

The Elgar Society **NEWSLETTER**



JANUARY

1978

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

L A T E N E W S..... Forthcoming Recordings

RCA announce that Sir Alexander Gibson and the Scottish National Orchestra are to record the Pomp & Circumstance Marches, the Crown of India Suite, and Cockaigne, under the sponsorship of the Bank of Scotland.

EMI are recording the Violin Concerto, with Ida Haendel and Sir Adrian Boult. In addition, the Five Part-Songs from the Greek Anthology, op. 45, recorded by the Baccolian Singers, are scheduled for release in the Spring.

PYE are to issue a recording of the Severn Suite by the Besses o' the Barn Band.

ITZHAK PERLMAN is currently studying the Violin Concerto, and there are tentative plans for a recording.

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Elgar Society Newsletter : ISSN 0309 - 4405

Elgar Society Newsletter

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NEW BARNET,
HERTS.

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EDITORIAL

NEW SERIES No. 4

In our last issue I raised the point 'where do we go from here?' in relation to the Elgar Society. There was insufficient response for any consensus of opinion to emerge. Suffice it to say that those who did respond expressed widely differing opinions. Suggestions were made that the Society should sponsor musical activities such as concerts on the mainland of Europe. However, in the present state of the Society that kind of activity is clearly far beyond us.

As an example of the kind of activity which the Society can sponsor, we are just about to publish the Discography of Elgar and his Interpreters. This is a most important step forward for us, and I am certain that the book will have permanent value, not only for present-day collectors and enthusiasts, but for future Elgar researchers. Many of the records listed are of great rarity, and the Society owes the compiler a debt of gratitude for his lengthy researches. We hope, in time, that other equally valuable publications will follow, probably from members of the Society.

One comment on the NEWSLETTER, arising from the last issue, was that it still resembled a 'school magazine'. We fully admit that at times it is hard to break away from such a formula. Any Society journal, however produced, must reflect at least some of the Society's activities. However, we are very conscious that too parochial an approach can produce a very dull journal, and we are trying all the time to produce a more outward-looking, and lively, magazine. Remember that contributors are unpaid, and we rely entirely on the writings sent to us. We are grateful for all of these, although it is not possible to use them all, for a variety of reasons. We believe that the NEWSLETTER has improved - to continue that improvement is our continual aim.

Ronald Taylor
EDITOR

News Items

CHRISTOPHER KENT, whose study of the manuscripts of the Third Symphony formed the basis of an outstanding talk to the London branch some time ago, is again concerned with manuscript material. He is compiling a catalogue, for eventual publication, of all Elgar MS. sketches, fair copies, proofs, etc., and members with knowledge of such items in private hands are asked to get in touch with Mr. Kent, at 5 Drury Road, West Harrow, Middlesex.

THE GRAMOPHONE RECORD made by Uppingham Community College, which was reviewed in our September issue, is selling steadily, but Barry Collett is anxious that it should reach more Elgarians. Members are reminded that it contains a number of items previously un-recorded, and the record is available at £2.75 (inclusive of postage) from Uppingham Community College, London Road, Uppingham, Rutland, Leics LE15 9TJ.

AT BOURNEMOUTH on November 13th, Bernard Keeffe conducted the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra and the Municipal Choir in a remarkably fine performance of The Kingdom. So outstanding was this interpretation that one waits eagerly, and we hope not in vain, for a performance at Bournemouth, under Mr. Keeffe, of The Apostles. Singing the role of Peter was the young bass, Stephen Roberts, who made such an impression on the recent HMV recording of the Coronation Ode.

THE ANNUAL WREATH-LAYING CEREMONY at the Elgar Memorial Window, will take place in Worcester Cathedral, immediately after Evensong, on Sunday, June 4th. All members who can visit Worcester on that day are invited to attend.

WESTMINSTER ABBEY CHOIR, under the direction of Douglas Guest (the Chairman of the Elgar Society), has recently made a record for Abbey Records. It includes Elgar's anthem They are at Rest. This piece was written in 1910, to commemorate the tenth anniversary of Queen Victoria's death, and was sung on that occasion at the Royal Mausoleum at Windsor. The performance by the Abbey Choir is the first appearance of this anthem on a record, which is expected to appear in Spring, 1978.

HADDO HOUSE CHORAL & OPERATIC SOCIETY. After an interval of three years this Society is again performing The Apostles and The Kingdom, on consecutive days. The dates are Saturday, 13th May (7.30 p.m.) and Sunday, 14th May (2.45 p.m.) in the Hall, Haddo House, Aberdeen. The soloists include Margaret Marshall, Neil Jenkins, Brian Rayner Cook, Stephen Roberts, and David Wilson Johnson. The conductor will again be the Society's musical director, June Gordon. Details of a package charge for performances, supper, tea, etc. will shortly be available. Members interested should write to the Hon. Secretary of the Elgar Society. Those who made the journey

Worcester THREE CHOIRS Festival

THE 1978 Festival will be held in Worcester, and appropriately the first day will feature a performance of The Dream of Gerontius, with Sir Charles Groves as conductor. The orchestras taking part this year will be the Royal Philharmonic, the BBC Northern Symphony and the City of Birmingham Symphony. In addition the Worcester Sinfonia will perform the Starlight Ex-

press music, with Cynthia Glover and John Lawrenson as the soloists. The other major Elgar work to be performed is the Symphony no.2. As always there will be a large number of extra activities in and around Worcester, and a full Festival programme will be available in March. Applications for the programme and booking-form should be addressed to S. Driver White, 5 Deansway, Worcester. Fuller details of concerts will appear in our May issue, but in view of the very heavy booking for the 1977 Gloucester Festival, readers are advised to book early. Dates: 27 August - 2 September

ELGAR BIRTHPLACE NEWS.....

The Curator, Jack McKenzie, reports: Our visitors this year have exceeded the figures for 1976. To date, in 1977, we have had 7,730 visitors to the Birthplace - 1600 more than last year, and an all-time record. Among these, we were delighted to welcome Herbert Howells, the distinguished composer who has just celebrated his 85th birthday. Prof. Howells told us that he first visited the Birthplace in 1923, when he was brought here on an afternoon visit by Elgar himself. It has also been a great pleasure to welcome Susan Hampshire and Richard Pasco, stars of Shaw's Man and Superman at the Malvern Festival. Elgar Society members may be interested to know that we have for sale Elgar busts (price £2), tankards (£1.70) and bookmarks (30p.). Anyone who would like to buy these should contact me here at the Birthplace, Lower Broadheath, Worcester.

NEWS ITEMS [continued]

to Haddo on the previous occasion were unanimous in agreeing that the whole weekend was an outstanding and memorable experience. Elgarians will be richly rewarded by giving maximum support to this venture.



Elgar's Interpreters on Record

an Elgar Discography compiled by **John Knowles**

COPIES AVAILABLE *now* OF THIS IMPORTANT NEW PUBLICATION

Published by the Elgar Society, price £1. By Post inclusive price £1.20p.
Orders to The Hon. Treasurer, 11 The Chase, Watford, Herts.

NORTH-WEST BRANCH OF THE ELGAR SOCIETY OPENED

THE INAUGURAL MEETING of the proposed North-West Branch was held at Bluecoat's Chambers, Liverpool, on Saturday, 5th November. On a damp Guy Fawkes' night, twenty-seven people, about two-thirds of them members of the Society, gathered to consider setting up the branch, and to listen to a programme of music. The meeting was hosted by Andrew Neill, a member of the central committee, John Knowles, the Society's treasurer, with the editor of the NEWSLETTER also in attendance.

In the event, little 'hosting' was needed, as the enthusiasm of the audience for a branch of their own soon became apparent. After some brief guidance from Mr. Neill and Mr. Knowles on the way in which previous branches had been formed, the audience sat back and listened to short extracts from The Light of Life. There was then a coffee break, which turned out to be the most important part of the evening. It was the opportunity for those present to get to know each other, and to discuss the problems of starting a branch. During these informal discussions a number of people volunteered to serve on a steering committee, and when the meeting resumed, Mr. Neill was able to announce not only the names of the volunteers, but also that he had persuaded Dr. Caleb Jarvis, organist of St. George's Hall, and a distinguished Liverpool musician, to act as Chairman. He had also persuaded Douglas Carrington, of Lytham, to take on the position of Secretary/Treasurer. The new committee then withdrew for what Mr. Carrington later described as 'the shortest committee meeting on record,' to arrange matters for their next meeting. The general meeting then continued for John Knowles to present extracts from The Black Knight, King Olaf, and Caractacus. Andrew Neill, in closing the meeting, wished the North-West branch every success. Good wishes and apologies for absence had already been received from the Chairman, and the Secretary, of the Society, Douglas Guest, and E. W. A. Jackson. Mr. Knowles was also thanked for arranging and introducing the musical programme, and our thanks also go to Rushworth's Music House of Liverpool, for lending the stereo tape equipment used during the evening. Further details of the branch will appear in Branch Reports in each issue of the NEWSLETTER.

BOOKS & MUSIC WANTED.....

Copies of Letters of Edward Elgar, edited by Percy Young, and Letters to Nimrod, are required by Mr. E. R. Doubleday, 65 Meadow Park, Bathford, Bath. Any member willing to sell copies of either book should get in touch with Mr. Doubleday.

Vocal scores of the Coronation Ode, and The Light of Life, are required by the Editor of the NEWSLETTER. Offers of copies, stating price, to 104 Crescent Road, New Barnet, Herts. We also need a copy of no. 6 of the old series of NEWSLETTERS, to complete our office file. Offers gratefully received.

ELGAR FESTIVAL

Festival President: HIS GRACE THE DUKE OF BEAUFORT.

TEWKESBURY ABBEY

SUNDAY MAY 21st — SUNDAY JUNE 4th

1978

A remarkably ambitious festival is being held at Tewkesbury in the early summer. Using a great deal of local talent, as well as visiting soloists, it is the plan of the organisers to perform almost all of Elgar's major works. Such an attempt would be daunting to most professional organisations, and it is therefore all the more to the credit of all concerned that such a full and impressive programme has been arranged. In addition to a specially formed Festival Chorus, under James Cowley, there will be a Festival Orchestra, and it is hoped that Meredith Davies will be able to share the rostrum with Mr. Cowley. The Avon Schools' Orchestra will also take part, as will the Birmingham Philharmonic Orchestra.

At the time of writing these notes there are still vacancies in the string section of the Festival Orchestra, and there may still be vacancies in the Chorus. Application should be made to James Walkley, 448 High Street, Cheltenham. Proceeds from the Festival will be donated to the Elgar Birthplace Appeal.

A full programme and Souvenir Booklet will be available shortly, but the provisional programme is as follows. [All events in the Abbey unless it is indicated otherwise.]

- | | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| Sunday, 21st May.
3 p.m. | Civic Service, attended by their Graces, the Duke and Duchess of Beaufort. |
| Sunday, 21st May.
7.45 p.m. | <u>The Light of Life.</u> <u>The Cello Concerto.</u> |
| Tuesday, 23rd May.
7.45 p.m. | Lecture by Isobel Baillie, in the Roses Theatre. |

Wednesday, 24th May. 7.45 p.m.	<u>Hope and Glory.</u> A full-length colour film on the <u>Life and Music of Elgar</u> , made by John Pike. To be shown at the Roses Theatre.
Saturday, 27th May. 3.0 p.m.	<u>The Apostles.</u>
Saturday, 27th May. 7.45 p.m.	<u>The Kingdom.</u>
Sunday, 28th May. 7.45 p.m.	<u>Violin Concerto.</u> <u>Wand of Youth.</u> <u>Froissart Overture.</u> <u>Chanson du Matin.</u>
Monday, 29th May. 7.45 p.m.	<u>The Music Makers.</u> <u>Viola Concerto.</u> <u>Sea Pictures.</u>
Tuesday, 30th May. 7.45 p.m.	Organ Recital, by Roy Massey.
Thursday, 1st June. 7.45 p.m.	Elgar's Lighter Music. An orchestral and vocal concert in the Roses Theatre.
Friday, 2nd June. 7.45 p.m.	<u>Coronation Ode.</u> <u>Spirit of England.</u>
Saturday, 3rd June. 7.45 p.m.	<u>Symphony no.1.</u> <u>Enigma Variations.</u> <u>Cockaigne Overture.</u>
Sunday, 4th June. 7.45 p.m.	<u>The Dream of Gerontius.</u>

Tickets, which range in price from £1 to £2.50, can also be purchased in reserved blocks at a reduced rate. Applications should be made to:

James Walkley,
"Craeg-Lea"
86 Wells Road,
Malvern, Worcs.

Single tickets will not be on sale until 1st April, 1978.

The Elgar Society wish the organisers of the Tewkesbury Abbey Festival the very best of good fortune in their enterprise. We shall hope to carry a report of the activities in our September issue.

TIPPETT CONDUCTS ELGAR IN THE U.S.A. Messrs. Schott announce performances in Dallas, Texas, of the Elgar Violin Concerto, by Yehudi Menuhin and the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, under Sir Michael Tippett in May.

D A T E S F O R Y O U R D I A R Y

Jan. 11	<u>Introduction & Allegro</u> English Chamber Orch.cond. by David Atherton	Queen Elizabeth Hall, South Bank
Jan. 26	<u>Symphony no.2; Cello Concerto</u> LPO. cond. Bernard Haitink. Soloist: Zara Nelsova	Royal Festival Hall
Jan. 29	<u>Violin Concerto</u> RPO.cond. Kyril Kondrashin. Soloist: Gidon Kremer	Royal Festival Hall
Feb. 5 8.p.m.	<u>Piano Quintet</u> (with Howell's <u>Piano</u> <u>Quintet</u> . Music Group of London Piano Quintet Tickets £1.50;£1.75p from Arts & Entertainment Section, Civic Centre, Uxbridge. Tel:Uxbridge 50111, ext.2318	Winston Churchill Hall, Pinn Way, Ruislip. Middx
Feb. 14	<u>Dream of Gerontius</u> Royal Choral Society.cond. Meredith Davies	Royal Festival Hall
Feb. 19	<u>Salut d'amour;Chanson de Matin;</u> <u>Chanson de Nuit</u> Bournemouth Sinfonietta.cond. Owain Arwel Hughes	Winter Gardens, Bournemouth
Feb. 22 23 & 24	<u>Cello Concerto</u> Hallé Orch.cond. Owain Arwel Hughes. Soloist:Colin Carr	Free Trade Hall, Manchester
Mar. 5	<u>Symphony no.2</u> LPO. cond. Bernard Haitink	Free Trade Hall, Manchester
Mar. 6	repeat of above concert	Assembly Rooms, Derby
Mar. 9	<u>Falstaff</u> Bournemouth SO. cond. Vernon Handley	Winter Gardens, Bournemouth
Mar. 11	<u>Introduction & Allegro</u> Manchester Camerata.cond. Wyn Davies	Royal Northern Coll. of Music, Manchester
Mar. 14	<u>King Olaf</u> Teresa Cahill, Kenneth Woolam, Peter Glossop, RLPO & LP Choir. cond. Vernon Handley	Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool

Mar.	20	<u>Violin Sonata</u> Nigel Kennedy, with Melvyn Tan.	Purcell Room, South Bank
Mar.	23	<u>Introduction & Allegro</u> Brighton Youth Orch. & J. Strange Quartet. cond. D. Gray	The Dome, Brighton
Mar.	25	<u>Enigma Variations</u> RPO. cond. Simon Rattle	Fairfield Hall, Croydon
Mar.	26	<u>Symphony no. 2</u> RPO. cond. Sir Charles Groves	Royal Festival Hall
Mar.	30	<u>In the South</u> Bournemouth SO. cond. Christopher Seaman	Winter Gardens, Bournemouth
Apr.	3	<u>Introduction & Allegro</u> Institute of Armenian Music	Queen Elizabeth Hall South Bank
Apr.	4 5 & 6	<u>In the South</u> RLPO. cond. Frank Shipway	Philharmonic Hall, Liverpool
Apr.	14	<u>Dream of Gerontius</u> Alfreda Hodgson, Anthony Rolfe- Johnson, Benjamin Luxon. SNO Chorus & Orch. cond. Sir Alexander Gibson	Usher Hall, Edinburgh
Apr.	15	repeat of above concert	City Hall, Glasgow
Apr.	15	<u>Dream of Gerontius</u> Norma Proctor, Ian Partridge, Derek Hammond-Stroud, English Sinfonia, Derby Choral Union, cond. Raymond Thorpe	Assembly Rooms, Derby
Apr.	25	<u>Spirit of England</u> LPO. cond. Daniel Barenboim. with Felicity Palmer	Royal Festival Hall
May	5	<u>Elgar Foundation Celebrity Concert</u> RPO, cond. Sir Adrian Boult & Donald Hunt. with Menuhin and Tortelier.	Royal Albert Hall

Martin Passande - - an Appreciation How strange it seemed for the West Midlands Branch to start the 1977/78 season without the enlivening presence of Martin Passande. For some years he had been so much a part of the Branch scene. I believe his name first appeared as a committee member in 1973. Two years later he became Secretary, and came to live in Hereford. Martin's famous Bring and Buy Stall was an added attraction at many meetings, not only in Malvern and Worcester. Jams, jellies and chutneys were only part of his stock

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THE STRANGE CASE OF THE "ODIOUS LETTER"

Elgar and Stanford

by
Vincent Waite

The real reason for the estrangement which existed for so long between Elgar and Stanford remains something of a mystery. According to Lady Elgar, the real hostility between the two began with an "odious letter" which Stanford sent to Elgar in December 1904, the contents of which have never been revealed. In fact, differences had arisen before, and it seems only fair to trace the course of their previous relationship so that neither party shall be unjustly blamed for any part of the mutual antagonism which caused such embarrassment and distress to their friends.

The two men first met in 1896 when Stanford and his wife came to lunch with the Elgars at "Forli" in order to meet Swinnerton Heap, the conductor of the Birmingham Festival Choral Society. Although only five years older than Elgar, Stanford was already Professor of Music at Cambridge and on the staff of the Royal College of Music, thus being (together with Sullivan, Parry, Mackenzie, and Cowen) part of the contemporary musical establishment. With their fiercely definite characteristics, some of them similar, it was perhaps inevitable that these two personalities should ultimately clash. Elgar was shy, suspicious, abnormally sensitive and quick to take offence. In many ways Stanford was even more difficult; although kindly and generous in spirit, he was quick-tempered, intolerant, and emotional. As Scott Goddard has perceptively expressed it, "he wore his nerves so near his upper skin that they were easily exposed and his temper Celtically aroused. . . His was the strange case of a man full of wit and with an abundant sense of fun, but with little sense of humour, a lack of which turned his wit bitter when circumstances became intemperate."

At first, relations were amicable enough to encourage Elgar to write to ask if the Bach Choir (of which Stanford was conductor) would welcome a new choral work. In his reply Stanford regretted that "this is a very inopportune moment financially", but he promised to recommend a work from Elgar directly the right moment came. In the same year Elgar sent him the score of The Banner of St. George, asking his opinion of the work, only to receive a typically forthright crushing reply: "It's all very well having fine raiment, but there must be a fine body to put it on." It is not difficult to imagine what the prickly Elgar (to say nothing of his wife) thought of this gratuitous snubbing sarcasm. In return Elgar expressed his opinion of Stanford's own music in a letter to Jaeger, describing it as "neither fish, flesh, fowl, nor good

red herring."

Outwardly, at least, there still seems to have been a veneer of cordiality, and there is certainly no doubt about the genuineness of Stanford's admiration for the Enigma Variations, although Plunket Greene's claim, that throughout this time there was no ill-feeling at all, is scarcely borne out by a letter from Elgar in January 1900 telling Jaeger that he "saw Stanford in Manchester the other day... and we are quite as before - this between ourselves: we smoked and supped together." Similarly a later letter from Jaeger certainly suggested there had been some previous disagreement, for he announced that "the result of your Stanford entente cordiale is that he is going to do your Variations at the College. They have bought scores and parts already." In return Elgar performed Stanford's Last Post with the Worcestershire Philharmonic, and Stanford became an honorary member of the Society.

It was undoubtedly on the earnest recommendation of Stanford, as Professor of Music, that Elgar was offered an honorary Doctorate of Music at Cambridge in 1900, the first of all the academic tributes to be paid to the composer. It was unfortunate that Stanford could not be present at the ceremony, but he had already warned Elgar of this possibility, and sent a telegram on the day regretting his absence, which was due to unavoidable commitments at Leeds where he was to be conductor-in-chief of the forthcoming festival. He had certainly been among the group of fellow musicians who had contributed towards the cost of the academic robes which Elgar confessed he could not afford to buy.

The first London performance of Gerontius did not take place until June 1903. Apparently when Stanford heard that it was to be given in Westminster Cathedral, he went out of his way to regret the choice saying, as Elgar reported bitterly, "It is a great pity for my sake, etc. etc. all on account of the deadly bad acoustics of the building, etc. etc." Stanford undoubtedly meant it kindly, and indeed afterwards his fears proved amply justified, but Elgar put the worst possible construction on it. "I quite appreciate Stanford's kindness in pointing out that the performance must be disastrous," was his sarcastic remark to Littleton of Novello's. "They say that about anything I do or compose... if anything can be said or done to throw cold water on the thing it will be done." Yet, so far, there had been no real breach between the two. It is true that as regards the music there was an ambivalence in Stanford's attitude towards Gerontius; on one occasion he could exclaim that he would have given his head to have written Part I, and then at other times describe it as "stinking of incense." This did not prevent his writing in generous terms to Elgar, congratulating him on the success of the Variations at Dusseldorf in 1901, and in the following year he was (together with Parry) a sponsor for Elgar's membership of the Athaeneum Club. In 1903 Stanford

had to use his influence to extricate Elgar from the result of an unpleasant contretemps with the Leeds Festival Committee, when Elgar's procrastination had badly mismanaged arrangements regarded as settled by the committee.

We now come to what was apparently the flashpoint of their estrangement, the "odious letter" received by Elgar on December 27, 1904. Plunket Greene has described how Stanford had a passion for writing letters which, invariably with a stinging postscript, would provoke trouble. "... 'I took up me pen, me boy,' was the recognized prelude among his friends to some inevitable row with a temporary antagonist." In March of that year the Stanfords had been present at a dinner party given for Elgar by his adoring friend Leo Schuster, in honour of the forthcoming festival of his music at Covent Garden which was to have royal patronage. The party was held in Schuster's house and was a sumptuous affair with no expense spared; even the panels of the dining room had been decorated with emblems "referring to various phases of Elgar's works in order to pay tribute to the composer." According to Sir Henry Wood's autobiography My Life of Music, what should have been a happy occasion was completely spoiled by Elgar's churlish and unmannerly behaviour; far from showing pleasure at this generous tribute, he appeared utterly bored by the whole proceedings. The crowning discourtesy came when Schuster, to quote Alice Elgar's Diary, "proposed E. 's health in the most touching way with his heart in his voice." The guests were by now thoroughly uncomfortable, but, to quote Wood, "naturally expected Elgar to make a suitable reply. Instead he went on talking to an old friend and probably had no idea his health had been drunk at all."

As someone who was always a convivial guest, and never so happy as when in congenial company, Stanford must have been especially incensed at this strange lack of courtesy. After all, Elgar had with surprising speed caught up with the musical establishment with his honorary degrees, his three-day festival, and his forthcoming knighthood; surely he might have shown suitable decorum, appreciation and gratitude at a dinner party in his honour. Percy Young has pointed out that Elgar was not well at the time, having suffered one of his severe headaches in the morning, but Stanford could not have been expected to know that. It has always been my theory that Stanford's suppressed anger at this unhappy social gaffe, together, perhaps, with the ill-feeling created by the unfortunate blunder Elgar committed over the Leeds Festival commission, had been bottled up until it finally exploded in the "odious" December letter.

From then on there was no longer any pretence of friendship. Indeed, during his tenure of the Peyton Professorship of Music at the University of Birmingham, Elgar seemed purposely to make the breach wider in his inaugural lecture, when, among several derogatory remarks about contemporary English composers, he referred scornfully to those of them who called some

work a rhapsody. "Could anything be more inconceivably inept?" he asked. "To rhapsodise is one thing Englishmen cannot do." As Stanford had already written some of his successful Irish Rhapsodies, it seemed obvious against whom the remark was directed, and was another example of Elgar's tactlessness. His devoted friend W. H. Reed admitted that even in an ordinary short speech Elgar had an unhappy knack of letting "a word or a phrase drop which had the effect of annoying someone and which, if he had stopped to consider it, he might have left unsaid." It was a pity that Stanford descended to the same rather childish level by satirically using one of Elgar's favourite musical directions, nobilmente, and applying it to a passage in his Ode to Discord.

The scene of the strangest episode in the Elgar/Stanford disagreement was at Lady Elgar's funeral at Little Malvern in 1920. In Elgar as I Knew Him, and in a letter to Plunket Greene, W. H. Reed relates that, as he was following the coffin to the graveside, "a hand was placed convulsively on my arm and a voice said, 'Tell him I had to come. I dare not go to the graveside as I am not well and my doctor absolutely forbids me to stand bareheaded in the open air; but I felt I must come: do tell him from me' ". It was Stanford, who then "buried his face in his hands and walked away in tears." Far from being touched by Stanford's gesture in toiling "all the way from Malvern contrary to the doctor's orders", Elgar was, if anything, even more implacably hostile when he heard of it after the funeral. He regarded it as "a cruel piece of impertinence", and, in a letter to Schuster, he bitterly described it as "a very clever 'trick' to make it appear that after all, he is really a decent fellow etc ., and that I am the culprit - that the fault (if any) of our difference (which only exists by his manufacture) is wholly mine and not his. As to his wanting to show respect and the like, I do not believe a word of it and never shall do: it was a mere political trick. He is an old friend of yours, older than I am, and probably more trusted, but that cannot alter my opinion". But, even in this unforgiving mood, Elgar felt constrained to add, "For the good things he has done in the past I still hold respect."

Not until another two years had passed was there at last some sort of reconciliation. It was at the 1922 Gloucester Festival, when a memorial tablet to Parry was unveiled, that Granville Bantock, or Brewer - accounts differ, brought the two men face to face. Stanford exclaimed with his usual impetuosity, "Let's forget all about it", and held out his hand. Afterwards Elgar maintained that he had no idea what 'it' was they had to forget, but at least some sort of rapprochement had been effected. A photograph of the occasion shows Elgar staring ahead with a kind of uncompromising cool aloofness, and with his morning coat tightly buttoned up. When chaffed by Sir Hugh Allen about this, he retorted tartly, "I always keep everything buttoned up when I am in this company," which scarcely struck a very cordial or conciliatory note.

Stanford died two years later, and thus the unhappy discord came to an end, except for that kept flickeringly alive by a few misguided members of

a Stanford clique who, as Michael Kennedy puts it, "not such big men as C.V.S. himself, were responsible in the 1920's and 1930's for ensuring a cold climate for Elgar's music in circles where they had influence." Now even they are forgotten.

In July of 1976 the BBC broadcast, on the same day, Stanford's Clarinet Concerto, and Elgar's First Symphony. It seemed to me a happy, even if unintentional, symbol of the reconciliation in harmony of these two men, both of whom in their own ways made imperishable contributions to the musical history of this country. And as I listened to the splendid music, I felt that perhaps under the benignity of "the Master of all Music, the Master of all Singing" the spirits of Elgar and Stanford, too, came together on that day as friends and fellow musicians.

R I C H T E R and GERONTIUS

A Strange Case of Incomprehension

by

Gareth H. Lewis

Without a doubt, Hans Richter deserves to be remembered with the deepest gratitude for his courageous championship of Elgar's music in the years around the turn of the century - when the composer was still experiencing difficulty in arousing the enthusiasm of his fellow countrymen. In particular, Richter gave superb first performances of the Enigma Variations & the First Symphony. It is sad, therefore, that to many Elgarians the name of Richter calls to mind chiefly the disastrous first performance of The Dream of Gerontius, which he conducted at Birmingham on 3rd October 1900. There are many puzzling features about Richter's part in this failure. We know that the chorus was ill-prepared, and that the soloists experienced difficulty both with the idiom and the vocal writing. One would have expected that Richter, with his reputation for understanding new and unfamiliar music, would have grasped the essentials of the work sufficiently firmly to have been able to convey a sense of leadership and enabled the choristers to have gained confidence and greater insight. If we look more closely at Richter's personality, however, we find that there was a deficiency in his emotional spectrum which put a surprisingly wide range of music outside his understanding - and it is probable that Gerontius came into this category.

Elgar, talking to Arnold Bax in 1901, bitterly blamed Richter for not knowing the score of Gerontius. This is hardly likely to have been the case. Richter's reputation as an interpreter of new music had been gained by careful and painstaking preparation of his performances. Richter had a copy of

the score early in September 1900 (giving sufficient time for a musician of his calibre to study it in detail) and it would seem, from Elgar's correspondence with Jaeger, that the composer and the conductor went through the work together. We cannot, therefore, blame Richter for not having done his homework, and we must look more deeply for reasons for this failure. Hans Richter was Hungarian by birth, having been born at Raab in 1843. His mother was an opera-singer with close associations with Wagner (she sang in the first performance of Tannhauser), and she arranged for the young Hans to become a chorister in Vienna at the age of ten, and to study both the horn and piano. It was presumably through his mother, also, that he became acquainted with Wagner. In the 1860's he assisted the composer by preparing fair copies of Meistersinger for the printers. Then, as Richter's conducting career became established, he emerged as one of the leading champions of Wagner's music, and was invited to conduct The Ring at Bayreuth in 1876. Two years later he became chief conductor of the Bayreuth Festival. It was as a Wagner conductor that Richter began his career in Britain, sharing with the composer the conducting of the Wagner season at the Royal Albert Hall in 1877. From 1879, Richter was an established part of London musical life, following the launching of the first of the very successful annual series of Richter concerts.

After the death of Sir Michael Costa, in 1885, Richter was invited to become musical director of the Birmingham Triennial Festival. On the face of it, this was an appointment difficult to justify; Richter's reputation in this country was exclusively as an orchestral conductor. Although he had conducted opera on the Continent, he had little involvement with large-scale choral works, the main fare at the major British festivals. He was still unfamiliar with the work of those British composers kept busy providing the festivals with their regular 'novelties', and he had no experience in the administration of large-scale festivals. On the other hand, the Birmingham committee no doubt recognised the commercial value of capturing a young conductor with a rapidly-growing international reputation. There was, of course, considerable opposition to Richter's appointment. It was felt that a British conductor (Sullivan had been hotly tipped) would have been more suitable in view of the nature of the Festival, and the appointment was generally regarded as the typical failure of a committee of businessmen to understand the musical problems involved. Things seem to have started well, however. Many years later, Stanford, in an essay on the great conductors of his youth, recalled the effect Richter had at Birmingham. He wrote: "England had been, for long, in a condition of mezzo-forte in orchestral playing. The best material was there, but performances were only pretty good. To make them super-excellent as players was the work of an authoritative man such as Richter. He swept away the ridiculous hash of everlasting items from opera... He restored the orchestra to its proper balance... He signalled his tenure at Birmingham by securing Joachim to play. He knew his value, and the personal effect the great violinist would

have upon all the players who came into contact with him. With that Festival, mediocrity disappeared."

Stanford's essay was published in his book Interludes, which appeared in 1922. Clearly, he held Richter in high regard, but he was by no means blind to his limitations, and it is from Stanford's picture of Richter's musical personality that we can see those limitations which inevitably led to the failure of the 1900 Gerontius performance:

Richter was often stiff in his reading of an unfamiliar score. [He] was, and remained, a species of ideal bandmaster... For him, all music which was not German was foreign. Richter was all for straightforwardness. He hated extravagance, and even took the 'diablerie' out of Berlioz. He took everything from the standpoint of commonsense; for this reason, he was strongest in what he best knew - Beethoven, Weber, and the Meistersinger. He was not often electric [although] he had magnetism... He had an even temper, was always careful [and was] little affected by moods.

Richter, from this account, seems to have been a thoroughly sound, conscientious and painstaking musician, of the highest integrity, but ultimately, perhaps, just a little dull and emotionally contained. Indeed, these inhibitions sometimes prevented his getting close to the point of contemporary German music; Stanford tells a story of Brahms leaving a concert hall in anger at Richter's treatment of the slow movement of his First Symphony.

By the time of the preparation for the Gerontius performance, Elgar had every reason to feel confident of Richter's ability to understand the work; after all, Richter had already given two splendid performances of the Variations. Gerontius, however, occupied a totally different world, further from the mainstream of European music - a world which seems to have been closed to Richter. If the preparation for the performance had been less disrupted, perhaps Richter's professional competence might have resulted in an adequate representation of the work. Under the circumstances, only the inspiration that comes from total involvement could have pulled together the scattered threads. Elgar's friends shared his bitterness. The great Sheffield choral-conductor, Henry Coward, not only attended the performance, but had been Elgar's guest at several of the choral rehearsals. He was in no doubt as to Richter's responsibility for the Birmingham failure, and, in his memoirs, confirmed the extent of the conductor's musical limitations:

Even the cleverest man has his prejudices, and limitations in sympathies, outlook, and grasp of musical idiom. A striking case of limited attainment is afforded by Dr. Hans Richter. He was undoubtedly a great orchestral conductor, but as a choral conductor he was quite ordinary. The worst performances of

Messiah, Faust(Berlioz), and Gerontius were under his baton, and, though he was excused on grounds of his lack of sympathy with, or knowledge of, the idiom of the works, this did not make for the musical success of a festival. He, being a German, was not criticised, whereas, for a similar result, an Englishman would have been played alive.

Richter's career in Britain lasted little over another decade after Gerontius. The regular seasons of Richter concerts in London ceased in 1897, when Richter succeeded to the conductorship of the Hallé Concerts in Manchester. He became a familiar conductor at Covent Garden, where he conducted several complete cycles of The Ring. At Manchester he gave the fine first performance of Elgar's First Symphony in 1908 - thus making amends to the composer for the Birmingham disappointment. By this time, however, Richter's health was failing. The following year he conducted his last Birmingham Festival, and two years later severed his Manchester connection. He retired to Bayreuth, and died in 1916. Although the political situation forced him to renounce academic honours offered him during his career in Britain, he retained to the last an interest in the composers and other musicians he had encouraged through his Birmingham, Manchester, and London associations. British music owes much to Richter, a debt which must not be obscured by the memory of that one sad day at Birmingham in 1900.

IN MOONLIGHT - - - A Forgotten Elgar Song.

By K.E.L. Simmons.

A number of 'unknown' Elgar songs have recently been rediscovered. In most cases, their neglect seems due to the obscurity of the place of publication, but this cannot be said of the most notable one - In Moonlight. Published by Novello in 1904, for both high and medium voice and piano (in G, F and E flat), it was once widely available and, presumably, popular. But behind its publication lies an unusual story.

In late January 1904, Elgar cut short his "horribly disappointing" winter holiday in Italy (mainly at Alassio), paused in London to dine with King Edward on 3rd February, and hastened anxiously back to Malvern next day. He was keen to complete In the South at home - the only place he could really work - and did so by 21st February, in time for its first performance on the last night of the Elgar Festival at Covent Garden on 16th March. Later that year, despite outward signs of success and affluence - including the knighthood and the move to a more expensive house at Hereford - and the consuming urge to proceed with great music, he was obliged to spend much time making weari-

some arrangements from his existing works (as in earlier days when he was less well-known), mainly because of continuing financial difficulty. Among the arrangements were a number based on the canto popolare section of In the South, including the Canto Popolare (In Moonlight) for small orchestra, and versions for organ, solo piano, piano and various single instruments (violin, viola, cello, clarinet), and piano trio. As pointed out by Rosa Burley (who had joined the Elgars at Alassio in December 1903), all these versions later disappeared from currency - and none more so than a song also called In Moonlight, and set to the canto popolare tune with the words of Shelley's. Not mentioned in any of the standard biographies that include formal lists of Elgar's compositions, (from Maine [1933] to Parrott [1971], neither does it draw editorial comment or identification in either of the books of Elgar letters [1956, 1965], though there are evident references to it in both.

Thus, Elgar referred to "the song" while writing to Jaeger on 13th August, 1904, earlier letters having mentioned "some arrgts of the Canto Popolare", and to Frank Schuster on 3rd September. In the last letter, he remarked that "the Shelley words fit in an extraordinary way", and responded to a suggestion that the music might be set to Italian words - a true canto popolare indeed (which, unfortunately, seems never to have materialised) - by urging that the provider of such a version should be allowed to "go his own wicked serenading way". Finally, on 28th December, Elgar asked Jaeger please to send "In Moonlight, in F, I should think", to the tenor Gervase Elwes.

The words Elgar set - or, rather (as he often did with his songs), fitted to already existing musical material, published or not - came from one of the posthumously published poems of Shelley, written in the tragic last year of the poet's life (1822). The poem appeared in two forms, firstly under the title An Arriette for Music (To a lady singing to her Accompaniment on the Guitar) and later as The Keen Stars were Twinkling (To Jane). Elgar, omitting the first verse of the complete poem, started with the second - at the lines 'As the moon's soft splendour/o'er the faint cold starlight of heaven/Is thrown...' then passed to the fourth making minor changes and ending with the words 'A tone/Of some world... where music and... feeling/Are one', a thought clearly close to his heart. In the piano accompaniment, the spread chords of the lady's guitar may be heard.*

To some extent, the blame for the neglect of In Moonlight may lie with Elgar himself; his attitude to his solo songs with piano was distinctly casual, and, in later life, somewhat self-deprecating, and he seldom gave them opus numbers. But the relatively high price demanded by the publishers may also have discouraged many people. At one time, for instance, In Moonlight cost 2s0d for four pages of music, as against 3s6d and 5s0d for the vocal scores of The Dream of Gerontius and The Apostles respectively, while 2s0d would buy The Black Knight and only 1s6d The Banner of St. George. What may well have been the first modern performances of In Moonlight were given by Judith Rob-

inson and Barry Collett to members of the Elgar Society at Leicester (in 1976) and Malvern (1977), using an old copy found by Martin Passande.

We still urgently need from Elgar scholars a complete listing of all the arrangements, vocal and otherwise, made by the composer himself, as well as those made by others with his consent. I have myself already raised the question of the orchestral version of Adieu, the origin of which has still not been fully established. At present the listings - even of Elgar's own arrangements - seem very arbitrarily compiled, and have unaccountable omissions.

*The complete Shelley poem was set in 1935 by Roger Quilter, under the title Music and Moonlight.

For a note on the version of Adieu members should see the letter by Malcolm Walker in the September 1977 issue of the NEWSLETTER.



Malvern Festival

Following the highly successful 1977 Festival, which was based on the association of Bernard Shaw and Elgar with Malvern, and with each other, the 1978 programme offers a wide range of events.

The Festival will run from 22nd May to 11th June, and there will be performances throughout of a Shaw play at the Festival Theatre. There will also be a series of concerts, most of which will contain works by Elgar and his contemporaries. The Julian Bream Consort will appear on 24th May; on 27th May, John Shirley-Quirk will give a song recital, many of them settings of texts by Housman; on 28th May and 29th May the London Symphony Orchestra will be giving concerts at the Winter Gardens, and on the evening of 29th the London Symphony Ensemble will present a programme of wind serenades, to include works by Elgar. At Malvern Priory on 1st June, the Gabrieli String Quartet, with pianist John McCabe, will be playing works by Mozart, Elgar, and Walton. The Leicestershire Schools Symphony Orchestra will appear on 3rd June; the following afternoon, the Aldwyn Consort give a programme of Choral Music, and on the evening of the 4th, the Hallé Orchestra, under James Loughran, will include the First Symphony of Elgar in their concert. The same weekend, Jacqueline du Pre will be giving master-classes for young 'cellists, to which spectators will be admitted. On 8th June there is a performance of The Music Makers, and the John Wilbraham Brass Soloists, with organist Leslie Pearson will appear on 10th June. The Festival closes on 11th June with a performance of Elgar's King Olaf given by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus, conducted by Vernon Handley.

Booking brochure giving full details available in early March from The Box Office, Malvern Festival Theatre, Malvern, Worcs. Tel: 06845 3377.

Record Reviews

CONCERTO FOR VIOLIN AND ORCHESTRA in B minor, Op.61

Kyung Wha Chung, London Philharmonic Orchestra,
conducted by Sir Georg Solti.

Decca SXL6842

Kyung Wha Chung, the outstanding female violin soloist of her generation has broken new ground by turning her extraordinary cultural and artistic background to Elgar's music. Her remarkable technique, born in Korea and matured in the United States, has thrown new light on many of the standard violin 'classics', to nothing but their advantage. For me, outstanding amongst her recordings are those of the Sibelius and Prokofiev concerti, and it should not therefore be surprising that she has at last turned her attention to Elgar's Concerto, and committed her current view of it to disc.

I had the good fortune to be present at Chung's first British performance, when she was accompanied by the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, under Andrew Davis. I recall being concerned that the sheer size of the work would tax even her sure technique, but despite the obvious onset of fatigue towards the end, her achievement was outstanding, as was the support of Davis. Her subsequent London performances were with Sir Georg Solti, with whom she shares this current recording. Sir Georg established his Elgarian credentials through a committed recording of the A flat Symphony, and this new record is, I believe, his most notable Elgarian achievement since then. He keeps the music flowing, never driving it forward, and accompanying Chung most sensitively, as one would have hoped but not necessarily expected.

If ever a record warrants repeated hearings before making even a tentative judgement, this one does. My initial reaction was the opposite to that of the fine Zukerman/Barenboim record [CBS: 76528], which is rich and expansive, with a sense of purpose and unity of its own. The Chung/Solti performance appeared to be more introspective, less considered, and for that the more hurried. Although the timing of recorded passages can make comparison invidious, the opening of the Concerto (up to the solo entry) is slowest in the hands of Barenboim, with Solti only marginally quicker, which partly proves the lie to my reaction. After Chung's solo entry, I felt the music lost tension, but repeated hearings prove this to be incorrect; it is more as if the atmosphere is changed slightly for the move to a deeply-felt rendering of the second subject. Never has it sounded quite like this, introspective rather than expansive, but charged with tension. At times Chung's wrapt concentration leads to some doubtful intonation, but her

insight into the depths of Elgar's world is real indeed, and although the surface sweep of Elgar's music may be handled more dramatically by others, this view is surely valid. Only at the end do I feel that the power of Elgar's statement becomes reduced, as if both soloist and conductor had not moved from the concentration of the cadenza before matters took care of themselves.

'Aquí Esta Encerra El Alma De...' is Elgar's inscription for his Concerto, and as Geoffrey Crankshaw says in his sleeve note, it must be partly the composer's own soul which is 'enshrined' in the work, and this recording goes some way to revealing that soul in a way I have not heard before. It is an undemonstrative, sensitive, and, at times, original performance, which succeeds in searching out the heart of one of Elgar's most personal utterances.

A. H. A. N

SYMPHONY NO. 1 in A flat, Op.55

London Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.
HMV ASD3330

It is less than ten years since Sir Adrian's previous account of this symphony appeared (on SRCS 39), and there may be many who question the wisdom of another recording. (There are eight currently available versions). However, this new record is a great improvement on the Lyrita disc. For one thing, the sections of the orchestra are in their usual positions for Sir Adrian, i.e. with the first violins opposite, and not adjacent to, the seconds. The HMV recording quality is far superior; Elgar's sumptuous orchestration is vividly captured, and the passages for solo instruments come through strongly without sounding unnaturally loud. The LPO are in magnificent form, even by their high standards, the brass in particular revelling in the virtuosity of the writing. And finally, there is Sir Adrian's interpretation. I always feel that in his Elgar performances there is a sense of inevitability - and I do not use the word in a pejorative sense. He seems to let the music flow, and to speak for itself. Even on those occasions when he takes liberties (as with the tempo of "Turn you to the stronghold" in The Apostles) there is the feeling that this is how it should be played. And, of course, he has a clear grasp of the overall structure of each work.

The opening of the symphony is, to my mind, the finest on record; the great tune is held back slightly, and the listener is kept in suspense until the repeat with full orchestra at figure 3. The Allegro is urgent and exciting; Sir Adrian conveys this restlessness without letting the music run away from him. The contrasts and conflicts in this movement are brilliantly brought out, and when the climax is reached at 50-51 the motto theme really does emerge as "heroic, lofty and calm", as Basil Maine described it. The first battle is over. The second movement is slightly slower than in most of the other versions, but this seems to give Sir Adrian time to pick out detail which is often

obscured in faster readings. Once again, the pacing is superb; the modulation into the Adagio is almost unnoticed, having been prepared by a careful relaxation of the tension. Conversely, the slow movement is faster than the other versions (with the exception of Elgar's own). Sir Adrian is very restrained and keeps the tempo moving along serenely, without ever seeming to hurry.

The finale is far more committed than in the previous recording, and almost half a minute faster. Like the opening movement, the contrasts are very evident; especially impressive is the cantabile rendering of the march at 130 after the turbulence of the opening Allegro. The performance is beautifully judged right to the end. After the triumphant return of the motto theme, we have a real stringendo at 150, and the temptation to rush the last few bars is firmly resisted. This, then, is a recording to treasure, and my "massive hope" in the future is that Sir Adrian will continue to delight us with offerings such as this.

G. H.

POMP & CIRCUMSTANCE.

HMV ASD 3388

Elgar: Pomp and Circumstance Marches 1 - 5; Imperial March; Empire March; Walton: Crown Imperial(original version); Orb and Sceptre.

London Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Sir Adrian Boult.

With this record another gap in the Elgar discography has been re-filled with a recording of the Empire March, written for the British Empire Exhibition held at Wembley in 1924. The sleeve proclaims in three places that this is its first recording, but as John Knowles correctly points out in his letter published in The Gramophone, it was recorded in 1925 by the BBC Wireless Symphony Orchestra under Percy Pitt, on Columbia 9059. It is not a work of the same calibre as the Pomp and Circumstance, or Imperial Marches, but, nevertheless, is well worth hearing. It is particularly suitable for out-of-door ceremonial occasions, and receives a committed performance from Sir Adrian and the LPO. The Pomp and Circumstance marches, and the Imperial March are superbly played, with great drive and nicely placed rubato. I cannot understand why the later marches rarely appear in concert programmes these days. They are obviously popular with those who buy records, as there are now ten recordings of the complete Marches currently available. It is a pity that EMI did not take the opportunity of completing this record with the Coronation March(1911), but the Walton marches, which received their premieres by Sir Adrian in 1937 and 1953 respectively, receive authoritative performances. The recording is excellent throughout.

R. T.

THE ELGAR SOCIETY

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING. The Society's Annual General Meeting will be held at 2.30 p.m. on SATURDAY, 11th MARCH, 1978. Formal Notice, Agenda and Minutes of the last meeting will be sent to members in the near future. The location will again be the Central Hall, Westminster, London, S.W.1.

BRANCH REPORTS

LONDON

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

Oct. 3rd. John McCabe: Elgar's Piano Music.

This meeting provided an excellent start to the new season. Mr. McCabe spoke in some detail about most of the purely piano pieces, and carefully analysed a number from the keyboard, including the Concert Allegro. He concluded his talk by giving a brilliant performance of the latter work. All his illustrations were given on the piano - a welcome change from the usual disc and tape. The Chairman both introduced and thanked Mr. McCabe at the conclusion of the meeting.

Nov. 7th. Diana McVeagh: Elgar's Concert Overtures - and other Associations.

Miss McVeagh dealt in considerable detail with the origins of Froissart, Cockaigne, and In the South. She drew attention to the influence which the music of other composers clearly had on Elgar at that time, notably Wagner and Weber. During his relatively short period of residence in London, before the turn of the century, Elgar attended many of the Crystal Palace concerts, which undoubtedly greatly enlarged his musical knowledge. In this connection Miss McVeagh made the interesting suggestion that Elgar may well have regarded this experience as his 'university.' Her excellent and informed talk was illustrated mainly with examples which she had specially put on tape for the occasion.

NOTE: As Monday, 1st May, has been declared a public holiday, the meeting arranged for that date has been postponed until the following Monday, 8th May.

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT. West Midlands members are asked to note that the AGM of the Branch will be held on March 4th, 1978, and not on 14th January as previously announced. It is hoped to deal with business speedily in order to hear Rodney Baldwyn, organist of Pershore Abbey, speak on "Imperial Elgar." We hope for a maximum attendance at the meeting.

Sept. 17th. For our first meeting of the 1977/78 season, Jack McKenzie, Curator of the Birthplace, played extracts from recent Elgar recordings on the stereo unit presented by Raymond Monk. Jack had previously said that he wanted to include as much music as possible, with the briefest introductory remarks by himself. Consequently, we enjoyed generous excerpts from five recordings in varying mood, starting with the stirring Coronation Ode. Then, the haunting String Quartet, and from the same record the Piano Quintet, with John Ogden. The particularly poignant recording of a live performance of the Cello Concerto, made in 1970 in America by Jacqueline Du Pre, was followed by the new recording of the Violin Concerto by Kyung Wha Chung. After the music, Miss Bridget Monahan presented Jack (for the Birthplace) with an 1881 Three Choirs Festival programme. This contained a goodly number of Elgars listed among the orchestral players.

At the end of the meeting the Secretary presented, on behalf of the Branch, a liquidiser as a wedding present to Vivienne and Jack. They expressed their thanks to all concerned.

Oct. 15th. Using blackboard, tape-recorder, and piano, Dr. Jerrold Northrop Moore took a packed audience through the conception, development, and mysteries of the Enigma Variations. Beginning with the disappointments over Caractacus, and ending with a quotation from Symphony no. 1, yet to come, Dr. Moore delighted and intrigued his audience, and whilst destroying the idea of conventional searches for the unheard theme, offered his own ideas about the 'dark saying.' Members who were not present will have to wait until Dr. Moore publishes his ideas to appreciate the scholarly thesis presented to us. Introduced by Chairman John Savage, Dr. Moore was warmly thanked by Edwin Buckhalter for his talk. The Secretary also thanked the Principal of Worcester College of Higher Education, Mr. Pierson, and the Head of the Music Dept., Mr. Stanley, for the use of the Music Room.

Nov. 19th. "A hawk dreaming poetry in captivity"; thus the young Elgar writing his "shed" music for performance by his friends, whilst reserving the bassoon part for himself. "Shed" music - "written in a shed" (Michael Kennedy) or "shed - cast off" (Fritz Spiegl). Thus Frank Greatwich and Spencer

Noble introduced the Woodwind Quintets to members, meeting for the first time in the Smoke Room of the Old Palace, Worcester, the heating having broken down in the rest of the building! The possible influence of Bizet, Saint-Saens, and Dvorak was mentioned, but Elgar, as always, went his own way - "mine own children" as he said. After 100 years, the Quintets have been rediscovered and have been performed on radio by the Athena Ensemble, and, very recently, at Birmingham University by the Bavicci Ensemble. By the time Elgar wrote his most extended work for woodwind - the Quintet in four movements - the fledgling was about to fly. Michael Trott thanked the speakers, also their wives, Jean and Eleanor, who had provided refreshments for the meeting.

The Worcester Festival Choral Society will take part in the Elgar Foundation Concert at the Royal Albert Hall, on 5th May. It may be possible to organise a coach from Worcester, should there be a demand. Anyone interested should contact Mr. & Mrs. A. Boon. Telephone: Wichenford 419, before the end of February.

NORTH WEST

Secretary: D. Carrington, 84 Park View Rd,
Lytham, Lytham St. Annes, Lancs.
Tel: 0253 737859.

Our newest branch, whose inaugural meeting is described on another page, is still planning its first meetings at the time of writing. It is hoped to have a January meeting, and members, or intending members, should contact Mr. Carrington as soon as possible for full details.

EAST MIDLANDS

Secretary: Gordon Richmond, 1 Blankley
Drive, Soughton Rd. Leicester,
LE2 2DE. Tel: 0533 704930.

Sept. 17th. This meeting took the form of an informal Quiz, with the questions set by John Hammond, of Nottingham. Barry Collett won the £5 record token prize. A very pleasant evening.

Oct. 15th. A talk, illustrated with records, by Barry Collett, on "The Lesser-Known Elgar, with particular reference to Caractacus." In the absence of the Chairman, Mr. John Hammond introduced the speaker.

Mr. Collett's enthusiasm for Elgar - instanced by his recent Uppingham College recording - and his knowledge of Elgar's music made him an ideal choice as speaker on this occasion. Caractacus, and other early Elgar works have been neglected for many years, and only recently have we had a chance to again enjoy these important stages in Elgar's career.

Nov. 26th. A taped programme, "My Dear Nimrod", presented by Tony Cross and George Wallis of Solihull. The part of Nimrod (A. J. Jaeger) was taken by Mr. Cross, and the part of Elgar by Mr. Wells. The programme gave us a most enlightening insight into the friendship between Elgar and Jaeger, by their exchange of letters. It was not meant to be a dramatised presentation, but consisted of material obtained from "Letters to Nimrod", and illustrated with excerpts from Gerontius, Enigma Variations, Caractus, Grania and Diarmid, Cockaigne, The Apostles, Symphony no. 1, Music Makers.

This was a programme which reached to the very heart of Elgar, and made us realise how divinely inspired is his music. Malcolm Sargent was once asked to conduct Aaron Copeland's Symphony no. 3 at the Edinburgh Festival. He declined; while very clever "it had nothing here", he said, touching his heart. How completely untrue this is of Elgar's music. The most inspiring part of the programme came, as usual, at Gerontius' "Take Me Away!" and the Angel's Farewell. Our grateful thanks were expressed to our friends for a most rewarding evening, also to Rita Cross for all the typing of the script. A complete labour of love!

Mr. Dan Stacey, the sculptor, and a member of the Branch, brought with him to the meeting 6 copies of the fine bust that he made of Elgar some months ago, and which first appeared at the West Midland meeting at Newland in April. These six copies were, needless to say, quickly sold. Another labour of love!

The following note has been received from Gordon Richmond:

I wish to inform my friends in London and West Midlands Branches that I am now at the Leicester Diocesan College of Theological Training, Launde Abbey, East Norton, Leics., in preparation for entrance into God's Sacred Ministry. As far as is known at present, Ordination will take place at Leicester Cathedral on Sunday, July 1st, 1979, and any of those friends able to be present would receive a most cordial welcome.

EDITOR'S NOTE: The success of the East Midlands Branch of the Elgar Society is due largely to Gordon Richmond's enthusiasm and hard work. All of us wish him well in his chosen calling, and we hope that his future duties will still leave him sufficient time to remain an active member of the Society.

A COURSE PROMOTED BY UNIVERSITY OF BIRMINGHAM--Dept. of Extra-Mural Studies::: At the College of Higher Education, Oldbury Road, WORCESTER, commencing Wednesday, 18th January, 1978, at 7.30 p.m. - "A Trailer for the Three Choirs Festival." Ten weekly meetings studying and listening to selected works, with scores when possible, thus leading to greater understanding and enjoyment of the 1978 programme. Tutor:- Prof. Brian Harvey. Fee:- £3.80.

Letters

From CHRISTOPHER KENT

After reading the recent press articles describing the similarities noted by Raymond Leppard between the Enigma theme and part of the Benedictus of Stanford's Requiem, I should like to point out two similar cases of Elgar's 'unconscious' recollection, prior to the Variations.

In September 1878 Elgar played in the orchestra for the premiere of Stainer's cantata The Daughter of Jairus at the Worcester Festival. Some nine years later he noted at the end of the ms. of Ave Verum Corpus that the final phrase of the motet was: "Very like 'Love Divine' in Daughter of Jairus. Stainer." It certainly is.

Allegretto $\text{♩} = 100$

Stainer: The Daughter of Jairus
No. 3. Love Divine
all love excell'p

Love Divine all love excell'p joy & Heaven to earth love down fix in us thy humble dwelling All thy

pp

frank-ful in-ter-cis-cro-nem Cor-pus lae-ti-ty per-fec-tum Ve-ro fuit San-cti-ne. Es-to nobis pro-tec-tum. Amen: in-cen-sa

cresc.

Elgar: Ave Verum

Largo

A-ve ve-ni cor-pus na-tum ex Ma-ri-a Vir-gi-ne. Vp-re pec-cu-mus in-mu-ni-ta-ti-o-nem In-cen-sa pro-fu-ci-re

One month after this on February 24th 1887, he played in Stockley's orchestra for a performance of Verdi's Manzoni Requiem. This experience was to have an even more far-reaching creative influence on him; the phrase of Verdi's that so indelibly implanted itself in Elgar's memory is in the orchestral part at fig. 1 of the Introit. Some most pregnant reflections of this phrase can be seen in several subsequent works: The Light of Life (no. 15, letter C), Caractacus (Sc. VI, fig. 5), The Music Makers

(figs. 39 & 50) and in the Cello Concerto Adagio.

I offer these thoughts in an attempt to place Mr. Leppard's observation in a wider, and perhaps more significant context vis-a-vis Elgar's creative processes. I doubt, however, whether Elgar would have been able to share the sentiment of Robert Louis Stevenson's remark, when recalling the writing of Treasure Island, that "stolen waters are proverbially sweet..."

Verdi - Requiem Requiem
Introit: Requiem Aeternam (fig. 1)

pp dolcissimo. [et lux perpetua] pp etc..

Elgar - The Light of Life (no. 15, later)

Andante. [And he worshipped Him]
pp. a tempo, più lento. etc..

Carastencus.
(Scene II fig. 5)

pp molto cresc. f etc..

The Music Makers.
(fig. 39)

più tranquillo. a tempo ma sostenuto.
A breath ins. p. dim. etc.. (fig. 50)

the land - to which they are going

f pp lento dolce. Cello Concerto.

ten

f. dim. pp. dolcis. etc..

From: GEOFFREY HODGKINS

I greatly enjoyed the articles by Mr. Scowcroft on the links between Sullivan and Elgar. May I add some observations of my own?

When Elgar first lived in London, from 1889 to 1891, he attended as many concerts as he could. Sullivan's grand opera Ivanhoe, received its first performance on January 31, 1891. It ran for 160 performances (a short run by Savoy standards, but no grand opera had been run continuously before this time). The Elgar's left London for Malvern on June 20, 1891, so Elgar had plenty of time to see it. He already had a close affinity with Scott's work, for the overture Froissart had been inspired by a passage in Old Mortality, with its mention of a knight's "loyalty to his king, pure faith to his religion, hardihood towards his enemy, and fidelity to his lady-love." These are all important themes in Ivanhoe. Also, the themes of the defence of England, with its echoes in Caractacus, and, a common theme in Elgar's early choral works, the hero as an outcast. But Ivanhoe looks forward to Elgar's next large-scale work, The Black Knight(1893). Both works include a tournament, with a mysterious knight dressed in black:

"To the barrier of the fight,

Rode at last a sable knight.

'Sir Knight! your name and scutcheon, say!' (The Black Knight)

"Will there be no more fighting? They are too strong, the challengers.
All have gone down before them! Who comes here?

The Black Knight! The Black Knight! He won the prize of yesterday!

Hail to the Black Knight! Hail to the great unknown!" (Ivanhoe)

The Black Knight is an interesting work, as Elgar is still searching for a personal style, and Sullivan's influence can be heard on occasions, notably the opening nine bars of Scene 3. There is an interesting parallel too, in the choice of texts in the sacred works of the two composers. Both The Light of the World, and The Apostles, begin with the words "The Spirit of the Lord is Upon Me" from Isaiah 61:1, and the final chorus of both The Prodigal Son and The Kingdom use the words of Isaiah 63:16. Although we know that Elgar was very well-read, Dora Penny tells us that his Biblical knowledge, up to the time of writing The Apostles was sketchy. Could it be that he remembered Sullivan's chosen words from performances that he took part in as a young man?

Martin Passande, (Continued) in-trade - old records, books and scores were also to be had. Many people will know of another of Martin's great interests, which led him to compile his imaginative Elgar Cookbook - those at the McKenzie's Birthplace party last summer will remember with pleasure the array of dishes prepared by him. In August he married Mary(née Fecitt) of the London branch, and on their honeymoon they were on TV film at the Three Choirs Festival. Mary and Martin now live at Bromley, Kent, and are regulars at the meetings of the London branch.

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