a considerable career at some fashionable clinic or research hospital, but his concern for ordinary people, so obvious to all who knew him, meant that he devoted himself to a local practice in Sawbridgeworth in Hertfordshire. Not only was he their doctor, but locally he was a well-known figure, on first name terms with a host of the inhabitants, who regarded him with real affection.

Only those who knew him well realised how much his family meant to him - they were the rock on which all his activities were based, and to his wife, son and daughter-in-law we send our heartfelt sympathy. The funeral, at the beginning of October, was a private one, but a Memorial Service was held on 19 October at the village church of High Wych. It was a moving occasion, made the more so by the incredible number who attended - rarely can that village church have seen such a congregation, and outside in the churchyard loudspeakers relayed the service to over a hundred people unable to get in the church - full to overflowing. A section of the London Philharmonic Choir sang the *Ave Verum* of both Mozart and Elgar, and two pieces by Vaughan Williams were played on the organ. At the end the organ played the Angel's Farewell from *Gerontius*. The Society was represented by the present editor and his wife, and by myself.

On a personal level I shall miss Gareth greatly, but count it a blessing that I knew him. To be with Gareth was to share in his good humour and with his enthusiasms. It was hard ever to be cast down when you were in his company, and if I have an abiding memory it is of his laughter, especially when he was pricking the balloon of pomposity and pretension. Gareth, you are greatly missed, but you will ever be in our memory.

Ronald Taylor

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TWO NEW INITIATIVES WITH YOUNG PEOPLE

For some years the Society has considered the problem of making Elgar more widely known to young people, especially in the music colleges of the country. To be honest, there is so far little to show for all this deliberation, but recently there have been a few rays of hope. First, the imaginative Elgar Performance Week involved over twenty schools in Hereford & Worcester (see the report below by the Director of the Birthplace Appeal). Second, a link has been made with the prestigious Chetham's School of Music in Manchester through the good offices of John Kelly, London Branch Treasurer. And third, an initiative at the Royal College of Music - of all places! - by a member who wishes to remain anonymous. I am certain that all

this will be of interest to members, and the people concerned have written about the projects in greater detail.

* * *

Alert members of the Society watching the BBC's "Young Musician of the Year" competitions in recent times may have noted that many of the finalists in various classes have been pupils of Chetham's School of Music, Manchester.

Chetham's (pronounced Cheet-hams, nickname 'Chets') was established in 1653 and was refounded as a specialist school of music in 1969. It still operates out of the original fifteenth-century buildings, and it is surprising to find such an establishment right in the centre of Manchester. It also houses the oldest public library in continuous use in the country.

In 1980 Chetham's was recognised by central government as part of the national pattern of schooling and from that time all entrants to the School have been entitled to fee-remission from the Department of Education and Science. Chetham's is the only specialist music school of its kind and size in Britain, with 265 students aged between seven and eighteen years, from all areas of the United Kingdom. Admission is by rigorous audition and studies include orchestral instruments, guitar, keyboard, voice and composition. 63% of pupils go on to music colleges, and 23% to universities.

In November Andrew Neill, John Kelly and Arthur Reynolds of the London Branch visited Chetham's at the invitation of the Headmaster, Rev Peter Hullah. Discussions centred on the exciting possibility of the Elgar Society and/or its Branches participating in some way with the activities of the School and in helping to bring a higher profile to Elgar's music within this unique environment. After lunch the party was joined by several members from the North West and Yorkshire branches at a public performance of music by Loeillet, Vivaldi and Telemann, and it was very moving to experience at first hand the quality of musicianship possessed by these young people. There followed a tour of the School and the unique library.

Discussions are at an early stage, but both School and Society are hopeful that "something will happen", and there is considerable goodwill and enthusiasm. For many years the Society has tried to reach out to younger people, but with limited success : now there is a special opportunity which must surely be seized and developed.

No firm plans have been laid, either by the School or the Society, but it seems likely that initially there could be support of the School's performance of Elgar's *Violin Concerto* at the Royal Northern College of Music on 18 February, when the soloist will be Ruth Williams, a seventeen-year-old pupil. Possibly a presentation on Elgar will be given to the members of the orchestra before rehearsals begin, and a pre-performance talk might be arranged. Some limited financial support from the Branches might be feasible. At this point it is not possible to say more, but it was felt that members would wish to know of these stirring developments and that those within travelling distance of Manchester on 18 February would wish to be present

at the concert. Any member having connections - past or present - with the School or its pupils, is invited to contact the Society's Chairman or either of the other two London members mentioned.

John Kelly

* * *

One of the Society's members has instituted 'The Elgar Memorial Prize' for composition at the Royal College of Music. Intended as an appreciation of music and especially that of Elgar, the Prize is to be awarded annually to the student who, in the opinion of the Director, shall have shown the most promise as composer of an original work in that year. There is provision for accumulation from years when it is considered that there is no composition in respect of which the Prize should be awarded so that, from time to time, the accumulation can be used for the commissioning of a new composition by a composer.

The member has said that he is well aware that Elgar himself would probably (rightly) say that his music is his memorial, and also of the irony that an almost entirely self-taught composer should be commemorated at one of the country's leading musical establishments! But the idea is to provide encouragement for talented young musicians in the field of composition and by naming the Prize after this country's greatest composer, giving them the highest possible example, thereby challenging them to offer their own best efforts.

In conjunction with the cash part of the Prize the winners of it receive a sculpted head of Elgar by the Worcester artist and sculptor, Victor Heyfron, and as a permanent mark of the Prize there is a life-sized head of Elgar (also by Mr Heyfron) which is now displayed at the RCM.

If, as a result of Elgar being now commemorated at the RCM in this way, future students decide to study his music in greater depth this will be a bonus so far as our member is concerned. Further, if such students' own musical vocabulary is enriched by such study then surely music itself can only benefit as a result.

There is evidence in Elgar's correspondence that, in spite of many demands on him, he would take time to offer encouragement and advice to the young aspiring composer, for instance, the 23-year-old Robert Elkin who submitted some piano pieces to him for his comments. In his letter of 6 March 1920 Elgar, after expressing pleasure at seeing "...the son of a valued friend entering the field" (ie. of composition), and wishing him well, proceeds to give him some practical advice with illustrations (J.N.Moore,*Letters of a Lifetime*, pp.333/4). It is hoped that the Prize will be an extension of that encouragement to young composers of succeeding generations.

BIRTHPLACE NEWS

We were very pleased to welcome Richard Hickox who had come hotfoot from conducting *The Dream of Gerontius* in Tokyo, by all accounts a very well-supported and acclaimed performance. Mr Hickox left for a recording session in Tewkesbury.

The writer had the honour of an invitation to address the Broadheath Women's Institute on the occasion of their 70th anniversary celebration. He was shown part of the group's archive which included minutes approved and signed by Carice Elgar Blake during the period she was living at Wood End.

Members will be interested to know that a copy transcript of the diaries of Edward, Alice and Carice are now available for inspection at the Birthplace, Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore having generously made his available to the Foundation for copying.

The writer was happy to discover that plans by the Birmingham Midland Institute to arrange an Elgar lecture and violin recital during the BBC Orchestras' festival of Elgar's music at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham were in no way frustrated by the later decision at a different level to hold the European Summit Meeting on the same day. Thus the statesmaen assembled on Birmingham's Elgar Day, and festival posters announcing "Elgar Scores for Birmingham" competed with notices about the Summit, while the faithful enjoyed a fascinating lecture by Dr Percy Young on the influence of Elgar's early religious music on his mature works, with occasional forays to the keyboard, and a fine performance of the *Violin Sonata* by Louis Carus.

A J Bennett

ELGAR'S BIRTHPLACE

OPENING HOURS

1 May - 30 September – 10.30 am - 6.00 pm
1 October - 15 January – 1.30 pm - 4.30 pm
16 January - 15 February – CLOSED
16 February - 30 April – 1.30 pm - 4.30 pm

CLOSED ON WEDNESDAYS THROUGHOUT THE YEAR

Elgar's Birthplace, Crown East Lane,
Lower Broadheath, Worcester WR2 6 RH
Telephone : Cotheridge (0905) 333224

Parties by arrangement with the Curator

ELGAR BIRTHPLACE APPEAL

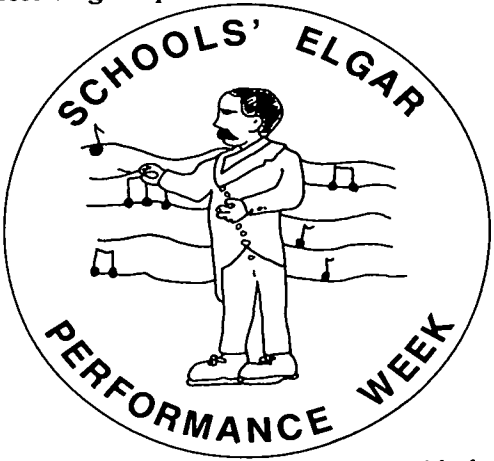
Progress Report by the Appeal Director, December 1992

Since the Society's AGM we have had two major events - a memorable performance of *The Kingdom* in Worcester Cathedral on 17 October; and the Schools' Elgar Performance Week in Hereford and Worcester from 9 - 16 November.

The latter was a splendid event : more than twenty schools gave concerts, most of them during the specified week, but two are still to come, so I cannot yet say what the financial result will be. I can say - and I know that Christopher Polyblank the Director of Music feels this too - that if these performances reflect the standard of music in our schools we should feel very proud. I only wish I could have been to every concert; I managed to get to five, and each one was different but equally enjoyable, and they had all been thought out and presented with great imagination and enthusiasm as well as considerable talent.

We shall all have the chance to hear some of the items again, as we are putting on a Schools' Concert at the Malvern Festival, to be held at the Elgar Hall, Winter Gardens on Monday 24 May at 7.00 pm. We are inviting all the Schools who gave a concert to take part, and as the programme will range from movements from the "Shed" Wind Quintets to Elgar's setting of *Ave Verum* and his *Romance* for Bassoon and Orchestra, it can be seen what a feast of young music-making we have been privileged to enjoy.

The Week also included a Seminar at the Elgar Hall attended by 300 schoolchildren during the day, with another session that evening for the grown-ups! Michael Kennedy gave a lecture on "A Portrait of Elgar", followed by unique archive films collated and shown by John Huntley and including films of Elgar at Three Choirs' Festivals in 1929, 1930 and 1932, and recording *Pomp & Circumstance March no.1* at Abbey Road Studios, plus many other fascinating old films of Elgar's contemporaries and interpreters. After an interval we had a performance of the *Violin Sonata* given by Louis Carus and Jill Polyblank. The Seminars were introduced by Guy Woolfenden and Andrew Neill respectively, and we were most grateful to them and to all who took part for making it a memorable day.

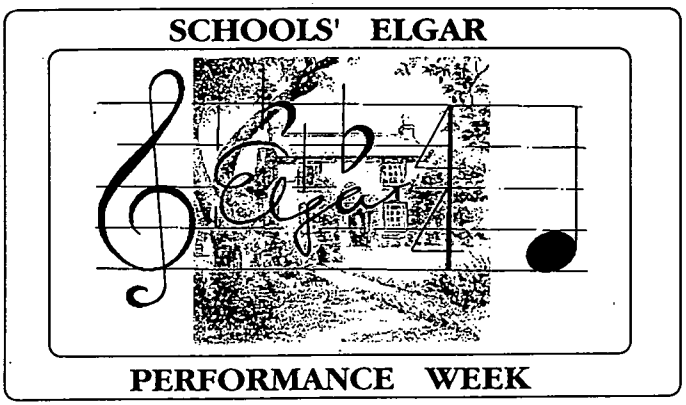


The main event for 1993 will be the *Wand of Youth* concert at the Royal Albert Hall on Monday 21 June, further details of which will be published in the New Year, but we hope to make this a Prom-style event with the Arena open to students at a special price. We are also hoping to start building at the

Birthplace as soon as possible, and are approaching suitable Trusts and Companies with the aim of raising a further 100,000 within the next three months - either in cash or by covenant or Giftaid, or indeed by gifts in-kind of building materials or equipment.

Diana Quinney

Guy Woolfenden, RSC Musical Director, and Michael Kennedy sign autographs for competition winners (from left) Joanna Jay from Lawnside, Malvern, winner of the poster competition; Gregory Collings from Aston Fields, Bromsgrove; and Sally Tyler, Nunnery Wood High, Worcester, winners of the competition to design a logo for the Elgar seminar programme. (Photograph courtesy Worcester Evening News). Sally's logo appears below; Gregory's is on the previous page.



RANDOM RAMBLINGS...

It has been pointed out that Sir Yehudi's description of himself at the EMI launch as "the last surviving relic" of those who worked with Elgar is not quite accurate, as Herbert Sumsion is happily still composing and arranging at his home near Gloucester, in which city he was of course cathedral organist from 1928 to 1967. Dr Sumsion is one of our Vice-Presidents, and celebrates his ninety-fourth birthday this year. His recording of the Elgar *Organ Sonata* remains for many the one by which all others must be judged.

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On 24 October the city of Liverpool paid tribute to Sir Charles Groves with a Memorial Service at the Cathedral in the afternoon (during which Elgar's *Serenade for Strings* was played), and a concert at the Philharmonic Hall in the evening given by the city's choir and orchestra, conducted by Andrew Davis (in the absence of Vernon Handley who was indisposed).

In 1981, whilst in Holland to conduct *The Music Makers*, Sir Charles gave an interview to one of our Dutch members, Wout Hoogendijk. Apparently Sir Charles never met Elgar, but saw him conduct *The Apostles* at Croydon in 1933, and during the time he accompanied the Paddington Station Choral Society learnt a lot about him from the conductor, Billy Reed. Sir Charles concluded : "Elgar is absolutely unique. A self-taught man, he writes for the orchestra with such mastery, it is a miracle! He never had to alter a note after the first performance, whereas when I conduct a work of a young composer these days, he does nothing but alter. Fortunately, Elgar is more and more appreciated by younger people all over the world".

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The Labour MP for Bradford West has complained about the inclusion of *Land of Hope and Glory* in a charity concert held in that city, suggesting rather the use of Afro-Caribbean or Asian tunes to reflect the "multi-cultural aspects" of Bradford. The show's organiser proceeded, unrepentant. "Everyone loves *Land of Hope and Glory*", he said; and despite post-Maastricht uncertainties, he seems to be right. Recently Jacques Delors was entertained by it, which reminded the musicologist John Lade that in 1989 his grandson had sung it in a choir at a celebration in Paris to mark the bicentenary of the storming of the Bastille, and new words had been written appropriate for the occasion. But surely the most interesting recent performance took place on 27 June in Dresden, when the Dresden Philharmonic and the Staatskapelle played in the open air in Theaterplatz, in aid of the Krakow Philharmonic whose concert-hall had perished in a fire. It was only the third time in a hundred years that the two orchestras had performed together, and the final item in a light programme of Johann Strauss, Bizet, Schubert and others was "Militärmarsch Nr.1 aus Pomp & Circumstance". I understand it was given a magnificent performance and was received with great enthusiasm by a crowd of twenty thousand.

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Another musicologist, Fritz Spiegl, has been writing about Elgar in his fascinating column "Wordplay" in the *Daily Telegraph*. He pointed out that Elgar did not invent the name "Somniferous" for the fourth *Promenade* for wind quintet, but it is a word used by Dickens and others to describe the sleep-inducing effects of alcohol. Mr Spiegl then turned to the word *Cockaigne*, which "relates to luxuriously indolent...living". The Oxford English Dictionary traces its origin to cooking and eating, from the French *coquaigne*, Italian *cuccagna*, and German *Küche* and *Kuchen*. I'm not sure if Mr Spiegl realises, but Elgar knew of this source, as his notes show (see Moore, *A Creative Life*, p.342), and this is probably why he described the overture to Jaeger as "stout and steaky".

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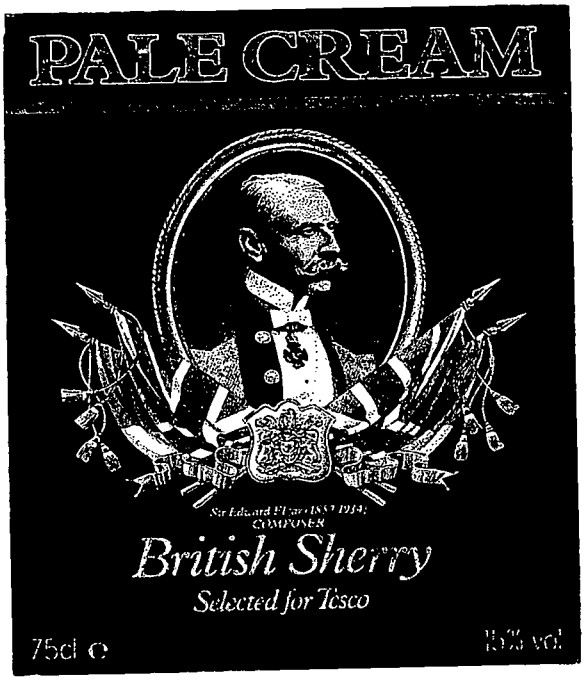
From stout to sherry : the supermarket chain Tesco are selling a low price cream sherry with the label as shown below. It is apparently "quite pleasant and good value at its price", according to the member who sent it in (the label that is, not the bottle!) Let us fill ourselves with (not so) costly wine...



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All Elgarians must know the origin of "Nimrod", who in Genesis chapter 10 verse 9

was "the mighty hunter before the Lord"; and "Jaeger" is the German for "hunter". What I hadn't realised was the way the Genesis text continued : "And the beginning of his kingdom was Babel..."(v.10); "...he went out into Assyria and builded Nineveh..."(v.11 : AV margin); "...the same is a great city..."(v.12). Reading the text of *The Music Makers* again it seems clear that O'Shaughnessy must have drawn on this passage; but I wonder if *Elgar* made the connection? I think it's more than likely, in view of his encyclopædic knowledge and the musical tribute to Jaeger which *The Music Makers* enshrines.

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In September came the good news that the first volume of EMI's "The Elgar Edition" had won the "Gramophone" award in the 'Best Historical Recording (non-vocal)' class. This achievement is very gratifying for all concerned, especially the Society and its Chairman. Not only was financial assistance given to the project, but it is arguable that without Andrew Neill's enthusiasm it may never have got off the ground at all. Volume II should be out by the time you read this, and will be reviewed in the May JOURNAL.

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I was fortunate enough to be able to join the London Symphony Chorus for the recording of *Caractacus* (the small stage at the Barbican precludes extra singers from taking part in the concert). During rehearsals of the Invocation in Part II the chorus master Stephen Westrop asked if anyone knew anything about the god Taranis. A slight pause, then one of the tenors caused considerable amusement by pointing out that the name is an anagram of Sinatra! It was interesting to observe the reaction of members of the chorus to the work. There were many who were scarcely able to contain their laughter when we first attempted the final chorus, but very soon the sheer 'singability' of the music completely captivated them. We are now looking forward to *The Light of Life* in January.

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The answer to the question set in the last JOURNAL is G.R.Sinclair, who is the dedicatee of four Elgar works : the *Te Deum & Benedictus* of 1897; the fourth *Pomp & Circumstance* March of 1907; the same year Elgar wrote the part-song *A Christmas Greeting* for Sinclair and the choristers of Hereford Cathedral; and of course he is "pictured within" the *Variations*. Elgar dedicated a number of works to the Three Choirs' organists : Sinclair's successor Percy Hull was given the fifth *Pomp & Circumstance*, and the part-song *Serenade*; Hugh Blair received *The Black Knight*, and *Cantique* for organ; Lee Williams the first *Wand of Youth* Suite; and Ivor Atkins the third *Pomp & Circumstance* March. Oddly enough he never dedicated anything to Brewer.

While on the subject of Brewer and the Three Choirs, I was less than enthusiastic about the seating in Gloucester Cathedral this year. Ronald Taylor (who accompanied me) and I are not much more than average build, yet the seats in the

side aisle were not only hard but there was virtually no room to spare either to the front or the side. We were only able to stay for *Emmaus* (the first item), but I guess that a full programme for someone with long legs would have been purgatorial. Surely a little more comfort is possible these days?

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A familiar complaint which I inherited from my predecessor is lack of notice of concerts and other events. This session we have missed a Bristol University Dayschool (mostly on *Gerontius*) at Cheltenham, an *Apostles* in Oxford, and a *Music Makers* in Gloucester. I am most grateful to those members who do send me details, but please do *NOT* assume that other people will let me know. And of course please attend any concert you can : today more than ever concert promoters are compiling programmes that they hope will bring in large audiences, and future Elgar concerts may well depend on good houses now.

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The new radio station Classic FM began in September. The decision to employ as presenters those with proven ability to "present" rather than musical knowledge led to howlers early on; for instance, works by 'Durufle' (to rhyme with "shoe-ful") and 'Verdi' (to rhyme with "birdie") were played, conducted by such as 'Arturio [sic] Toscanini'. Things have gradually improved, and I have to say that the station does appeal to several of my friends for whom Radio 3 is rather daunting (still). I am disappointed at the relative lack of British music - at the times I have listened, anyway.

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The 1993 Three Choirs' Festival will take place at Worcester on 21 - 28 August. Elgar works include *Cockaigne*, the *Introduction & Allegro*, the *Violin Concerto*, and most notable of all, *The Spirit of England*, receiving its Three Choirs' première on 27 August. The third movement, "For the Fallen" received several performances under Elgar in the 1920s and 30s, but the work has never been given in its entirety. Full details and booking forms will be available in March and can be obtained from the Festival Secretary, 10 College Green, Worcester WR1 2LH.

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1993 sees the delayed publication of *Edward Elgar : Music and Literature*, edited by Raymond Monk, who has kindly furnished me with details of other forthcoming books and recordings that will be of interest to members. Two similar books which will greatly help scholars are Christopher Kent's *Elgar Research Guide* (520 pages!); and Paul Wilson's *An Elgar Source Book*, this last from Scolar who are also bringing out Percy Young's *Dream of Gerontius: A Dual Inspiration*, a much-extended version of his A.T.Shaw lecture of a few years back. From Dent comes Robert Anderson's *Elgar* in the "Master Musicians" series (the third such volume, following W.H.Reed and Ian Parrott). Finally, a new edition of Dora Powell's *Edward Elgar:*

Memories of a Variation, with comments by Claud Powell, and an Appendix by Jerrold Northrop Moore.

This year also sees two new recordings of *The Dream of Gerontius* and three of the *Violin Concerto*, plus new recordings of the symphonies and the *Cello Concerto*. Barbirolli's EMI recordings of the symphonies are being transferred to CD, as is Groves' version of *The Light of Life*. Richard Hickox will also be recording that, plus of course *Caractacus*. And last but not least, May sees the third and final volume of "The Elgar Edition".

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The Society's International Sub-Committee is at present being re-constituted, and there is a vacancy for an additional committee member. Enthusiasm and, if possible, a facility for languages, plus experience, knowledge of or contacts in musical institutions overseas would be distinct assets. Please contact Ian Lace at 8 Park Court, Church Road, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH16 3NX.

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Major changes have recently taken place in the leadership of the Elgar Foundation. Mr Tim Waterstone, founder of the chain of bookshops bearing his name, is the new Chairman; and Mr Laurie Watt - a Society member - Vice-Chairman. We wish these gentlemen well in their new posts, and look forward to working in harmony with them and the Foundation in the Elgarian cause.

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There was a capacity audience at Imperial College on 28 November to hear Dr Vernon Handley speak on the subject of "Conducting Elgar's Oratorios". If this meant that the Branch Secretary spent much time in trying to reconcile "tea numbers", and that one well-known erstwhile National Officer perched initially on the floor, it was assuredly in a good cause!

Despite recent illness, Dr Handley was in absolutely prime form. With a fund of anecdotes, great wit, boundless energy and total command of his subject he let an entranced audience into the tricks of the trade of rehearsing orchestras and choruses. Points of differing interpretation were considered and shown very often to be matters of "routine" and "bad habit". Above all Dr Handley emphasised the importance of being true to the score. Readily discernible behind all the laughter - when was there so much of this at one of our meetings? - was Dr Handley's integrity and commitment. The afternoon proved both witty and profound.

The event was made possible by the bequest received by London Branch in the Will of the late Mike Richards (see JOURNAL May 1992 p.25). It was an occasion which he would have relished and thus totally appropriate.

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Advance notice : the Society's Annual General Meeting for 1993 will be held on Saturday 5 June at 2.30 pm at the Huntingdon Hall in Worcester. This will be followed by tea, and then at 5.00 pm the A.T.Shaw Memorial Lecture.

The Treasurer wishes to remind members that their 1993 subscriptions became due on 1 January. Cheques for £10-00 should be sent to him at the address printed on the back cover. Members with bank standing orders are requested to ensure that these have been adjusted to take account of the new subscription rate.

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Late news from America : the New York Philharmonic, in its 150th year, will feature three concerts in which Pinchas Zukerman will play the *Violin Concerto* (with the conductor Leonard Slatkin). The dates are 30 April and 1 and 4 May.

DATES FOR YOUR DIARY

8 January	Enigma Variations *RSO/Glover*	Usher Hall Edinburgh
9 January	Repeat of the above concert	Royal Concert Hall Glasgow
10 January	In the South *LSO/Hickox*	Barbican Hall London
16 January	Serenade for Strings *London Chamber O*	Queen Elizabeth hall South Bank
24 January	Banner of St.George *Epsom Coll.Chor.Soc*	Epsom College 7.45 pm
28 January	Introduction & Allegro *Acad.St.Martin's/I.Brown*	Queen Elizabeth Hall South Bank
31 January	The Light of Life *Soloists, Lond.Sym.Ch & O/Hickox*	Barbican Hall London
6 February	Introduction & Allegro *Polish Ch.o/Stanienda*	Assembly Rooms Derby
18 February	Violin Concerto (see article for details)	Royal Northern Coll. Manchester
21 February	Cockaigne *LPO/Mehta*	Royal Festival Hall South Bank

24 February	Enigma Variations *Bournemouth SO/Hickox*	Wessex Hall, Poole 7.30 pm
26 February	Repeat of the above concert	Great Hall Exeter University
12 March	Introduction & Allegro, Elegy *Bournemouth Sinf/R.Studt*	Great Hall Exeter University
12 March	The Kingdom *H.Field,C.Watkinson,M.Davies,J.Howard/ RSO & Ch/O.A.Hughes*	Usher Hall Edinburgh
13 March	Repeat of the above concert	Royal Concert Hall Glasgow
22 March	Sea Pictures *Penelope Walker/YMSO/J.Blair*	Royal Festival Hall South Bank
27 March	The Apostles *Soloists/Ashtead Ch.Soc*	Dorking Halls 7.30 pm
28 March	Symphony no.1 *Guildford PO/Brian Wright*	Civic Hall Guildford 3.00 pm
17 April	Coronation Ode *D.Charlesworth,Y.Burnett,P.Kerr,D.Stephenson/ Leith Hill Fest.Ch/Southern Pro Musica/Llewellyn*	Dorking Halls 7.30 pm
17 April	The Dream of Gerontius *P.Bardon,E.Barham,J.Koc/Ditchling Ch.Soc/Guildford PO/J.Canetty-Clarke*	Worth Abbey nr.Crawley
8 May	In the South *Rutland Sinf/Collett*	Festival Hall Corby
8 May	The Dream of Gerontius *Tonbridge Ch.Soc, Penshurst Ch.Soc*	Rochester Cathedral 8.00 pm
21 May	Cello Concerto *Lowri Blake/LPO/Bamert*	Royal Festival Hall South Bank
2 June	The Black Knight *Elgar Chorale & O/D.Hunt*	Worcester Cathedral 7.30 pm

CONCERT REVIEWS

Emmaus, by A.Herbert Brewer, orchestrated by Elgar

Given in Gloucester Cathedral on 28 August by Alison Hargan (soprano), John Mitchinson (tenor), Three Choirs Festival Chorus, Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by John Sanders.

Most Elgarians will be familiar with the story of *Emmaus*; how in 1901 Elgar came to the aid of his friend Brewer who because of legal wrangling about the libretto copyright was left with almost no time to orchestrate the work before its scheduled première at the Three Choirs' Festival that year. The orchestration was completed by Elgar in eleven days, the première was a success, and Brewer was eternally grateful. However, *Emmaus* never really caught on, despite a few early performances, and it has probably not been given since August 1929 when the BBC broadcast it from Birmingham (Brewer's son Charles worked for the BBC and was the announcer for the broadcast). Elgar's orchestration remained missing presumed lost until a couple of years ago when Anthony Boden discovered it in the basement of Gloucester City Library.

Emmaus is a short (half hour) sacred cantata telling the story related in Luke 24 of how the risen Jesus appears on the road to Emmaus to two of his followers who initially fail to recognise Him. Only when they invite Him in and He breaks the bread do they recognise Him. It is a pity that Brewer used none of the biblical text (one of the most telling narrative passages in the whole Bible), or even a mixture of scripture and libretto (as in Elgar's *The Light of Life*). Joseph Bennett's text is generally dire, even by the standards of the time. It is also quite short, and this necessitates much unconvincing repetition of words. Furthermore the two soloists are not given 'roles' to sing, but share the story-telling with the chorus, so that the listener is not really drawn in and involved in the drama.

The music is a different matter. *Emmaus* shows that Brewer is on a different plane from the run-of-the-mill cathedral organists who churned out festival fare that was instantly forgettable. There is an evident debt to Stainer and Sullivan as one might expect, but of greater interest is the influence of Wagner - still a ne'er-do-well in the eyes of many church musicians in 1901. The orchestral opening of no.9 ("Spread is the humble board") is positively Parsifalian, and I wonder whether the Eucharistic link between the Breaking of the Bread (in *Emmaus*) and the Grail was done consciously or not. Then there is the occasional hint of one E.Elgar; for instance, at the words "two travellers, stepping slow, towards Emmaus pass", sung by tenors and basses in thirds against a string accompaniment on a unison F♯, very similar to a passage in the "Gudrun" scene from *King Olaf*.

Those hoping for an orchestral score comparable to *Gerontius* or *The Apostles* will be disappointed. *Emmaus* is obviously on a much more modest scale, and Elgar's scoring is appropriately restrained : as he told Jaeger; "I have *not* made what *I* call an elaborate score", and so the singers are never overwhelmed by orchestral sound. The work which springs most readily to mind by way of comparison is *The Light of Life*.

Emmaus was given a sympathetic performance by the combined forces under John Sanders, the current Gloucester organist. The choral and orchestral ensemble was not always as one might have wished, but that can be put down to the perennial curse of the Three Choirs - lack of rehearsal time. One hopes that it will not be another sixty years before *Emmaus* is heard again. Maybe Chandos or Hyperion could be persuaded to record it : Ivor Atkins' *Hymn of Faith* - another Three Choirs' commission with Elgarian connections - would make an admirable companion piece.

The Editor

Caractacus, Op.35.
Barbican Hall, London, 25 October 1992.

Judith Howarth (soprano), Arthur Davies (tenor), David Wilson-Johnson, Stephen Roberts, Alistair Miles (basses), London Symphony Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Richard Hickox.

Caractacus is for me a work of special affection, recalling as so much of Elgar's music does happy days and fond nostalgia. I remember attending the first modern revival (albeit with an altered text) at a Cheltenham Festival well over twenty years ago. Recordings of "The Sword Song" and "Lament", sung so majestically and movingly by Peter Dawson, thrilled me on a visit to the Birthplace during Alan Webb's tenure; and the "Triumphal March" led out our wedding procession in 1977.

My pleasure this year as London's Branch chairman was enhanced by our being able to arrange a block booking attendance of 73 members and friends, thanks to the invaluable assistance of our secretary David Bury. Our efforts were justified and well rewarded : the Barbican Hall was virtually full, and, hearing the final applause which broke like waves on the island of the orchestra, the audience were obviously enthusiasts for and lovers of Elgar's music.

It is possible to smile at the text, even occasionally feel embarrassed by it, but nothing can detract from the magical robe of many colours with which Elgar vested those words. The score is uneven; but Richard Hickox, his soloists and superb chorus, underpinned by a radiant LSO, swept us along with conviction, unravelling a Bayeux-like tapestry of incident, colour and thrilling effect. From the opening - spare and bleak and subtly threatening - to the sunset glow of a radiant E♭ Epilogue, we were captured by a revelatory performance of real power and truth : a performance which blew away cobwebs and stripped the treacly varnish of Victorian sentimentality from what could be seen afresh as a work of youthful vigour and passion.

We were well served by the soloists who, it must be admitted, have to flesh out somewhat two-dimensional stock theatrical figures. A great highlight for me at any performance is the love duet between Eigen and Orbin, filled as it is with a fresh lyric charm and a sweep to its climax which bears very favourable comparison to my mind with mid-period Verdi, no mean model. As in so much of Elgar's vocal music, here is the sense of unstaged opera calling for operatic voices, and we were not denied these, in Judith Howarth and Arthur Davies especially.

If you did not attend the concert or hear it on Radio Three, do not despair! This fine cast, chorus, orchestra, and committed Elgarian conductor have even now recorded the work for release next spring [CHAN 9156-7, coupled with the orchestral version of the *Severn Suite*; due out on 1 February.- Ed.]

I felt at the end of the performance that I could heartily agree with a member of the orchestra who in the interval said to me : "What a discovery! What a joy to perform".

Martin Passande

MUSIC REVIEW

Falstaff, Opus 68; Polonia, Opus 76. Elgar Complete Edition : Volume 33.
Novello, 1992. £79-95 (cloth) : £54-95 (paperback).

From the customary full and thorough documentation of the score some fascinating points emerge about the composition of *Falstaff*.

The first music to be sketched and used in the completed work was part of a theme which does not occur until near the work's end (cue 119), occurs only the once, and is not mentioned, let alone quoted or titled, in Elgar's own lengthy prose analysis. Robert Anderson and Jerrold Northrop Moore recount that two *dolce* bars of this theme first appeared amid sketches for *The Apostles* and a 'Rabelais' ballet, probably in 1903. (They do not mention that Buckley (1904) lists a *Falstaff* overture as being in *MS*). Next the theme can be traced in 1913, when Elgar and Alice Stuart Wortley were guests of Frank Schuster at The Hut. She left first, and that evening he copied the now eight *espressivo* bars to send to her with the words '(Farewell to the Hut) July 1913/ written on Tuesday after you left & now - Good night -'.

In my own now tattered miniature score I years ago wrote 'loyalty' above the theme, taking the suggestion from Tovey's essay where he writes "...and, in another new theme, Falstaff shares in the glow of affectionate loyalty to the new King" (Tovey quotes it in music type) and goes on "This immediately combines in counterpoint with Example 1". Exactly. So often the first germ of Elgar's greatest works seems to be what any logical wise-after-the-event analyst might describe as a *new* counter-melody to the *original* theme. How strangely topsy-turvy creation can be! Listening to this music freshly now I hear more than 'loyalty' in that theme. It has always seemed to me quintessential Elgar, with the alternate tension and release of accented, then resolved, dissonance. 'Farewell' not only to a loved place, a loved companion (The Hut, the Windflower) but in its final context, Falstaff's full hearted but objectively honest farewell to his prince, now to be his king.

The Foreword tells us that the editor of Elgar's own copy of *Henry IV part I* was the Danish scholar Georg Brandes, and that the composer marked this passage to account for the King's rejection of Falstaff :

> The scheme of the whole, indeed, demands that there shall come a moment when the

Prince, who has succeeded to the throne and its attendant responsibilities, shall put on a serious countenance and brandish the thunderbolts of retribution.

The score ended originally at Falstaff's death, bar 1380 (not, as now, bar 1391). Elgar had to finish the piece before leaving for a holiday in Penmaenmawr. He came downstairs at 4 am. Alice made him tea. He finished "his great work". But it was then an *afterthought* to add those *tempo giusto* bars, the curt rhythm, the penultimate hollow chord : "the man of stern reality has triumphed". Two clear facsimiles of the appropriate pages, now in the Fitzwilliam Museum, show the stages.

Falstaff is firmly in the repertory, but the wider value of the Complete Edition lies in its publication of such lesser works as *Polonia*. I for one would not make high claims for the piece, but it is proper that it should be available, handsomely and accurately printed. Corrections to the musical text of Falstaff are minimal, those to *Polonia* are extensive, found largely by checking against the orchestral parts - a full score was published in 1915 by Elkin.

Though an occasional piece, composed at Młynarski's request for a wartime Polish Victims' Relief Fund concert, *Polonia*'s roots go far back. Elgar and Paderewski (to whom it is dedicated) probably met in 1899, and the editors trace the later links between the two composers. It was Paderewski who made the famous crack about Elgar's master being 'Le bon dieu'. Basil Maine recounted that while at Plas Gwyn Elgar came to know a descendant of the Lubienski family - and heard "much of Polish history, thought and feeling". Elgar used two national Polish hymns, and themes from Chopin and Paderewski, each precisely identified here. His dedication on the manuscript full score to Paderewski includes a rather choice French adjective: "avec affection et un espoir inébranlable".

Diana McVeagh

BOOK REVIEWS

Farewell My Youth; and other writings by Arnold Bax
edited by Lewis Foreman. Scolar Press. 192pp. £27-50

I remember this entrancing little book with great affection from my own youth when I was discovering the world of music. For many years it had been eagerly sought after by collectors so it is good to see it available once more especially since it is now enhanced with many new pictures and additional Bax writings.

Farewell My Youth is Arnold Bax's autobiography, published in 1943 when the composer was sixty. In it he describes, in a series of often witty vignettes, his time at the Royal Academy of Music and his teachers and contemporaries there; his discovery of the poetry of Yeats and of the wild and beautiful coastal scenery of Ireland and the influence of its myths and legends on his music; plus his romantic escapades in the Ukraine.

He also describes his meetings with Sibelius, Debussy, d'Indy, Schoenberg - and of course, Elgar. He also includes illuminating observations on Richard Strauss, Vaughan Williams, Moeran, Beecham, and Henry Wood.

Bax makes numerous references to Elgar throughout the book, most notably their meeting at Birchwood in 1901. A shrewd portrait of Alice Elgar, at that time, is followed by the observation that Elgar's appearance was "rather that of a retired army officer turned gentleman farmer, than an eminent and almost morbidly highly strung artist". Bax recalls that Elgar was still sore over the *Gerontius* "fiasco" at Birmingham in the previous autumn and that Elgar had told him that neither the choir nor Richter knew the score. Then, when Bax tried to tell him that the critics had been positive, Elgar snapped - "Critics! My dear boy, what do critics know about anything?"

Bax also relates how Elgar, on his birthday in 1933, presented himself in one of his less attractive moods. Harriet Cohen and Bax were in the Savoy Grill after hearing Toscanini conduct the *Enigma Variations*. When Harriet, of whom Elgar was genuinely fond, rushed up to him to congratulate him on the evening's wonderful music, Elgar rather boorishly turned to his actor friends, spread out his hands in mock mystification and exclaimed, "What are these people talking about?"

Bax also gives us a vivid picture of the tumultuous reception which greeted the première of *Land of Hope and Glory* in the old Queen's Hall on an evening when it was infiltrated by wisps of London fog.

The book contains both prose and poetry writings of Bax (he was also a successful poet writing under the nom de plume of Dermot O'Byrne). The inclusion of Bax's short story, *Ancient Dominions*, with its dramatic setting in an ancient pagan temple on the edge of the sea, gives us an insight into the sort of mythical inspiration that lies at the root of such compositions as *The Garden of Fand*.

Lewis Foreman contributes scholarly notes on the many personalities - mostly musical - that Bax introduces and he includes a valuable introduction which sets Bax's works, in words and music, in the perspective of their times.

A number of irritating typographical errors are the only blemish. Highly recommended.

Ian Lace

C.Hubert H.Parry : His Life and Music, by Jeremy Dibble *(O.U.P, £45)*

The high price of Dr Dibble's biography of Hubert Parry might have stood between me and a very good read, had I not chanced to hear "Hubert Parry at Highnam", the lecture/recital led by Dibble that proved to be one of the highlights of last year's Three Choirs' Festival. Elgarians will find this book enlightening for at least three reasons : first, for the penetrating glimpse into the musical establishment to which Parry enjoyed privileged access; second, for the perspective Parry's struggles lends

to Elgar's struggles; third, for Parry's responses to first performances of Elgar's works.

Dibble has extracted judiciously from voluminous primary-source material left by Parry and his contemporaries to give us an insider's look at the reach of Europe's musical society that lay beyond Elgar's grasp, partly because he was nearly two decades younger than Parry, partly because he emerged into Parry's world of towering musical figures relatively late in life, and partly because he set himself against the musicians of academe who counted Parry among their leaders. No wonder : during Elgar's youth, Parry experienced the joys of fatherhood as a founder of The Royal College of Music, only to watch helplessly when his *enfant cheri* grew up to face accusations of establishmentarian condescension by the time Mr Elgar had become Sir Edward. Given the hare-versus-tortoise disparities of background and outlook between the two composers, the unfaltering friendship initiated by Parry and maintained by Elgar says something noble about both men.

So do the contrasts between the difficulties each man had to overcome. Suppose Elgar's crucially stalwart mother had died when Elgar was twelve days old? Suppose Elgar had been born into a milieu that polarised music-making into the pastime of the dilettante and the full-time trade of people beneath them in birth? Suppose Elgar had devoted himself to a wife who did not share her husband's passion for music and "developed valetudinarian tendencies designed effectively to divide his loyalty between her and his work"? Any one of these suppositions might have proved sufficient to fetter Elgar's genius. That Parry contended with them all and accomplished what he did is a remarkable tale of triumph over adversity. I was left with the view that perhaps Elgar's struggles served to prune his genius to florescence whereas Parry's struggles left his hypothetical genius permanently stricken at the roots.

Parry's responses to first performances of Elgar's music are both helpful and disappointing. They are helpful because they offer us an intelligent witness to such moments as Richter's rehearsals for the ill-fated first performance of *The Dream of Gerontius*, that left too little time to rehearse *De Profundis*, Parry's new work that appeared on the same programme. They are disappointing, however, because most of them appear to lurch between ecstasy and catalepsy. From the *Enigma Variations* onwards Parry's view of Elgar's orchestral works seems uniformly laudatory. Yet Parry's pathological antipathy to organised religion prevented him from taking in the towering sonorities of *Gerontius*, even after the work had taken its place among the staples of the Three Choirs' Festival repertoire.

After hearing the first performance of *The Spirit of England* Parry dismissed the work as sentimental - a bizarre reaction from the composer who gave us *Jerusalem* in 1916. Consider the response of Ernest Newman, a scourge of sentimentality in music if ever there was one. Newman's *Birmingham Post* review of that same first performance sums up *The Spirit of England* as "a work of passionate sincerity and a beauty that is at times touching, thrilling and consoling...It takes a lifetime of incessant practice to attain a touch at once so light and so sure as this".

Perhaps Elgar's steadfast affection for Hubert Parry was tinctured with a wistful

perception that the eclipse of his standing as a composer over Parry's was as unintentional as it was unstoppable. When the much-mourned composer died in 1918 Newman penned a devastating assessment, summing up Parry as "the composer who never was". Shaw twisted the knife of injustice further by castigating Parry as a ringleader of the alleged cabal of academic Elgarophobes. But Elgar never failed to stress his view of Parry's importance as a music-maker and vigorously defended his friend as an academician who bravely stood apart from the ranks of university critics allegedly ranged against him.

Sadly, even Elgar's good intentions inadvertently reduced Parry's achievement. An admirer of *Jerusalem*, Elgar tossed off a reorchestration for the 1922 Leeds Festival. Dibble tells us with a heavy heart that from thenceforward Parry's arrangement was discarded in favour of Elgar's.

This book's dust jacket proclaims that Dr Dibble is presently at work on "a major study of Sir Charles Villiers Stanford". Those parts of *Parry* that chart the relationship between the two Royal College colleagues sketch a pattern that will be familiar to Elgarians : in the beginning affectionate support; in the middle sulphurous conflict; in the end unfulfilled reconciliation attempts. Rumour has it that OUP is pressing Dibble to compress his Stanford study into a length that can be sold at a more attractive price than *Parry*. What a pity it would be if considerations of space and price prevent the full unravelling of Stanford's maniacal character, mysteries we glimpse in Jeremy Dibble's generally admirable tribute to C.Hubert H.Parry.

Arthur S.Reynolds

Three Choirs : A history of the Festival, by Anthony Boden *(Alan Sutton, £20)*

There have been histories of the Three Choirs before; the first, by Daniel Lysons as long ago as 1812, the most recent by Watkins Shaw in 1954. Anthony Boden's book, which brings the Festival up to date (Hereford 1991) is a model of its kind. The author, who is secretary of the Gloucester Three Choirs, is obviously a devotee, and has undertaken a prodigious amount of research, not least on the origins of the Festival - a subject which has confounded previous historians. He has unearthed new evidence which takes some sort of collaboration between Gloucester and Worcester back to the 1660s but admits that a definitive starting date is not possible, except to say that it was before 1720.

Anything which has lasted as long as the Three Choirs' Festival is bound to have an interest beyond the scope of its immediate terms of reference (ie. music); for it must reflect, to a greater or lesser degree, the social and historical changes which have taken place during that time. Here is the real strength and appeal of Mr Boden's book, for he has sought to give the Festival a more human face by filling out the characters which heretofore have been largely names. He has also made his subject more interesting by avoiding an unremitting chronological plod through the last two and a half centuries, and by including considerable contemporary comment and pertinent anecdotes. I suspect that like me most prospective readers will be less interested in the first hundred and fifty years than in the last hundred, and the early

history is made more accessible by taking a more thematic approach to it; so that the financial problems of the stewards, the often uneasy relationship between the musical and clerical staff of the cathedrals, the difficulties in dealing with performers, and other issues are all given a broad perspective.

The role played by Elgar in the Three Choirs is dealt with at length; the orchestration of *Emmaus*, the first (private) performance of the *Violin Concerto* at Gloucester in 1910, and the inter-war years when he was *the* personality of the Festival. The reader will discover many little gems : like the performance of *Elijah* at Gloucester in 1904, either side of lunch. In Part II the second soprano part was sung by a fourteen-year-old chorister named Ivor Gurney, who was "hauled down" to sing when Madame Sobrino "lingered too long over the decanter" at the Bell Hotel. The most recent years are enlivened by personal reminiscences of leading performers, many of whom are happily still with us.

The book bears witness to a certain amount of haste (no doubt to be ready for the Gloucester Festival last year). There are some bad spelling errors which should have been spotted : "reqire", "etherial", "recieve", "symhony", and others. Footnotes are often sadly awry, especially at the end of Chapter 13. Plunket Greene, as so often, acquires a double "t", while Aldeburgh loses its "e"; the 1974 photo captions are wrong; *Belshazzar's Feast* was first performed in 1957, not 1975 (p.199); Douglas Guest retired in 1981 (p.205); and Sumsion was 90 in 1989 (p.236). There are others, including two Elgarian howlers : he composed *Sea Pictures*, not the *Sea Songs* (p.141); and Edward Lloyd did *not* retire "from public life after the Hereford Festival of 1900"(p.90) - though after his performance at Birmingham two or three weeks later, he and probably others no doubt wished he had. (In fact he occasionally came out of retirement - see Gareth Lewis's article in the NEWSLETTER May 1977). I point out these errors not to carp but in the hope that they will be corrected in any further editions, for this fine book deserves to enjoy the greatest possible sales. It not only charts an important part of our musical heritage, but it celebrates something good, something worth preserving. Anthony Boden talks of a "special atmosphere", or a sense of "communion", of something indefinable which "binds all together". I well remember my first Three Choirs - at Hereford in 1973, when after a truly memorable performance of *The Apostles* on the final evening, we adjourned to the Festival Club at the Shire Hall and, suitably lubricated, began some impromptu singing; snatches of works performed earlier in the week, folk songs, hymn tunes. Some of the soloists joined in, and I stood in a group of "tenors" as we sang "O Thou who camest from above" to, appropriately, S.S.Wesley's "Hereford". The memory of David Johnston singing the sublime tenor line in that superb tune will remain with me always. The place of the Three Choirs Festival in the musical life of the nation may not be what it was; looking at the list of newly-commissioned choral works over the last forty years, only *Hodie* has entered the repertoire, but that surely reflects the decline which has taken place in choral singing during that time. The Three Choirs can count itself fortunate in possessing such a persuasive advocate as Mr Boden, for while he is not uncritical of certain aspects, he is totally committed to its continuing health and success. Long may it prosper!

The Editor

The Malvern Hills; Travels through Elgar Country, by Archie Miles.
with a Foreword by Sir David Willcocks. Pavilion, 1992. £14-99.
Available in paperback from 18 March, price £7-99.

I suspect that this book of well over a hundred beautiful coloured photographs will be immensely popular among members. The Malvern Hills and the adjacent parts of the Three Choirs counties have a unique place in Elgarians' affections, and there must be many for whom a visit to this area gave a whole new dimension to their love and appreciation of Elgar's music. The popularity of talks to branches which include slide shows of the Hills testifies to this.

However, this is *not* a pictorial biography of the composer. As Archie Miles says in his Introduction, "I have not attempted to map out the finest details of Elgar's life, homes, work places, and so on, but to seek the essence of the landscape which fired the composer's inspiration". Rather it is a circular tour, beginning at Upton-on-Severn, and going north up the River Severn (via Kempsey) to Worcester. There are views of the Birthplace, Claines churchyard, and a detail from the Memorial Window in the Cathedral. Then follows a section on the Teme Valley, an area which was always dear to Elgar. The route then turns south through such places as Alfrick, Suckley, and Cradley, picturesque villages which must have changed little in appearance since Elgar cycled through them nearly a century ago. And all the time we are given tantalizing, distant views of the Hills themselves. The final section deals with the Hills, and includes some beautiful photography, which must have taken a great deal of time and patience to capture. Miles writes : "For me, the best times to be on these heights are at dawn and dusk. The peace, the solitude and the wondrous quality of light give me the kind of natural euphoria that must surely be akin to those moments from which Elgar drew his own inspiration". Everyone who knows this region will have their own special memories and vistas, and is sure to find new delights among the more familiar ones. My own favourite is not one of the dramatic ones; a view north-westwards from the Hills towards Birchwood during May, surely the best time of all to experience this magical countryside.

The Editor

RECORD REVIEWS

String Quartet in E minor, Op.83
(coupled with Walton : String Quartet in A minor)

Britten Quartet
Collins Classics 12802

String Quartet in E minor, Op.83
Piano Quintet in A minor, Op.84

Mistry Quartet, with David Owen Norris (piano)
Decca Argo 433 312-2

The Britten Quartet gives a most attractive performance of the Elgar *String Quartet*:

relaxed and flexible, but by no means lacking in fire when appropriate. The perfect tonal blend and unanimity of expression and phrasing well confirms their reputation as perhaps the finest of the remarkable number of young chamber groups to have emerged in recent years. Few recordings have quite captured so successfully the first movement's contrasting moods, where the pervading air of calm mystery is so frequently disturbed by an uneasy restlessness.

I also found their handling of the second movement, marked *piacevole* ("pleasantly"), particularly attractive. It is taken a little more slowly and quietly than by some of their rivals, but the Britten Quartet beautifully catches the underlying, and typically Elgarian spirit of gentle wistfulness. The recorded sound too is most appealing : the slightly recessed balance and the resonant acoustic of St George's, Brandon Hill, Bristol, combining to give the sound an appealing mellow glow.

The Walton *Quartet* of 1945-47 is inexplicably underrated (and under-performed : it is far more often heard in its string orchestra version, the *Sonata for Strings*). There are several parallels with the Elgar *Quartet*, and they make an ideal pair on a CD. The first movement again starts with a gentle, lyrical theme, challenged by a contrasting, fiery second subject, the tensions between the two themes forming the basis of the movement. The second movement is a typically Waltonian scherzo, which is followed by a gentle lyrical movement, owing much to the example of Elgar. The final movement returns to the familiar world of the extrovert, bracing Walton.

The Argo recording of the Mistry Quartet, played immediately after the Britten Quartet, came as something of a shock. The recorded sound is more closely balanced, capturing a wider dynamic range, and Jagdish Mistry and his colleagues, whose tempi are significantly faster, find far more drama and passion in the music. Nevertheless I found their approach, with tonal beauty taking second place to a restless probing in the music, to be just a bit too driving, and a touch aggressive. With repeated hearings I have found myself gradually coming to admire some aspects of this wide-ranging interpretation, which gives us more of the anger and despair of the post-war Elgar than most rival recordings. Nevertheless there is a dimension of true Elgarian spirit missing, and which the Britten Quartet instinctively finds.

If we have undervalued the *Quartet*, the symphonic range and power of the *Piano Quintet* has long been recognised, reinforced twenty-three years ago by the classic recording by John Ogdon and the Allegri String Quartet. It is music which can more easily withstand the Mistry Quartet's approach. Indeed, the sensitive playing of pianist David Owen Norris seems to have induced the string players to adopt a slightly less forceful approach. There are moments of great inwardness in the first movement, where they find just the right *misterioso* touch, something which quite eluded them in the *Quartet*. Perhaps the slightly less forward recorded sound has helped. The balance is just about perfect, the piano (a little more backward than on some recordings) emerging naturally and with perfect clarity through the string textures.

Although this is one of the best modern versions of the *Quintet*, it does not displace

either the passionate John Bingham/Medici Quartet version on Meridian (coupled with an equally fine *Quartet* - my recommendation for anyone seeking this particular pairing) nor the somewhat cooler but most sensitively shaped version from Bernard Roberts and the Chilingirian Quartet on EMI. On the other hand the Ogden/Allegri recording is now available on a mid-price EMI 'Studio' CD (CDM7 69889-2). It is a large-scale, generous performance, beautifully judged, if a little less sensitive than some more recent rivals. Nevertheless, with the well-balanced recording still sounding more than satisfactory in the digital transfer, and the interesting couplings (Ogden's pioneering performances of the *Concert Allegro* and the *Sonatina*, and the lovely Hugh Bean/David Parkhouse recording of the *Violin Sonata*), this would be my first choice recommendation for anyone specifically seeking a recording of the *Quintet*.

Gareth H.Lewis

"Wood Magic" - The Life of Sir Edward Elgar in Words and Music [Richard Pasco, Barbara Leigh-Hunt] & Violin Sonata, Op.82
Piano Quintet, Op.84; String Quartet, Op.83

Medici Quartet with John Bingham
Medici/Whitehall MQCD 7001/2

These two discs are amongst the first releases on a new label launched by the Medici Quartet in their twenty-first anniversary year. For the last fourteen years, they have been Artists-in-Residence at Kingston Polytechnic and these recordings mark the latter's transformation into a university.

The key to the understanding of the chamber works is of course Brinkwells. By the end of the Great War, Elgar sensed that the world had passed him - he was depressed and physically ill. Brinkwells and the Sussex countryside reactivated the creative urge which was to find its culmination in the *Cello Concerto*. "Wood Magic" was the name Lady Elgar gave to the slow movement of the *Sonata* but it is an appropriate title for all three chamber works and also for the play compiled by Michael Kennedy which in the main uses Elgar's own words and those of his contemporaries to paint the background to this part of Elgar's life. Richard Pasco is very convincing as the composer. Barbara Leigh-Hunt plays both Lady Elgar and Rosa Burley which can be a little muddling on first hearing as there is no indication of this in the booklet. Interlaced between the words are musical excerpts played by John Bingham and the Quartet. In some of the overlaps, I thought the recorded balance should have given more prominence to the actors than it does. This 'entertainment' has been performed in the concert halls now for many years and has been broadcast by Radio 3. I enjoyed it but would not really want to listen to it more than a few times.

The first disc is completed by the *Violin Sonata* played by the leader of the Quartet, Paul Robertson. I found this somewhat disappointing. Somehow the music doesn't flow - it is not really involving. This may in part be due to the recorded sound which is rather brittle. The violin sounds rather steely. I should have liked a bit more atmosphere and a much warmer piano tone. The second movement is far too jaunty, missing out on the inward mysterious quality of the music. The playing is very cool

with little or no passion at, for example, the wonderful *pp* at fig.28. The same comments apply to the Finale with a singular absence of drama at fig.40 and little or no *fuoco* when so directed. In the final pages, there is no sense of struggle - no sense of winning against the odds, making a rather tame conclusion. Returning to Nigel Kennedy (in his pre-Nige days!) on Chandos is to enter a different world. he is much more imaginative and involving. He captures the ebb and flow, the bravura followed by hesitancy, which I believe matches the mood of the composer at the time.

The second disc is much more successful. These artists have been playing the *Quartet* and *Quintet* for many years now (I wonder if any tapes exist of the performances of the *Quintet* the Medici gave with Clifford Curzon?) and made much-acclaimed recordings of them for Meridian a decade or so ago. They play with a flexibility that reflects their long experience of the works and they sound as though they are really inside the music. The opening of the *Quintet* is alert and purposeful and at the *poco animato* at fig.6 there is a wonderful flow as if the composer is reminding us that he is again creating music that is strong and alive just as in the old days. Certainly the Medici give us a big performance of a big work. A minor hesitation would be the lack of dynamic contrast. The opening of the slow movement is not really *pp* yet there is a real sense of repose and the central climax is certainly powerful and strong. The finale too is bold and confident. The spooky middle section (from fig.56) is sensitively handled before the piece is led logically and inexorably on to its triumphant A major close.

Of the three chamber works, I have always found the *Quartet* the hardest to penetrate. Suffice it to say, the music made more sense here than in many other performances. Again, I would have liked rather more dynamic contrast - there isn't any really *pianissimo* playing but the recorded sound is certainly fuller with a strong clear bass line. The middle movement is possibly a little too fast and not quite tender enough but the finale is marvellous, the Medici playing it with very precise articulation, great confidence and enormous exuberance.

John Knowles

Cello Concerto, Op.85 (with Dvořák : Cello Concerto)
Maria Kliegel (cello), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Michael Halasz
Naxos CD 8.550503

Maria Kliegel has won a growing reputation since winning the 1981 Rostropovich 'cello competition and I would guess is now heartily sick of the oft-quoted Rostropovich testimonial hailing her as the finest cellist since du Pré. Certainly on the evidence of this disc, her playing is very different in style from du Pré's. She has a warm tone which matches the beautifully balanced orchestral sounds produced by the Naxos engineers in the resonant acoustic of the Henry Wood Hall. Her playing is very neat and she is fully alert to the myriad dynamic markings Elgar puts in the score, with some really lovely pianissimo playing. Her performance of the opening movement is essentially serious in mood. The quasi-modal passage at fig.7 is beautifully shaped, capturing well the world-weary inner quality of the music. Her

virtuosity is to the fore in a brisk account of the Scherzo although she and her conductor make rather a meal of the *largamente* passages (fig.22,etc), where the orchestral response is not *a tempo* as marked and indeed if anything slows up even more. The Adagio is perhaps too dry-eyed and reserved but after a lively account of the finale, she plays the final moving passages with deep feeling.

Coupled with a sensitive performance of the Dvořák, this disc would be a strong contender even if it were offered at full price. As it is, anyone picking it up on impulse, willing to risk a fiver having heard the outstanding account of the *Violin Concerto* on the Naxos label, will be far from disappointed and indeed will have a real winner.

John Knowles

Symphony no.1 in A♭, Op.55

Hallé Orchestra conducted by James Loughran

Cockaigne Overture, Op.40

Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Owain Arwel Hughes

ASV Quicksilva CD QS 6082; also available on cassette

Loughran's recordings of the Elgar symphonies, released ten years or so ago, never made a great impact, possibly being overshadowed by the Boult and Handley versions. Yet the *First* - on ASV's bargain label at £4-67 - has lots of good things to commend it; Loughran seeks to emphasize the passion in it, and those who like their Elgar *à la Mahler* will approve. The danger of this approach is to undervalue the quieter, more reflective Elgar; for instance the beautiful melody at fig.12 is marked *dolce*, but here is played much too prosaically for my taste. Loughran allows the orchestra its head in the big tuttis, but the recording (made in the rather 'boxy' acoustic of Manchester's Free Trade Hall) gives far too much prominence to the brass. This approach to the Elgar symphonies should suit the *Second* better (Loughran's recording of that work, which I have not heard, is due out in March), for this version of the *First* sounds more like "the passionate pilgrimage of a soul" than "a massive hope in the future". The fill-up is a fine, rumbustious account of *Cockaigne*, recorded in the more spacious acoustic of St Barnabas' Church, Mitcham, and the concluding pages are marked by a wonderfully uninhibited organ taking on the whole orchestra, and nearly winning. Great stuff; and the whole disc can be safely recommended at its bargain price.

The Editor

BRANCH REPORTS

LONDON Branch is sailing through choppy water just now. In October the season should have opened with Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore but rapid alteration had to be made when it became clear that Dr Moore must be in America at that time because of his mother's illness. The Vice-Chairman, David Michell, and Secretary had the unenviable task of standing in before an obviously disappointed audience. However, the generous reception given to the hastily-assembled programme about the Pearl CD Edition suggested that a satisfactory salvage operation had been accomplished. Meanwhile, it became known that Walter Essex must withdraw from the December meeting - another great disappointment. However, in November all was well! Anthony Boden, with his definitive study of the Three Choirs' Festival hot from the press, spoke eloquently about the history of the Festival, leading on to his wonderful story of the discovery of the lost orchestration of Brewer's *Emmaus*. We were able to hear generous excerpts from this fascinating work recorded at this year's Gloucester Festival.

Meanwhile another great success was the bringing together of over 70 people for the Branch Group Outing to the performance of *Caractacus* conducted by Richard Hickox at the Barbican. A further visit for *The Light of Life* at the end of January is now being planned.

On 4 January we welcome Richard Morrison to speak on "Kipling and Elgar", followed on 1 February by David Mellor MP, whose title is "Aspects of Elgar". Then on 1 March Malcolm Ruthven (familiar to many through his years on Radio 3) gives his highly-commended presentation "Elgar in Camera".

SOUTHERN Branch is pleased to have welcomed yet more new members recently, and the branch turned out in force for our first meeting of the season, when we were privileged to welcome Percy Young, who lectured on "The Consequences of being an Organist", with illustrations at the piano; an enjoyable question and answer session followed with many members contributing, and we were all deeply grateful to our distinguished visitor for making the long journey to us from Wolverhampton. For the first time our November meeting consisted of a "Desert Island Elgar" session organised by Walter Essex and Stuart Freed. It was a most enjoyable opportunity for members to talk about their preferences and continue to get to know each other.

Plans for 1993 include a live music session, featuring the *Violin Sonata* and a selection of early violin pieces, Philip Scowcroft on "Elgar's Transcribers", and a presentation of Michael Kennedy's "Wood Magic" - our proximity to 'Brinkwells' will make this all the more interesting.

The WEST MIDLANDS programme commenced on 3 October with Dr Melville Cook's second and, sadly, final talk on "The Three Choirs' Festival" and his personal participation. On 21 November John Winsor, a Branch member, presented a pictorial record of "Elgar's Malvern" and the places with which he was connected.

And so to 1993 when we will have our Annual Supper Party at The Stables. This will be on 12 February, price £3-50. On 6 March again at The Stables (37 Albany

Terrace, Worcester) we will be holding the Branch AGM preceded by Michael Trott's presentation "An Evening with Elgar". The Committee has been active and has included in its deliberations an update of the Branch Constitution. This will be presented to the AGM together with the news that neither the Chairman nor the Secretary will be seeking re-election.

Michael Trott will introduce "Wand of Youth" at the joint meeting with Worcester Recorded Music Society on 20 March at The Old Palace, Worcester; and Anthony Boden will be addressing the Branch on 24 April at the Friends' Meeting House, Worcester, when the subject will be "Ivor Gurney and Friends".

NORTH WEST Branch's current season opened in October with an excellent talk by Lance Tufnell on "Elgar, Rodewald and Bantock". Our November meeting took the form of a lecture recital; Dr John Wray, our Chairman, himself a former pupil of John Ireland, talked about his tutor. This rare insight into the life of the composer was followed by a performance of his *Piano Sonata* given by Ian Buckle, one of the RNCM's outstanding students. Our AGM and Christmas Social followed on 5 December.

Forthcoming programmes will be "A Quiz on English music" presented by John Mawbey on 9 January; "Elgar's world in contemporary pictures" by Dennis Clark on 13 February; "Elgar's interpreter - Barbirolli", a talk by David Young on 6 March; and our season will close on 24 April with a recital of vocal and piano music performed by Cantilena.

YORKSHIRE Branch's new season commenced on 21 September when David Bury revealed to us the identity of his "Awful Female". This dreaded lady has gone the rounds of the branches in recent times without her name becoming public. In case David has another visit lined up, we are giving nothing away... On 12 October Andrew Neill gave a fascinating talk on "Elgar and the Great War", much of the script being provided by readings from the Elgars' diaries of that period. With an actress friend, Lorraine, taking the part of Alice this presentation was greatly enjoyed, and with our visitors having to return to London the same evening we were particularly grateful for their efforts.

9 November was an informal evening given over to the display of our large collection of Elgarian archives. Cared for by Lance Tufnell, they seemed to have grown amazingly since the last showing, some years ago, and provided members with much interested browsing, especially the playing of Elgar-conducted 78s on old Pathe and EMG gramophones provided by Bill Astin.

Coming up on 11 January is the secretary's "Elgar's world in contemporary pictures" followed on 8 February by Mark Jepson's talk on the Wind Quintet music. On 8 March we look forward to a visit by Bridget Duckenfield to talk on Landon Ronald, the subject of her book "O Lovely Knight".

Following the unfortunate demise of the SOUTH-WEST Branch just two years ago, members of the Society met at Kingswood Independent School in Bath on 20 November to consider the possibility of re-forming. On a very wet afternoon, Society

Chairman Andrew Neill, accompanied by Dennis Clark, secretary of the Yorkshire Branch, spoke of his great pleasure that a sufficient number of members had expressed a desire to belong to a branch in the South-West. Following a discussion it was decided to form a steering committee of six members (who were duly elected) until the branch has been formally reconstituted by the General Committee of the Society. Acting Chairman Ron Bleach outlined the plans for 1993 (details below). We hope that members will support the talks and encourage others to join us on a regular basis.

23 January - "Elgar and Sullivan" a talk by Ron Bleach.
27 February - "Members' Choice" Bring your own!
27 March - "Bax and Delius" a talk by Lewis Foreman (a joint meeting with the South West Branch of the Delius Society). NB. This meeting will take place in the Music Room of Clifton College, Bristol.
24 April - "O lovely Knight" a talk on Sir Landon Ronald by Bridget Duckenfield.
22 May - "Elgar in Pictures" presented by Dennis Clark.

Meetings will take place at 2.15 pm on the fourth Saturday of the month at the Bristol Music Club, St.Paul's Road, Clifton, Bristol.

LETTERS

From: Phillip Brookes

I read Philip Scowcroft's article, Elgar in Crime Fiction *(September 1992) with interest. I feel he has missed two opportunities to point out Elgarian connexions, even though he mentions one of the authors himself.*

In chapter eight of The Moving Toyshop, *Edmund Crispin has one of the heroes feeling...*

> *...conscious that he had had too much beer at the "Mace and Sceptre".*
> *"I feel like Gerontius", he said gloomily, breaking a long silence.*
> *"Gerontius?"*
> *"'This emptying out of each constituent...' Sick, I mean".*

Secondly, although I cannot recall any Elgar (yet) in Colin Dexter's novels, Inspector Morse does solve The Settling of the Sun *on television to an accompaniment of "Gerontius" and "Nimrod" and even mentions Sir Edward at one point. The storyline is by Dexter himself, so I suppose it counts.*

Incidentally, Edmund Crispin was the composer Bruce Montgomery (1921-1978), of whose music absolutely nothing seems to have been recorded, although the Concertino for String Orchestra *would make a refreshing addition to yet another disc of English string music, and his* Coronation Ode *(words by Kingsley Amis) might be paired with Elgar's.*

A glance through Crispin's detective stories will reveal composers featuring prominently in Holy Disorders, Swan Song, The Glimpses of the Moon, *John Ireland*

arriving to conduct a film score in Frequent Hearses, *and Geoffrey Bush credited as co-author of the short story* Who Killed Baker?

From: Stephen Harrow

I have an idea for a CD : an 'Enigma' CD. All the recent renewed interest in the identity of the theme or tune or chant or chime or initials or quality or concept or philosophy or motto or birdsong (anybody come up with that one yet?), the umbral utterance which may or may not 'go' with the Variations, prompts me to suggest a musicological game for Elgarians, based on the programmability of the compact disc.
The main item on the CD would naturally be a recording of the Variations. *Anybody's would do; but perhaps it should be EDU's own, second, recording. The current front-runner for the hidden melody seems to be a fragment of the Andante of K.504, the* Prague Symphony; *but I'm tempted to say bung in the whole thing. That would use up somewhere between 55-60 minutes, leaving about 20 minutes on which to put short tracks devoted to the other main contenders in the game: the Dies Irae (my own favourite, after the Prague), Rule Britannia, Auld Lang Syne, Home Sweet Home, pieces of Purcell, bits of Brahms, chunks of Bach, Jeannie with the Light Brown Hair, whatever. Using the programmable function of the CD, it would be possible to mix and match any of the Variations (and, if the cuing were detailed enough, of specific bits of individual Variations) with any of the possible alternate themes, in any order and with any number of repeats. Space permitting, experimental piano juxtapositions of variations with alternates could be included. The insert booklet would summarise the story, put the case for each contender and print musical texts. Hours of harmless fun for all the family - and the next recording project for the Society (ELG 0014, perhaps)?*

From: David McBrien

Although I am aware of all the discussion which has recently taken place concerning the high cost of compact discs I don't think the Editor and David Michell are entirely fair in their complaints about the pricing of the Pearl and EMI 'Elgar Editions'.
Like the Editor I remember the excitement I felt when Pearl announced the first LP transfers of all Elgar's acoustic recordings in 1969. I had been aware since 1963 of the existence of these records and had found out how difficult they were to buy. Now Pearl made them all available, despite, as Charles Haynes told me in 1972, the Elgar Edition not being "frankly, one of our most lucrative projects". The price of those first discs, in 1969, was 43s 9d (just under £2-20). At today's prices that would be worth well in excess of £20. I doubt if Pearl or EMI will break sales records with the CD issues yet both have taken great pains to make new and improved transfers. I never thought in 1963 that I could ever own all the records, and more, that Jerrold Moore listed in his discography. I feel great gratitude to all involved in ensuring that I can - no quibble about the cost.

THE ELGAR SOCIETY

FOUNDED 1951

Registered as a Charity No.298062

President: Sir Yehudi Menuhin, O.M., K.B.E.
Chairman: Andrew Neill

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