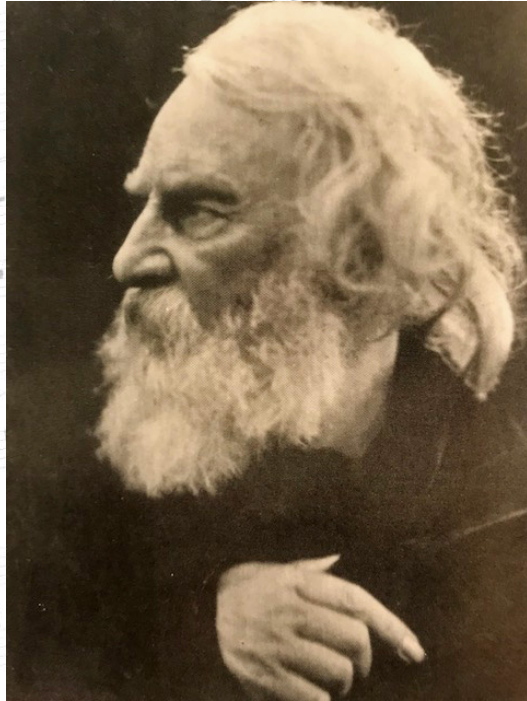


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*Front Cover: Portrait photograph of Longfellow taken at 'Freshfields', Isle of Wight in 1868 by
Julia Margaret Cameron. Courtesy National Park Service, Longfellow Historical Site.*

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End a footnote with a full stop, please, and never put a comma before a parenthesis.

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At the end of the essay, add about a hundred words about the author, please.

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Editorial

Professor Russell Stinson, the musicologist, in his chapter on Elgar in his recently issued *Bach's Legacy* (reviewed in this issue) states that Elgar had 'one of the greatest minds in English music'.¹ This is a bold claim when considering the array of intellectual ability in English music ranging from Byrd to Birtwistle, but his musical achievements alone fully substantiate this: in Michael Kennedy's words he was 'a blazing genius as a composer'.² Even though he was self-deprecating and often sought to downplay his technical knowledge, that he was a master manipulator of the elements of music – its structure, tonality, harmony, dynamics and above all its themes and melody – is clear to all who study his scores and listen attentively to his works.

What makes this more remarkable is that he was an autodidactic polymath, constantly seeking, absorbing, and retaining information. Whilst Elgar's formal education may have ended when he left Littleton House school, Lower Wick at the age of 15, he never ceased to learn.

Elgar had a quicksilver mind, that encompassed many disciplines. He was a voracious reader. His reading, although perhaps undisciplined, was wide-ranging and eclectic as befits a self-educated man. This was evident to Delius during their two-hour conversation in May 1933: he quickly deduced that Elgar was well read, being suitably impressed by Elgar's espousal of Montaigne. A particular area of study was the eighteenth-century and he was something of an authority on that era. His extensive interests included the theatre, art, and heraldry. The development of the gramophone, recording techniques, the cinema, and wireless drew his attention. He developed a love for chemistry and scientific gadgets, subsequently showing a keen interest in microscopes. Practical skills included carpentry and outdoor activities such as cycling, fishing, kite-flying, photography, travel, horse racing, golf, and in later life motoring through Worcestershire and adjoining counties, with plate pool and billiards as indoor recreations. Perhaps his paramount interest in his final years was his pet dogs. He filled his life with all these things and more and was constantly inquisitive.

Arthur Fox Strangeways, writing shortly after Elgar's death noted: 'Two things were characteristic of Elgar – his endless curiosity about everyday things, and his power of finding fun in chance people and ordinary incidents'.³

Wordplay, anagrams, spoonerisms, ciphers, and puzzles were fun and remained a lifelong fascination. Wulstan Atkins gives an account of how Elgar solved a crossword clue with the unusual engineering word 'caisson' in 1930. He had come across the word some time before, consulted a dictionary and remembered it.⁴ This was his invariable practice.

However, sometimes his keen intelligence let him down, and he uttered remarks which caused needless hurt and distress, particularly when angry with choirs, or solo singers, the result of a level of performance which did not reach his expected standards. On mature reflection such reactions might have been avoided and the offending words left unsaid. On occasion this unthinking tendency invaded his letters, causing him to exaggerate and self-dramatize. Elgar's well known letter to Sidney Colvin of 13 December 1921 is a case in point, where he states that he was 'still at heart the

1 Russell Stinson, *Bach's Legacy: The Music as Heard by Later Masters* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2020), 156.

2 Michael Kennedy, *The Life of Elgar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), x.

3 Dr Fox Strangeways, 'Elgar', *Music and Letters*, Volume XV, No.2 (April 1934), 111.

4 E. Wulstan Atkins, *The Elgar-Atkins Friendship* (Newton Abbott: David & Charles, 1984), 430.

dreamy child who used to be found in the reeds by Severn side with a sheet of paper trying to fix the sounds ... but as a child & as a young man & and as a mature man, no single person was ever kind to me', when there is a huge amount of evidence to the contrary.⁵ Be that as it may, we cannot doubt the truth of Michael Kennedy's words: 'That he was a great master of the art and fabric of music is only one aspect of the final portrait of Elgar ...'⁶ and for orchestral players, under Elgar's baton in his own works, it was correctly stated that 'every man knew that he was facing a great mind'.⁷

One product of his early reading, following his mother Ann's influence, was a love for the poetry of Longfellow, which provided a framework for his choral works *The Black Knight* and *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf*. Julian Rushton has written an article putting *The Black Knight* in context, showing how Black Knights and related themes feature in other literature and music and sets out the history of Uhland's ballad which Longfellow translated.

Arthur Reynolds traces the importance of Longfellow to Ann and Edward and draws upon recent biographical studies of the poet to provide an outline of his life and work and his importance in American literature.

Relf Clark closely examines the four days in April 1920 between Alice Elgar's death and her funeral at St. Wulstan's church, and has shone a searching light on the possible cause of her death, those who attended her funeral, the music played, and the presence of C.V. Stanford.

Christopher Grogan's book *Edward Elgar, Music, Life and Landscape* was published toward the end of 2020 and is reviewed by Arthur Reynolds. Dr Clark reviews two recently issued books that, whilst not dealing exclusively with Elgar, have chapters on the composer.

Andrew Keener reviews a DVD featuring Sir Adrian Boult, who is also the subject of a fine five CD box set issued by the LPO which includes the A flat Symphony and the concert overture *In the South* – the conductor Adrian Brown, a pupil of Sir Adrian, surveys these discs.

Our Chairman, Neil Mantle warmly reviews a CD of Rivka Golani playing viola arrangements of eight pieces by Elgar, and from Munich we welcome a marvellous recording of the Bavarian Radio Chorus, conducted by Howard Arman, singing, highly appropriately, *From the Bavarian Highlands* and other part-songs. Christopher Morley has listened to this beautiful CD which is worthy of a place on every Elgarian's shelf. John Knowles considers Elgar's Organ Sonata arranged for strings. The Violin Concerto continues to attract virtuoso players and a recording with Renaud Capuçon, Rattle and the LSO, coupled with the Violin Sonata where Capuçon is joined by the pianist Stephen Hough, is reviewed by Tully Potter. Having written enthusiastically about the RVW Society's first volume of Folk Songs arranged by Vaughan Williams, Steven Halls now reviews the second CD in the series, and Andrew Neill considers a CD of 20th century British Treasures sung by Kathleen Ferrier from SOMM.

Contributions for the August issue should reach the editors no later than 14 June 2021.

Kevin Mitchell

With the Editorial Team of Andrew Dalton, David Morris and Andrew Neill

5 Jerrold Northrop Moore, ed, *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime*, 2nd edition (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2012) 403.

6 Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar*, 3rd edition (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987) 334.

7 Letter Wulstan Atkins to Stephen Lloyd, 16 August 1978, quoted in Stephen Lloyd, 'Elgar as Conductor', Christopher Redwood, ed, *An Elgar Companion* (Ashbourne: Sequoia Publishing, 1982) 298.

Ballads and Demons: a context for *The Black Knight*

Julian Rushton

Why did Elgar settle, for his first big choral and orchestral work, on a translation of a gloomy German narrative poem?¹ The eponymous Black Knight humiliates and destroys the two children of an unnamed king; as Diana McVeagh puts it: 'There appears to be no moral cause for the evil, which seems gratuitous and random'.² But this kind of tale had a wide appeal to all kinds of artists, from the late eighteenth century into the early twentieth: roughly the period denoted, in part, by the term 'Romanticism'.

The Black Knight sets a ballad written by the German author, jurist, and politician Ludwig Uhland (1787–1862). *Der schwarze Ritter* is dated 1806, the year he turned nineteen. The translation is by the American author Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–82), included in his semi-autobiographical novel *Hyperion* (1839), so he must have found the ballad in an early edition of Uhland's poems. Another English translation by a lesser author appeared in 1864; Longfellow's was certainly the better choice.³

German ballads and their composers

Uhland's interest in medieval themes led in 1836 to *Der Mythos von Thör nach nordischen Quellen* (*the myth of Thor from Norwegian sources*); this Norse god figures in another work of Longfellow and hence in Elgar's *King Olaf*. Prior to that, having established a reputation with ballads published in periodicals, Uhland had turned to lyrical genres, attractive to romantic composers of Lieder. He published them in 1815 as *Vaterländische Gedichte* (*Poems of the Fatherland*). This collection didn't include the ballads, which were added to the 1826 edition Longfellow presumably acquired.⁴ Uhland's lyrics cover favourite romantic topics, unlike the gruesome ballads: love, pastoral, spring, mountains, and religious themes. *Der schwarze Ritter*, however, except for mentioning Pentecost, seems non-religious, as jousting, dancing, and feasting seem a strange way to celebrate a church festival. But nobody at court is represented as wicked, whereas in other ballads sin is horribly punished.

Black knights figure in other legends, usually in opposition to the 'parfait gentle knight' of

1 In "'How strange": Elgar's early notations for *The Black Knight*', I traced the work's compositional origins: this *Journal*, Vol. 22 no. 3 (December 2020), 5–17.

2 Diana McVeagh, *Elgar the Music Maker* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 17.

3 Illustrations from an early edition of *Hyperion* appear in the previous issue of this *Journal*, pp. 1 and 64. The other translation is in *The Songs and Ballads of Ludwig Uhland*, translated from the German by the Rev. W. W. Skeat, M.A., late fellow of Christ's College, Cambridge (London: Williams and Norgate, 1864).

4 *Gedichte von Ludwig Uhland*; I have consulted the 'latest edition' (Neuste Auflage) of 1842.

chivalry (although some of the Knights Templar also wore black armour). Declining to reveal his 'name and scutcheon', Uhland's knight would have been excluded from the Round Table; but in legend (including Arthurian) the knight in sable armour deals death by orthodox means (weapons), whereas Uhland's either poisons the children (mockingly saying 'golden wine will make you whole'), or uses black magic. Although he looks human, and speaks, jousts, and dances, he is accompanied by supernatural phenomena: 'When he rode into the lists,/The arch of heaven grew black with mists,/And the castle 'gan to rock'.

The Black Knight is one of several ballads that end with the premature death of young people. In Uhland's *The Boy's Death*, a youth ventures out despite warnings of danger; brutally assaulted, he dies with a vision of the maiden who had urged him to leave 'the valley of death'. In *The Three Damsels*, a queen sets three young guards to protect her rose-garden; three 'damsels' are allowed in, but (as in Goethe's *Heidenröslein*, well known in Schubert's setting), the roses fight back, and they bleed. Three knights arrive, kill the guards, and destroy the garden. The queen vows to bury the guards on beds of rose leaves and petals, and raises a garden of lilies, flowers of mourning.

Several composers were attracted to Uhland and his main predecessor Gottfried Bürger (1747–94). In 1857 Franz Liszt composed a 'melodrama' (recitation with music) for Bürger's *Lenore*, later the subject of a symphonic poem by Henri Duparc (*Lénore*, 1875). Bürger's *Der wilde Jagd* (*The Wild Ride*) inspired César Franck's symphonic poem *Le Chasseur maudit* (1882). These ballads feature horses controlled by demons: the 'accursed huntsman' is punished for breaking the Sabbath, and when Lenore's lover dies in battle and she blasphemes, the devil appears in her lover's form and rides her to a graveyard; the earth swallows her up as demons mockingly sing 'may God have mercy on your soul'. Another wild ride is Goethe's *Erkönig*, although the horse itself isn't demonically possessed. In Schubert's setting, a single voice takes four roles: narrator, father, child, and the supernatural 'Erlking', with a fiendishly difficult piano part which at least two later composers decided to orchestrate.⁵ Similarly, in *The Black Knight*, the chorus takes all the roles – the king, the herald, the knight, the prince and princess – as well as narrating; the piano version, the first to be completed (as was normal with Elgar) is also difficult, but the superb orchestration is his own.

Schubert's contemporary Carl Loewe (1796–1869) was something of a specialist in ballad settings, including *Erkönig* and others by Goethe, and some by Uhland. Even the supposedly austere Johannes Brahms found such material appealing. His early piano Ballade (Op. 10 No. 1, 1854) is

Erkönig by Moritz von Schwind c.1860



5 Hector Berlioz c.1860, and Max Reger c.1914.

The Erl King by Albert Steiner circa. 1910



entitled *Edward*, after a Scottish tale of parricide derived in turn from the folk-song collection of another German poet, Johann Gottfried Herder (1744–1803). *Edward* was set as a song by Loewe, by Brahms's associate Heinrich von Herzogenberg (1843–1900), who taught Elgar's contemporary Ethel Smyth, and by Brahms himself as a duet (Op. 75). Brahms also set a few of Uhland's verses including three in his Op. 19 set of songs.

In the year Elgar got to work, 1889, a French study was published that includes a translation of Bürger's *Lenore*; it proposes that such German ballads originated in British sources, and despite its title ('origines anglaises'), it includes Scotland and Ireland. I return to Scotland below.⁶

Other ancient sources

The future Lady Elgar, highly cultured in science and literature, may well have suggested *The Black Knight* to her husband. She is one of the few composers' wives with her own biography; Percy M. Young tells us that she engaged with literature in other languages, including German.⁷ Choosing this subject also suggests that Alice and Edward Elgar were attuned to the spirit of the age (*Zeitgeist*). Tales of death, often of the young, the supernatural, the Middle Ages, and chivalry continued to preoccupy literary, artistic, and musical minds into the early twentieth century (e.g. Schoenberg's *Gurrelieder*); throughout this time, the Mozart opera that was most admired included a graveyard-scene, a walking statue, and punishment by demons.⁸

Uhland's *Der schwarze Ritter* is one of many works that contribute to this aspect of international romanticism. In Elgar's Britain, at the time of the Pre-Raphaelites, William Morris, and the continuing Gothic revival in architecture, his choice of this poem seems natural enough. The grotesque gargoyles of Viollet-le-Duc's 'restoration' of Notre-Dame de Paris were anticipated in the novel of that name; its author, Victor Hugo, had legitimized the grotesque as a proper concern for artists in his Preface to *Cromwell* (1827). The grotesque in music was represented in works of Berlioz and Liszt among others, and could have affected Elgar's response to the ballad, especially to the supernatural phenomena that attend the knight's entry into the lists, and the devilish orchestral laughter as he raises the beaker of 'golden wine'. Another composer attracted to grisly folk-tales (and one Elgar admired) was Antonín Dvořák, but his late symphonic poems *Vodník* (*The Water Goblin*) and *Polednice* (*The Noon Witch*) date from 1896, too late to have affected *The Black Knight*. However, Elgar might have known Dvořák's earlier *The Spectre's Bride*, for although its Worcester performance came later (1896), it was published in London (1885), and vocal scores could have reached the Elgar music shop.

Another similar subject was chosen by Elgar's near contemporary, Gustav Mahler, also for his earliest large-scale vocal and orchestral work. *Das Klagende Lied* (*Song of sorrow*) involves child murder, but this time supernatural forces mete out justice; the bone flute sings, denouncing the fratricidal killer ('Ach Bruder, lieber Bruder mein! Du hast mich ja erschlagen!'). The story derives from the Brothers Grimm, many of whose folk-tales, published in the early nineteenth century, are indeed grim. Mahler composed it when about the age at which Uhland wrote *Der schwarze Ritter*, in which the supernatural is emphatically not a force for justice. Coincidentally, Mahler revised his cantata about the time Elgar was finishing his; neither can have been aware of the other but in their

6 G. Bonet-Maury, *G.A. Burger et les origines anglaises* [sic] *de la ballade littéraire en Allemagne* (Paris, Hachette, 1889).

7 Percy M. Young, *Alice Elgar: Enigma of a Victorian Lady* (London: Dobson, 1978), 61–80.

8 *Don Giovanni*; *The Magic Flute* was also influential, the naturalistic comedies less so.

reflection of the *Zeitgeist*, as Robin Holloway puts it, the comparison ‘runs all the way’.⁹

Michael Pope suggests a Scottish legend as a source for *Der schwarze Ritter*; it appeared in a German source of 1694 which could have been known to Uhland.¹⁰ The wife and three children of King Alexander III of Scotland (1241–86) died, so he remarried; this much is historical. The legend Pope refers to tells of a spectre seen at the wedding, which then vanished. Another version, in Holinshed’s chronicles, identified the unwelcome visitor as a monster, skeletal but with raw flesh, an omen of death.¹¹ Historically, Alexander died a year later, following a fall from his horse. So it isn’t really the case, as Pope avers, that ‘Uhland’s poem recounts many of these events, both literally and symbolically; some are telescoped, and some are transposed’. Whether or not Uhland knew the Scottish legend, his narrative is essentially different. The knight – evidently Death itself – appears as a living human, neither phantom nor skeleton. No queen is mentioned; the children die together, whereas Alexander’s died at different times; and Uhland’s king lives on. The last line of the ballad suggests that Death takes no pleasure in harvesting one already old.

Scotland attracted the romantics as a semi-exotic location for operas; it was the original setting for the supernatural legend of the Flying Dutchman, displaced by Wagner to Norway. Scottish lyrics were used for songs, and Scotland inspired orchestral music by Mendelssohn, Berlioz, Bruch, and a native Scot; works by Hamish MacCunn (1868–1916) were performed late in 1889 at Crystal Palace concerts that Elgar attended, soon after work started on *The Black Knight*.¹² In MacCunn’s ballad *Lord Ullin’s Daughter* (1888), young lovers, eloping, are drowned. Elgar attended a ‘Scotch concert’ (30 November) that included MacCunn’s concert overture *The Ship of the Fiend*, whose title, in this context, speaks for itself. The day before, he and Alice had heard the better-known *The Land of the Mountain and the Flood*, which might have led to wistful reflection on his abandoned ‘Scotish’ [sic] or ‘Scotch’ overture of 1886; he showed it to the Birmingham conductor ‘old Stockley’, who ‘candidly said he could not read the Score & it sounded to him disconnected – So I have retired into my shell & live in hopes of writing a polka someday’.¹³

Hyperion, a Romance

Longfellow’s Uhland translation was reissued in a book of verses that Elgar owned, but its first appearance was in his much admired semi-autobiographical novel, *Hyperion: a Romance*. This was a favourite of Ann Elgar, and was surely known to Alice. It came to have special associations for the composer himself, before and after the choice of poem for his debut as a composer of dramatic choral music. He gave copies to his fiancée Helen Weaver, to his sister Lucy (in 1889, the year he began composing *The Black Knight*), to Hans Richter, and as late as 1931 to Vera Hockman.¹⁴

The title of Longfellow’s ‘Romance’ doesn’t refer to the mythological Greek sun-god evoked

in Keats’s long, unfinished, poem *Hyperion*. It could have been suggested by Friedrich Hölderlin’s only novel, *Hyperion* (1797–9), which also treats of philosophy and lost love, but in the context of Greek aspirations for independence. Longfellow’s subject is touching, but his dialogue largely consists of improbably long speeches that don’t make easy reading. His *alter ego* ‘Paul Flemming’ attempts to alleviate a bereavement by travelling in Germany, as had Longfellow himself.¹⁵ He meets an Englishwoman, Mary Ashburton, and tries to impress her by teaching her the language. When he suggests reading *Der schwarze Ritter*, she replies: ‘I beg you not to perplex me with your German, but read me the ballad in English’. He replies, rather improbably: ‘I will improvise a translation for your own particular benefit’; this is *The Black Knight* as printed in the novel. Her reaction is not encouraging: ‘It is indeed a striking ballad but rather too grim and ghostly for this dull afternoon’. She preferred other poetic offerings, but the relationship does not prosper.

The disconsolate Flemming departs for further exploration of Alpine scenery, eventually experiencing something of a conversion: a determination to return to his homeland and do something positive with the rest of his life. What seems to trigger his resolve is a church service with sermon, and the burial of a child. Flemming ponders the representation of Death in the ancient world, ‘sculptured as a beautiful youth’, with wings:

Strange, that, in later days, this angel of God, which leads with a gentle hand into the “land of the great departed, into the silent land”, should have been transformed into a monstrous and terrific thing! Such is the spectral rider on the white horse; – such the ghastly skeleton with scythe and hour-glass, – the Reaper, whose name is Death!

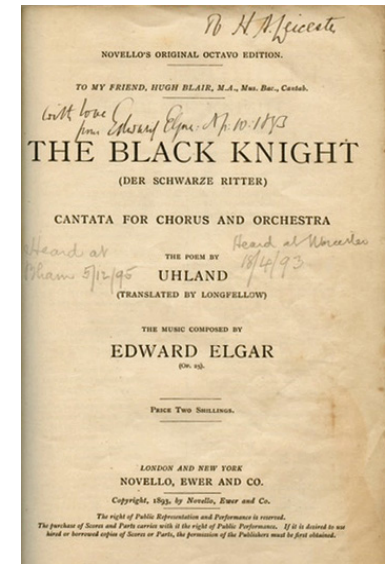
Or transformed, he does not add, into a Black Knight. Flemming continues by considering the Dance of Death as a popular theme in culture: ‘in an ancient Spanish poem, and painted on a wooden bridge in Switzerland’:¹⁶

The images of Holbein are well known. The most striking among them is that, where, from a group of children sitting round a cottage hearth, Death has taken one by the hand ... It is a beautiful design, in all save the skeleton. An angel had been better, with folded wings, and torch inverted.

Thus images suited to the German ballad-tradition return, to play a part in the hero’s regeneration; shades, perhaps also, of Elgar’s *Dream Children*.

15 Robert Anderson describes Longfellow’s German travels in *Elgar and Chivalry* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2002), 105–120.

16 Luzern has just such a bridge.



Vocal score of *The Black Knight* given by Elgar to Hubert Leicester on 10 April, 1893. (Arthur Reynolds’ archive)

9 Robin Holloway, ‘The Early Choral Works’, in Daniel M. Grimley and Julian Rushton, *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 63–80, cited 66–7.

10 Michael Pope, note to the EMI Classics recording CMS 5 65104 2 (1984).

11 Ralph Holinshed’s *Chronicles of England, Scotland, and Ireland* (first edition 1577). Holinshed also lies behind Shakespeare’s *Macbeth*, witches included.

12 Martin Bird (ed.), *Provincial Musician. Diaries 1857–1896* (Edward Elgar: Collected Correspondence Series V, Vol. 1, Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2013), 72, 89.

13 Letter to Dr Charles Buck, 8 January 1886. Jerrold Northrop Moore (ed.), *Letters of a Lifetime* (Second edition, Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2012), 19–20.

14 For this, and further information on Longfellow, see Arthur Reynolds’s article in this issue of the *Journal*.

Longfellow took an epigraph from Goethe: ‘Wer nie sein Brot mit Tränen ass’ (‘He who never ate bread in tears’), a poem from his widely-read novel *Wilhelm Meisters Lehrjahre* (1795–6), which may have been a model for *Hyperion*, with descriptions of Germany that Longfellow emulates. ‘Wer nie sein Brot ...’ is sung by the harpist, and was set by Lieder composers including Schubert and Schumann. As with Goethe, Longfellow’s popularity for musicians endured, in Sullivan’s *The Golden Legend* (1886), Elgar’s *King Olaf* (1896), and Samuel Coleridge-Taylor’s popular *Hiawatha* settings (1898–1900).

Shortly before finishing *The Black Knight*, Elgar wrote to his mother in August 1892 from Heidelberg, where he and Alice had encountered

... a great procession of Students – torchlight – the three duelling guilds with a brass band & marching – all their faces wounded (silly fools) & many with bandages on – gay uniforms and no end of torches: it did remind me of *Hyperion* and the beer scandal.¹⁷

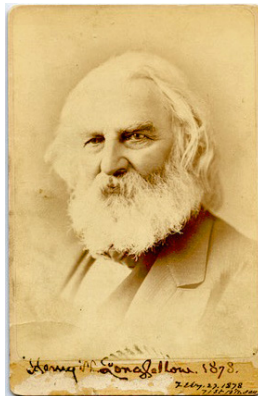
The ‘beer scandal’ (*Hyperion* Book II, chapter 4) is a row among duelling students in a Heidelberg hostelry. Presumably the Elgars wouldn’t have entered such premises, but by this time they would have known of the rowdy Leipzig students of Goethe’s *Faust*, another supernatural tale with lyrics destined for music; one of Longfellow’s rowdy students has the name ‘Brander’, taken from the tipsy singer of Goethe’s ‘Rat song’. This was set in French in Berlioz’s *La Damnation de Faust*, a work often performed at British choral festivals in the period of *The Black Knight*; it too includes a wild ride, leading to the pit of hell. The Elgars apparently attended a couple of performances.¹⁸

Longfellow’s translation

Longfellow is faithful to the original, although Flemming’s ‘improvisation’ uses deliberately archaic (‘poetic’) English. When the herald invites the Black Knight to identify himself, Uhland has: ‘Herr! wie ist Eur Nam und Zeichen?’; Longfellow has: ‘Sir Knight! Your name and scutcheon say’ (rhyming with ‘mighty sway’). In stanza six he has ‘Flowerets’ for ‘Blümlein’ (little flowers), a German diminutive modern enough for the doomed miller-lad of Uhland’s contemporary Wilhelm Müller, as, like the shocked onlookers in *The Black Knight*, he contemplates withered flowers.¹⁹

Longfellow’s only lapse in fidelity is the very last line: ‘Greis! Im Frühling brech ich Rosen’, translated as ‘Roses in the spring I gather’ (perhaps just acceptable to rhyme with ‘father’; Uhland’s ‘Rosen’ rhymes with ‘Fredelosen’). Although ‘roses’ offered no

Carte-de-visite portrait of Longfellow taken in 1862 by William Norman of Montreal. Source: Arthur Reynolds’ archive



17 Letter of 12 August 1892. Moore (ed.), *Letters of a Lifetime*, 51.

18 *La Damnation* was performed over 70 times in Britain by 1890. Elgar played in extracts in Birmingham under William Stockley (1882 and 1883). A programme in the Birthplace collection is of a complete performance under Hans Richter in 1889. The diaries mention another (26 November 1890) under Joseph Barnby; see Bird (ed.), *Provincial Musician*, 42, 118. My thanks to Dr Rachel Howerton for details of Berlioz performances.

19 Wilhelm Müller (1794–1827), *Die schöne Müllerin. Trock’ne Blumen* (No. 18 in Schubert’s cycle) begins ‘Ihr Blümlein alle’.

convenient rhyme, it’s a pity to omit ‘Greis!’. English equivalents might need two syllables (‘old man’, ‘greybeard’, ‘dotard’), but the word epitomizes the contempt with which the Black Knight dismisses the king’s plea to die with his children.²⁰

Longfellow (or Flemming) maintained Uhland’s ballad form: six-line stanzas, the rhymes AABCCB (so ‘father-gather’ is rhyme B in stanza ten). He was less strict with respect to metre. Uhland adheres to one syllabic pattern: 8, 8, 8, 5, 7, 8. Longfellow varies this; the first stanza’s syllable count, for instance, is 9, 9, 7, 4, 6, 7, the first-line’s nine only achieved by compressing ‘It was’ to ‘‘Twas’. As an example, here is the cruel ninth stanza:

	Rhyme	Syllable-count
An des Vaters Brust sich schlangen	A	8
Sohn und Tochter; ihre Wangen	A	8
Täten völlig sich entfärben.	B	8
Wohin der graue,	C	5
Erschrockne Vater schau,	C	7
Sieht er eins der Kinder sterben.	B	8
Each the father’s breast embraces,	A	8
Son and daughter; and their faces	A	8
Colorless grow utterly.	B	7
Whichever way	C	4
Looks the fear-struck father gray,	C	7
He beholds his children die.	B	7

Here the B rhyme is dubious; ‘utterly’ (translating ‘völlig’), correctly set by Elgar with first-syllable emphasis and a weak ending, is made to rhyme with ‘die’, which must be strong (as Elgar duly sets it). To his credit, Longfellow keeps that critical word for last; but there is nothing in the quite simple German that corresponds to the poetic inversion of word-order in lines 3 and 5.

Elgar decided to set the poem in 1889, as a ‘Ballad for Chorus and Orchestra / Words by Longfellow. Music by Edward Elgar / if he can’.²¹ At that point, there was no mention of his cantata being ‘a sort of symphony’, but his division of the poem into four parts, corresponding to four symphonic movements, emerged logically from the ballad, which has four scenes. Two stanzas are used in each of the first three movements – Pentecost, the joust, and the dance – and the remaining four in the finale in which, at the feast, the action is brought to its dire conclusion. This makes the finale by far the longest movement, roughly the length of the second and third combined.²²

20 Skeat did no better. His lines are generally shorter, and his translation is more laconic; the last line also omits ‘Greis!’. Like Longfellow, he rhymes father with gather, and inverts word-order: ‘With hollow voice and dead / Replies the phantom dread / In spring I roses gather’. *Lord Ullin’s Daughter*, by Thomas Campbell (1777–1844), uses the same rhyme: ‘Oh! Haste thee, haste!’ the lady cries, / ‘Though tempests round us gather; / I’ll meet the raging of the skies, but not an angry father’.

21 Small letters sic: The autograph is shown in my previous article (see note 1), on p. 10.

22 In EMI Classics CMS 5 65104 2 (1984), the timings are 6.03, 6.10, 8.36, 14.40. The conductor is Sir Charles Groves, a reliable adherent of composer’s tempi, in this case with metronome marks.

Symphonies in which the finale is either the longest movement, or the one that bears the most interpretative weight, had come into vogue with the example of Beethoven, notably his two symphonies in minor keys. The Fifth, in C minor, became the archetype for symphonies that proceed from hardship to triumph, or from struggle to the stars (*per ardua ad astra*); the Ninth ('Choral') sets Schiller's *Ode to Joy* – which actually invokes stars, in lines set by Beethoven as a sublime evocation of the godhead. The '*ad astra* narrative', as it has come to be known, is represented by other symphonies in C minor, such as Brahms's First, and two closer to Elgar's cantata in date, Bruckner's Eighth and Mahler's Second (the 'Resurrection', with its choral finale). Indeed, after the noble introduction, Elgar's First Symphony follows this pattern, with an apotheosis of the motto-theme near the conclusion of a finale that begins in turmoil and in entirely the 'wrong' key (D minor, whereas the symphony is in A flat). The narrative of *The Black Knight* moves in the reverse direction: from joy in spring via the conflict of chivalry (the court doesn't even try to eject the unwelcome and dangerous guest), to end in darkness. How Elgar works this into a symphonic form will be the subject of a third article, 'if I can'.

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Elgar and Longfellow

Arthur Reynolds

The last notable person to see Henry Wadsworth Longfellow alive was Oscar Wilde. In 1882, Wilde was a young journalist visiting Boston, Massachusetts on a lecture tour. In January he journeyed to Cambridge for breakfast with America's leading man of letters; Longfellow died in March.

Perhaps sensing his impending mortality, the 75-year-old sage took the opportunity to seek the 28-year-old Irishman's view on an unsettling incident that had occurred fourteen years previously, when Longfellow visited Britain on a book tour. The itinerary included a summons to Windsor Castle for an audience with Queen Victoria. Flustered in the Royal presence, Longfellow expressed spurious surprise that he was so well known in England. 'O, I assure you, Mr. Longfellow', replied the Queen, 'You are very well known. All my servants read you'.¹

Was Her Majesty's rejoinder an intentional rebuff or an appreciative observation? Longfellow confessed that he could never work out whether he had been mocked or complimented. Wilde was in no doubt; to him the Queen's response amounted to, 'the rebuke of Majesty to the vanity of the poet'.² Victoria's diary suggests otherwise, observing that on Longfellow's arrival, her staff clustered about the castle corridors, eagerly awaiting a glimpse of the literary lion. In Britain as well as America, Longfellow's uplifting verses and prose narratives were held dear as romantic antidotes to the menial tedium of working-class existence. Among the uncountable admirers of the writer's work was a farm labourer's daughter from Hereford named Ann Greening, subsequently Ann Elgar.

Ann's second son Edward was born half a century after Zilpah Longfellow's second son Henry: Henry's birthdate falls on February 15, 1807; Edward's on June 2, 1857. Both enjoyed happy boyhoods, growing up in provincial towns and their environs. Centred in Worcester, Edward's environs - 'a world to conquer and to love,' - encompassed the section of the Vale of Evesham that rises up to meet the Malvern Hills. Henry's home base was Portland, Maine, then an appendage of Massachusetts; his cherished landscape stretched from Casco Bay to the sandy plains of Brunswick and beyond to Plymouth, where nearly two centuries earlier his Pilgrim ancestors had landed to participate in the founding of New England.

Nineteenth-century Portland was about the size of Worcester and about the same distance from Boston as Worcester was from London; the two towns differed significantly, however, in terms of their inhabitants' outlook on life.

Though a prosperous trading city with well-located waterways, Worcester in young Elgar's day was an inward-looking place, where most of the populace passed through life strapped in a

1 Charles C. Calhoun, *Longfellow, A Rediscovered Life* (Boston: Beacon Press, 2004), 3.

2 Ibid. 3.



Casco Bay where Longfellow roamed as a happy child. (Arthur Reynolds' archive)

rigid social structure. In the lower middle of this glacial hierarchy stood the hapless tradesman, a status that circumscribed the Elgar family: Ann, her husband William Henry (W.H.) and their five surviving children.

By contrast, Portland was an outward-looking seafaring town, where trade was synonymous with adventure. The recently-ended Revolutionary War had bequeathed a panoply of heroic figures, most sprung from middle- and lower-middle class origins. The triumph of a force of arms-bearing tradesmen over a professional army led by well-born officers produced the stuff of folklore that cast its spell over small town American boys of Longfellow's generation.

Both Longfellow and Elgar were sired by talented but taciturn fathers, who obliged their offspring to seek warmth and intimacy in the laps of their mothers. Long stays away from home as a circuit-travelling lawyer and later as a congressman accounted for Stephen Longfellow's air of aloofness toward Henry and his seven siblings. The *froideur* of Elgar senior was more complicated.

During Edward's childhood, W.H. Elgar's frame of mind was hobbled by a paralytic streak of indolence weighed down by crushing loss. W.H. adored his oldest son Harry, whose boyhood passion for botany presaged a bright future as a physician. When Harry was struck down by scarlet fever in the spring of his sixteenth year, the grief 'nearly cost my Father his reason', according to Edward's sister Lucy. Though he playfully referred to Edward as 'the governor', it appears that W.H. found himself unable to transfer to his second son the unalloyed affection he felt for his first-born. He seems to have preferred his third son Joseph. Then son number three died, and the wound of bereavement opened again. For both the poet and the composer it was up to the mothers to compensate and compensate they did admirably.

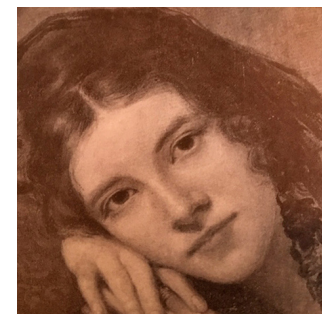
Zilpah Longfellow raised her children on derring-do stories of her countrymen's prowess in nation-forging struggles against the myriad menaces of the inhospitable wilderness, the dispossessed Indians, and the American War for Independence. She named her second son Henry after a beloved brother who died fighting the Barbary pirates preying on American shipping. When Henry displayed an aptitude for languages, Zilpah persuaded Stephen to send him to Europe, where in time their son acquired a capacity amounting to genius as a translator of foreign tongues that would enable the published outpourings with which Ann Elgar would regale her brood.

Lucy Elgar tells us their mother never tired of immersing herself and her children in Longfellow's verse and prose. Pasted into Ann's scrap-book are extensive passages from *Hyperion*, a particular favourite with both mother and son. In later life, Edward would scour second-hand bookshops in search of discarded volumes for presentation to friends. Hans Richter received a copy of *Hyperion* accompanied by a letter from Elgar praising the book as a precious offering.

In her memoir *The Story of November 7th, 1931*, Vera Hockman, another recipient, recalls an intimate moment when Edward said, '.... I am going to give you a little book - Longfellow's *Hyperion* - which for many years belonged to my Mother. Since then for years & years it has gone with me everywhere. I want you to have it because now you are my Mother my child my lover and my friend'.³ Henceforth, Vera's endearment name for Edward would be *Hyperion*.

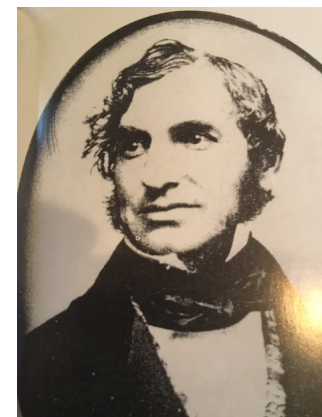
Hyperion is Longfellow's long lament to his ill-luck in love. In 1831 he embarked on an idyllic marriage to Mary Potter, a Boston judge's daughter, who died in childbirth four years later. After a year's heartbroken drifting through Germany, the widower's grief surrendered to the salve of new love, when Henry met Francis 'Fanny' Appleton, the eighteen-year-old daughter of a Boston textile merchant. There followed a seven-year courtship during which Fanny rejected her suitor's marriage proposals innumerable times before they wed in 1843. What caused Fanny to keep Henry waiting was the manner of his wooing. The author who would subsequently enchant countless hearts with tales of Evangeline and Hiawatha, thought he could win Fanny's heart with recondite recitations of what an adolescent girl would understandably perceive to be treacly Teutonic dramedies. After three years of obsessive but unsuccessful attempts to kindle her affection, Henry took his obtuseness to new heights with the 1839 publication of *Hyperion*. The 439-page lugubrious love letter full of identifiable analogies so mortified Fanny she kept her *innamorato* in suspense for another four years.

The narrative takes us on a Rhine journey with Paul Flemming, a young man traumatized by the death of a friend. In due course Flemming meets and becomes besotted by an English girl called Mary Ashburton, who summarily rejects him. In terms of critical response, *Hyperion* suffered summary rejection too; Edgar Allen Poe thought the text, '...without design, without shape, without beginning, middle, or end...'.⁴ So did Fanny, who dismissed *Hyperion* as, '... desultory, objectless, a thing of shreds and patches like the author's



Francis Elizabeth Appleton in 1834. Oil on Canvas. Courtesy U.S. National Park Service, Longfellow National Historical Site

Longfellow in 1848 aged 41. Daguerreotype by Southwork and Hays, Boston. Courtesy of the Metropolitan Museum of Art.



³ Kevin Allen, *Elgar in Love* (Malvern, Worcs: Aldine Press Limited, 2000), 41.

⁴ Nicolas A. Basbanes, *Cross of Snow, A Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow* (New York: Penguin Random House, 2020), 168.



Paynes Meadow and the river Severn
(Arthur Reynolds' archive)



Ann Elgar and Edward at the time she started reciting the poetry of Longfellow to him
(Arthur Reynolds' archive)

mind... The hero is evidently himself, and... the heroine is wooed (like some persons I know have been) by the reading of German ballads in her unwilling ears...⁵ Chief among those repellent verses was *Der schwartze Ritter* by Johann Ludwig Uhland.

In time, *Hyperion* would take its place in the affections of Longfellow's public as an incisive travel guide to Germany and Switzerland. In his letter to Richter, Elgar cited the book as the source, '...from which I, as a child, received my first idea of the great German nations'.

Between 1892 and 1896, Edward set to music four of Henry's texts:

- 1) 1892: Elgar's choral song *Spanish Serenade* sets 'Stars of a Summer Night' from Act 1 of Longfellow's play *The Spanish Student*. Initially scored for two violins and piano, Elgar later produced a version for small orchestra. Although he had never been to Spain, his scoring sumptuously evokes the pleasure the poet takes in Spain's sultry nights by underpinning the piece's luxuriant piano and voice sonorities with a guitar-like strumming from the violins.
- 2) 1893: The composer's cantata *The Black Knight* divides Longfellow's translation of Uhland's *Der schwartze Ritter* into four scenes wherein Death, posing as a 'sable Knight' arrives as a 'grim Guest' at the medieval halls of a Hofburg palace to snuff out the lives of the monarch's children with the dire riposte: 'Roses in the spring I gather'. Begun in 1889, it took nearly four years of prodding by Alice Elgar and Hugh Blair to raise Edward's self-confidence to a level enabling him to complete the work. At a thousand bars, *The Black Knight* proved to be his first large-form choral composition. For further information and insight, see Julian Rushton's excellent article elsewhere in this issue.

5 Ibid. 199.

- 3) 1894: *Rondel*, Elgar's courtly-love song for voice and piano makes use of a verse form originating in French lyrical poetry of the 14th century. Longfellow's translation of the poem by Froissart consists of two quatrains in which the first two lines of the first stanza function as a repeating refrain.
- 4) 1896: Elgar's second cantata, *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* is largely drawn from *The Musician's Tale*, an episode found in Longfellow's *Tales of a Wayside Inn*. A group of disparate story-tellers exchanges yarns around the fireside of a country inn. Among them is a musician modelled on Longfellow's close friend Ole Bull, the Norwegian virtuoso violinist and insurgent renowned for his role in Norway's struggle for independence from Sweden. In the fifth story of Part 1, the Musician draws his listeners near with the disclosure of a 'wondrous book' called the *Heimskringla*. Written by the twelfth-century Icelandic sage Snorri Sturluson, the *Heimskringla* (*The Circle of the World*) introduces us to Olaf Tryggvason, the Viking chieftain-convert, who during the last decade of the tenth century brought Christianity to Wotan-worshipping communities dwelling along the coasts of the North Sea. After the cantata's premiere at Handley, *Birmingham Gazette* critic Robert Buckley spoke for many by pronouncing the work to be, 'stamped throughout with greatness'. The *Staffordshire Sentinel's* review began with the headline, MR. ELGAR THE GREATEST ENGLISH GENIUS SINCE PURCELL.

Although he did not specifically set any lines from *The Divine Tragedy*, Longfellow's verse drama crucially influenced *The Apostles*, particularly his conception of Mary Magdalene in 'The Tower of Magdala' scene from 'The First Passover'. Elgar's presentation of Mary Magdalene's part in *The Apostles* drama, his 'In the Tower of Magdala' scene, comes straight out of Longfellow's portrayal of the beautiful-but-fallen girl dwelling in her eyrie:



The Malvern Hills from Leigh Sinton taken in 1973 (Arthur Reynolds' archive)

COMPANIONLESS, unsatisfied, forlorn,
 I sit here in this lonely tower, and look
 Upon the lake below me, and the hills
 That swoon with heat, and see as in a vision
 All my past life unroll itself before me.
 The princes and the merchants come to me,
 Merchants of Tyre and princes of Damascus,
 And pass, and disappear, and are no more;
 But leave behind their merchandise and jewels,
 Their perfumes, and their gold, and their disgust.

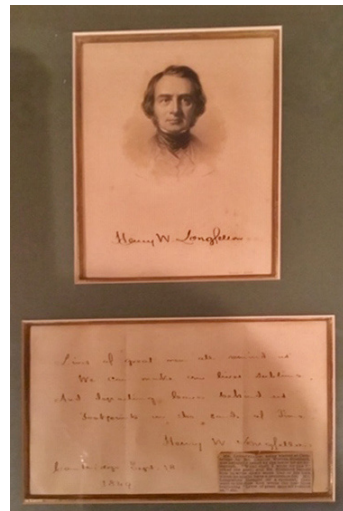
Redemption comes from Mary's momentous healing encounter with Jesus:

A fisher's boat drew near the landing-place
 Under the oleanders, and the people
 Came up from it, and passed beneath the tower,
 Close under me. In front of them, as leader,
 Walked one of royal aspect, clothed in white,
 Who lifted up his eyes, and looked at me,
 And all at once the air seemed filled and living
 With a mysterious power, that streamed from him,
 And overflowed me with an atmosphere
 Of light and love. As one entranced I stood,
 And when I woke again, lo! he was gone;
 So that I said: Perhaps it is a dream.
 But from that very hour the seven demons
 That had their habitation in this body,
 Which men call beautiful, departed from me!

Uncertainty grips her until Mary's second encounter with her Healer.

This morning, when the first gleam of the dawn
 Made Lebanon a glory in the air,
 And all below was darkness, I beheld
 An angel, or a spirit glorified,
 With wind-tossed garments walking on the lake.
 The face I could not see, but I distinguished
 The attitude and gesture, and I knew
 'Twas he that healed me. And the gusty wind
 Brought to mine ears a voice, which seemed to say:
 Be of good cheer! 'Tis I. Be not afraid!

August Jaeger's *Analytical Notes* identify the significance of the collaboration: 'The scene, "In the Tower of Magdala" is perhaps the most original thing that we owe to the composer's genius. The prominence given to the outpouring of Mary Magdalene's grief and anguish; the allusion to her past life...(the one suggestion of worldliness amidst surroundings so truly sacred and so deeply moving); the idea of letting Mary be a spectator, and to a certain extent the narrator of the "Storm" scene....symbolic of the storm raging in her heart, and subservient to the one poetic idea of her conversion to Christ...make the scene one of the genuine "creations" in modern music'.



Left: Manuscript of lines from *The Divine Tragedy* and portrait of Longfellow by Eastman Johnson taken in 1846 when he was aged 39 (Arthur Reynolds' archive)

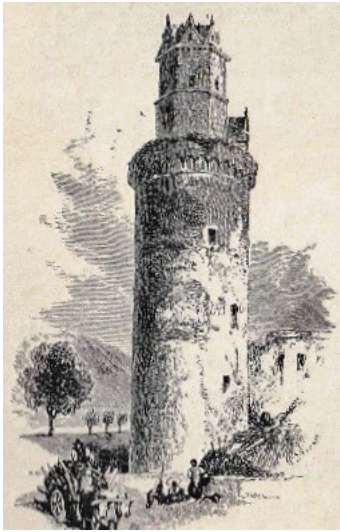
Above: Elgar in 1898 at the porch of 'The Mount' school, Malvern, taken by Rosa Burley (Arthur Reynolds' archive)

The life-narratives of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow and Edward Elgar took comparable twists and turns, with this distinction: nemesis came early to Edward. Though he carried the scars of his early life into old age, once Elgar broke free of the bonds he thought held him back, there was no stopping him. Apart from losing one wife and enduring a prolonged courtship with another, Longfellow led a charmed life until 1861, when a self-lighting match set fire to Fanny's clothing. Trapped in her hooped skirt, there was no escape from incineration. Burns from Henry's unsuccessful effort to stop the spread of the flames left his face and hands permanently disfigured. Most photographs of Longfellow dating before 1861 depict him clean shaven; afterward, all images show him bearded to conceal his facial lesions.

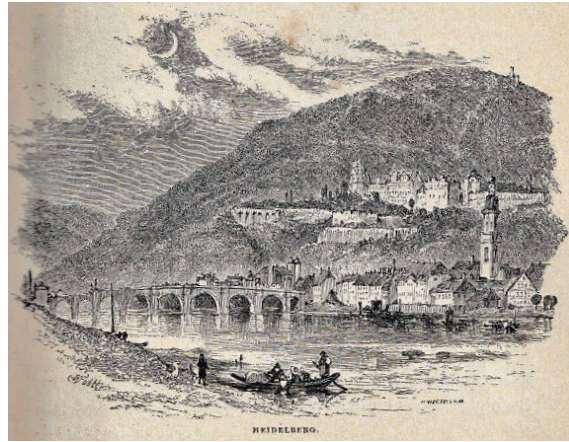
For both artists, inspiration was Janus-faced. One visage looked back on their countryside while the other looked forward to the cultural horizons of Western Europe. Both achieved fame as conduits of European musical and literary culture into their respective localities, particularly the culture of German romanticism. Henry's translations introduced American and British readers to the beauties of German Literature. In 1875, a grateful Kaiser awarded Longfellow his country's highest civilian honour by inducting him into Pour Le Mérite, the order founded by King Frederick the Second, aka Frederick the Great, whose prior ranks included Mendelssohn and Liszt. A quarter of a century later, Britain's King Edward VII would adopt the honour as the Order of Merit. The first musician recipient would be Sir Edward Elgar.

Edward's linkage to the German romantic musical tradition was cited in 1905 by the great Austrian violinist Fritz Kreisler: 'I place him on an equal footing with my idols, Beethoven and Brahms'. Four years later Arthur Nikisch, principal conductor of the Berliner Philharmoniker from 1895 until his death in 1922, endorsed Kreisler's view in an interview with a British journalist, who asked Nikisch for an appraisal of Elgar's Symphony No. 1. 'I consider Elgar's symphony a masterpiece of the first order, one that will be ranked on the same basis with the great symphonic

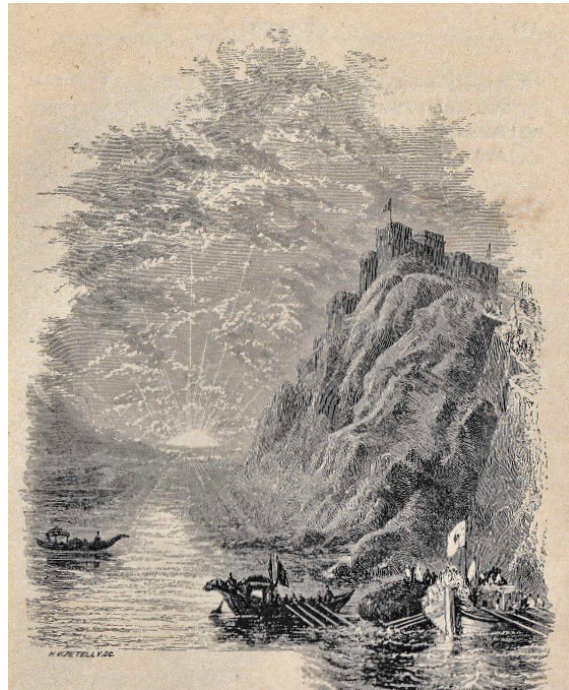
Three drawings taken from Longfellow's poetry. Drawings by Myles Birket Foster engraved by Henry Vizetelly (from Second Edition of *Hyperion* published by David Bogue of Fleet Street, 1853).



Longfellow's Journey: The Tower at Andernach



Longfellow's Journey: Heidelberg



Longfellow's Journey: Illustration for Uhland's *The Castle by the Sea*

models - Beethoven and Brahms...When Brahms produced his first symphony it was called "Beethoven's tenth" because it followed on the lines of the great masterpieces of Beethoven. I will therefore call Elgar's symphony "the fifth of Brahms".

The aftermath of warfare - the American Civil War for Longfellow; the European Great War for Elgar - blighted the reputations of both artists in their last years. George Orwell's post-World War I commentary could have found equal application to the post-Civil War era in America:

...by 1918 everyone under the age of forty was in a bad temper with his elders, and the mood of anti-militarism which followed naturally upon the fighting was extended into a general revolt against orthodoxy and authority. At that time there was, among the young, a curious cult of hatred of 'old men'. The dominance of 'old men' was held to be responsible for every evil known to humanity, and every accepted institution from Scott's novels to the House of Lords was derided merely because 'old men' were in favour of it⁶

The works of both Elgar and Longfellow fell victim to posthumous generations of critics calling themselves Modernists. 'Longfellow is to poetry what the barrel-organ is to music', sneered arch-Modernist Van Wyck Brooks. Culture arbiter M.J. Turner poured scorn on Elgar's 'Salvation Army Symphonies'. What the critics were unable to forgive in the works of both artists was admirably articulated by Percy M. Young, whose commentary on Elgar could be applied to Longfellow as well (*italics mine*):

The warmth of his [*their*] style, the amplitude of his [*their*] vision, an unashamed sense of traditional patriotism, combined with a magnificence of technique... were an invitation to the English [*British and Americans*] to regard affectionately, and in idealized form, the values which then appeared to support national greatness...⁷

A 1955 issue of *The Record Guide* included this anonymous assessment:

Boastful self-confidence, emotional vulgarity, material extravagance, a ruthless philistinism expressed in tasteless architecture and every kind of expensive yet hideous accessory: such features of a late stage of Imperial England are faithfully reflected in Elgar's larger works and are apt to prove indigestible today.

More recent opinion has relegated critics' contempt for the works of both the poet and the composer to the shrill sanctimony of a churlish minority. Among Longfellow's most memorable lines is this verse from *A Psalm of Life*.

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

If we can say without reservation that our lives are richer for the poetry of Longfellow and the music of Elgar, then we can affirm that both Henry and Edward made their lives unquestionably sublime and placed their footprints permanently on the sands of time.

6 George Orwell, *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1937), Part II, 9.

7 Percy M. Young, *Vaughan Williams* (London: Dennis Dobson Limited, 1953), 28.

Arthur Reynolds is Chairman of the North American branch of the Elgar Society and a previous member of the London Branch Committee. After a childhood and early youth in America, he lived for more than three decades in England, first at Cambridge, then in London and Gloucestershire before returning to live in the USA. Arthur has spent more than half a century amassing an archive of Elgar material consisting chiefly of discarded items he rescued and continues to rescue from undeserved oblivion.

Postscript: In the Footsteps of Paul Flemming

In Chapter VI of *Hyperion* Longfellow translated two of Ludwig Uhland's poems, *The Black Knight* and *The Castle by the Sea* which his fictional alter ego Paul Flemming read to Miss Ashburton as they journeyed through what is modern Germany into Switzerland and Austria. In July 1840 Myles Birket Foster, accompanied by the 'printer' of the British editions of *Hyperion* and one other nameless companion, travelled to the Continent 'with the view of following in the footsteps of the hero of this romance . . . that the various scenes amid which its vivid incidents are laid, might be reproduced with scrupulous exactness by Mr Foster's facile and able pencil'.¹ The account of this journey was included in later editions of *Hyperion* as 'Notes on a tour in the footsteps of Paul Flemming'. On reaching the Rhine at Rolandseck (south of Bonn) the group travelled south to Andernach and Bingen. Arriving in Heidelberg 'where *Hyperion* is well known among the English residents' they moved on to Weinheim in what is now Baden-Württemberg and 'Frankfort' (Frankfurt am Main) where they followed Longfellow by visiting Goethe's house. The party then journeyed into Switzerland through the Sidli Alp Valley to stay in the Hotel d'Interlaken.

The author then mentions the village of Waldering in the Tyrol where they met the parish priest who, as an 'admirer of Uhland', knew both *The Black Knight* and *The Castle by the Sea*. Travelling into Austria the party arrived in Salzburg via Innsbruck. From there the group visited the village of St Gilgen on the Wolfgangsee and then moved onto Wolfgang itself. Birket Foster and his companions then retraced their steps to Salzburg and travelled home via Munich, Augsburg and Stuttgart.

Before cinema and television became popular entertainment Richard Strauss, capitalising on the fashion for staged melodramas and the success of his 1897 setting of Tennyson's *Enoch Arden*, set Uhland's *Das Schloss am Meere* (*The Castle by the Sea*) the following year. Both melodramas are performed by a reciter with piano accompaniment or, perhaps more accurately, piano interjections. Like Longfellow, Strauss also spent time on the Isle of Wight in some glorious summer weather in 1902. There he completed his large choral setting of Uhland's *Taillefer* (William, Duke of Normandy's minstrel at the battle of Hastings). Strauss's Five Lieder, Op 47, are also by Uhland and many of the great German lieder composers, including Brahms, Loewe, Schubert and Schumann, also composed Uhland settings. Grieg and Liszt set his poems too as did more obscure composers such as Conradin Kreutzer (1780-1849) and Josef von Spaun (1788-1865).

Ludwig Uhland (1787-1862) was born in Tübingen on 26 April 1787 and studied jurisprudence at Tübingen University. He was drawn to medieval literature but worked for Württemberg's Ministry of Justice in Stuttgart between 1812 and 1814 whilst contributing poems to publications such as *Deutscher Dichterwald*. According to *The Encyclopædia Britannica* (1910-1911) his collected poems show a style that has 'precision, suppleness and grace' which . . . distinguished him from those of the romantic poets. He gained a reputation for his liberal views and had to resign as professor of German literature at Tübingen University as his opinions were considered incompatible with his position. In 1848 he was elected to the Frankfurt parliament.

Uhland gained a reputation as a poet, a politician and a student of the history of literature and, in addition to his poetry, is renowned for his work on the Minnesänger Walther von der Vogelweide (c.1170-c.1230) and the collection *Alte hoch- und niederdeutsche Volkslieder*. He died in Tübingen on 12 November 1862.

Andrew Neill

¹ See *The Elgar Society Journal*, Vol. 22 No 3 (December 2020).

Four days in April 1920: some notes regarding the death and burial of Alice Elgar

Relf Clark

Alice Elgar died at Severn House, Hampstead at about 6.10 p.m. on Wednesday, 7 April 1920.¹ It was the first Wednesday after Easter Day.

I Cause of death

Little if anything turns on the exact cause of Lady Elgar's death. There was nothing sudden or suspicious about it, and a post-mortem was evidently considered unnecessary. She had been unwell since at least 6 November 1919.² One of her symptoms, a cough, had been evident in November and December 1918 and was serious enough then for the Elgars' physician, Sir Maurice Abbot-Anderson (1861-1938), to arrange for X-rays to be taken.³ And Alice was not of course young.

- ¹ Percy Young states that Alice died 'on the morning' of 7 April 1920, which is incorrect: see Young, P.M., *Alice Elgar: Enigma of a Victorian Lady* (London: Dobson Books Limited, 1978), 182. He evidently found it hard to accept that while Lady Elgar was dying, her obituary was being composed by A.H. Fox Strangways in the library of Severn House. He reasonably assumed, in other words, that Alice's death preceded its composition. Why was Elgar so anxious to ensure that there was no delay in the publication of an obituary?
- ² In his letter to Laurence Binyon of 14 January 1920, Elgar said that Alice had been 'ill since 2 Nov.' and that 'a little walk' on 13 January had been her 'first appearance out': see Young, P.M., ed., *Letters of Edward Elgar and Other Writings* (London: Geoffrey Bles Limited, 1956), 259. According to Elgar's letter to Ivor Atkins of 14 January, Alice's walk the previous day had been of only ten minutes' duration: see Atkins, E. Wulstan, *The Elgar-Atkins Friendship* (Newton Abbot: David & Charles (Publishers) Limited, 1984), 304. It is not clear how Elgar arrived at his date of 2 November (which is also given in his diary entry for 12 January). According to Alice's diary, on 2 November Elgar was in Stoke Prior and she herself was in Lichfield, where she remained until 4 November, on which date she travelled home. On 6 November, she was 'in bed all day with [a] wretched cold'. Her diary entry for 13 January includes 'first time A. had been out since 1st day after return from Lichfield [i.e., 5 November]'. It is worth underlining the fact that Alice had attended the first performance of the Cello Concerto, Op.85, which was given on 27 October 1919, and on that occasion expressed herself robustly (and to later generations amusingly) on the subject of Albert Coates, whom she described as a 'bounder'. There seems to have been nothing very wrong with her then.
- ³ Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: The Windflower Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989), 216-7. It is clear from Sir Maurice's grave (in Lyme Regis cemetery) that his surname was hyphenated. For a short biography of him, see Fitzgerald, C. and Harvey, B.W., *Elgar, Vicat Cole and the Ghosts of Brinkwells* (Chichester: Phillimore & Co. Limited, 2007), 191. I am grateful to Kevin Mitchell for drawing this publication to my attention.

Born on 9 October 1848, she had achieved slightly more than the biblical span of years.⁴ Public speculation about the cause of death would have been insensitive both during Elgar's lifetime and during that of Carice, who died in 1970, and it appears that it was not until 1978 that a writer on Elgar broke the silence. In that year, Percy Young attributed the death to problems with 'kidneys and heart' as well as to 'the inadequacies of medical treatment', but he did not disclose the source of this information.⁵ In 1984, Jerrold Northrop Moore stated that the cause of death was 'cancer, [which was] less common then and less readily recognized than it might have been in later years - and it was in the last stage'.⁶ Dr Moore did not specify the organ or organs affected and like Dr Young did not give the source of his information. Some twenty years later, Michael Kennedy stated that the cause of death was 'undetected lung cancer', which brought a third organ into the discussion.⁷ Again, though, no authority was given; and in any event one wonders how it is possible for an illness undetected during a patient's lifetime to be diagnosed with apparent confidence more than eight decades after the death and without the benefit of exhumation and the involvement of a pathologist. In 2007, Diana McVeagh stated that the cause of death was 'probably ... heart failure',⁸ which to some extent accords with Dr Young's diagnosis. But as in all the other cases, no authority was given, although perhaps the use of 'probably' implied an awareness that the matter was not as straightforward as the earlier writers appeared to suggest. In the same year, J.P.E. Harper-Scott, who one imagines consulted both Dr Moore's 1984 study and Michael Kennedy's of 2004, stated that the cause was 'undiagnosed cancer, very advanced'.⁹ Given that no authority is cited in any of the five cases just referred to, one assumes that the authors either discussed the symptoms with medically qualified persons within their respective circles or, in the case of Harper-Scott, and perhaps McVeagh, relied on the earlier authors; and one wonders whether Dr Moore was privy to information obtained from members of the Elgar and Grafton families whose friendship he enjoyed.¹⁰ The symptoms, or at any rate some of them, can be gleaned from a number of sources. Dr Moore states that in November 1919 'Alice was ill again with [a] cold and cough which doctors could not remedy'.¹¹ His 'again' is a reference to her having been ill in November and December of the previous year (as to which, see above). In a letter dated 8 December 1919, Elgar told Troyte Griffith that Alice had been 'very ill (chill inside)' and was still 'a very very [sic] poor thing'.¹² W.H. Reed was 'sure' that Alice was losing weight and referred to her listlessness and

- 4 See Psalm 90, verse 10. See also Young, P.M., *Alice Elgar: Enigma of a Victorian Lady*, 21, footnote 9. I am indebted to David R. Young for sending me a copy of an extract from a register of baptisms compiled at Kutch, India and according to which Alice was born on 9 October 1848 and baptised on 10 November that year. The Elgars' marriage certificate does however give Alice's age on 8 May 1889 as 39.
- 5 Young, P.M., *Alice Elgar: Enigma of a Victorian Lady*, 182.
- 6 Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1984), 752.
- 7 Kennedy, M., *The Life of Elgar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 162.
- 8 McVeagh, D., *Elgar the Music Maker* (Woodbridge: The Boydell Press, 2007), 184.
- 9 Harper-Scott, J.P.E., *Elgar: An Extraordinary Life* (London: The Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music (Publishing) Ltd, 2007), 129.
- 10 Dr Moore's *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1990) is 'affectionately dedicated' to five members of the family.
- 11 Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: The Windflower Letters*, 231. Doctors are still unable to cure the common cold.
- 12 Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime*, 330.

apparent fragility.¹³ Early in 1920, Rosa Burley was 'shocked to find Alice shrunken and terribly depressed'.¹⁴ On 22 January, Elgar reported to the Windflower that Alice had 'a fresh cold' and was 'a notably poor thing'.¹⁵ On 5 February, he told her that Alice continued to 'cough badly'.¹⁶ On the same date, in a letter to Sidney Colvin, he described her cough as 'tiresome'.¹⁷ Over eighty years later, Michael Kennedy stated that the cause of that cough was 'pulmonary oedema', but he gave no authority for doing so, and one does not have to be a medical practitioner in order to know that a cough can be a symptom of a number of illnesses.¹⁸ On 25 March, when Elgar returned from a conducting engagement in Leeds, he found that Alice was in bed and 'very unwell'.¹⁹ On 26 March, according to Michael Kennedy, Alice was 'showing signs of uraemia'.²⁰ Elgar's diary entry for that day shows that Alice was 'very ill' and 'retaining nothing'.²¹ On 27 March, she 'seemed a little easier' and Elgar thought that his having lunch at the Savile Club would help her in some way.²² But on 28 March she was worse, and at around this time, according to one source, she fell into a coma.²³ The diary entries in the period immediately preceding Alice's death refer to 'great pain' (29 March), insomnia (30 March), the ineffectiveness of sleeping draughts (5 April), and incoherence (6 April). One imagines that all these things amount to no more than a few not particularly helpful pieces in the necessarily complex jig-saw of the complete clinical picture. Some of the above quotations are vague and maddeningly uninformative. For example, was the 'tiresome' cough a dry one or a productive one? What exactly were the 'signs' that Alice was displaying on 26 March? What was the location of the great pain? These passing references tell us nothing about blood pressure, temperature, pulse rate or any of the other variables established by a routine examination of a patient. Nor do we know anything about the 'meddies' prescribed by Sir Maurice.

With perhaps one exception, none of the five authors appears to have obtained a copy of the death certificate. The two causes of death it recites are 'Chronic Interstitial Nephritis' and 'Uraemia / Coma',²⁴ which suggests that Dr Young may have obtained a certified copy of the

- 13 Reed, W.H., *Elgar As I Knew Him* (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd, 1973), 66-7.
- 14 Burley, R. and Carruthers, F.C., *Edward Elgar: The Record of a Friendship* (London: Barrie & Jenkins Ltd, 1972), 201. Burley does not give a date, but Elgar's diary shows that she visited Severn House, with others, on 18 January.
- 15 Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: The Windflower Letters*, 233.
- 16 *ibid.*, 234.
- 17 Young, P.M., *Letters of Edward Elgar and Other Writings*, 259.
- 18 Kennedy, M., *Portrait of Elgar* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1989), 285.
- 19 Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: The Windflower Letters*, 237. The printed sources differ as to what exactly Elgar had conducted in Leeds. On page 336 of his *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime*, Dr Moore states that Elgar conducted *The Apostles*, on page 237 of the Windflower volume, he adds to this *The Dream of Gerontius*, and on page 751 of his *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, he again refers to both works. But according to Robert Anderson's *Elgar* (London: J.M. Dent, 1993), 145, Elgar conducted only *The Dream of Gerontius*. The diary entries confirm that he conducted both works, on 23 March *The Dream of Gerontius*, the following day *The Apostles*.
- 20 Kennedy, M., *loc. cit.*
- 21 Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 751.
- 22 Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime*, 336.
- 23 *ibid.*
- 24 The word 'Coma' is written directly below 'Uraemia' and not numbered.

entry and subsequently been let down by his memory. Clearly, Michael Kennedy was on the right track when he referred to uraemia, but like the candidate who failed to satisfy the examiners in Mathematics, he did not ‘show his working’; and the death certificate says nothing about the deceased’s lungs, or about any manifestation of cancer. Nor does it mention her heart.

The registrar must have taken the two causes from a certificate supplied to him either directly or via Elgar himself, who registered the death with him on Friday, 9 April, before making his way with Carice to Little Malvern. The certificate was signed by Dr T. Rose, MRCS, who was Sir Maurice Abbot-Anderson’s *locum tenens*.²⁵ Why Sir Maurice himself did not give the certificate is not clear (Elgar’s diary entry shows that he had called at Severn House at 12.30 p.m. on 7 April, so he appears not to have been far away). At any rate, Dr Rose had the advantage over all the authors named above of having a medical qualification; of having presumably discussed the case with Sir Maurice, or having at any rate read his notes; and of having examined the patient both before and after her death.²⁶ But a death certificate is not necessarily the last word on the cause of a death: it is possible that Dr Rose confined himself to the proximate causes. Moreover, one recalls from the cases of Harold Shipman²⁷ and Bodkin Adams²⁸ that medical professionals occasionally obscure the truth. Bodkin Adams was acquitted of murder but confessed to Inspector Hannam that in order to facilitate cremations, and spare ‘the dear relatives’ the delay inevitably caused by an inquest, he sometimes gave false information.²⁹ But there does not appear to be any reason to think that Dr Rose had either criminal inclinations or any ground for misrepresenting the cause of Alice’s death; and apart from the fact that the patient died (an outcome that even the most skilful of medical professionals cannot always prevent) there is no reason to think that he and the other physicians who called at Severn House were incompetent (although this seems to be hinted at in some of the above quotations). Alice was attended by Sir Maurice Abbot-Anderson, Dr Rose and a Dr Lakin.³⁰ Abbot-Anderson was awarded his knighthood and MVO (and, later, the CVO) for services to the royal family, a fact which may explain why the status-conscious Elgars retained him. A knighthood is not of course a medical qualification - nor is membership of the Royal Victorian Order - and it may be that Sir Maurice’s bedside manner was more impressive than any contribution he made to medical science; but we can reasonably assume that he was a competent physician. According to Elgar’s diary, the last-named of the trio, Dr Lakin, who was a specialist, called at Severn House on 6 April. It seems likely that Dr Rose’s certificate accorded not only with what he himself had deduced from examining the patient but also with the views of Sir Maurice (which had been formed over a period of some months) and with whatever conclusions the specialist had reached, and it is perhaps unlikely that all three of them were mistaken. Occam’s Razor dictates that one must treat cautiously any theory based on the idea that all the qualified physicians who attended Alice completely failed to locate the organ or organs at the seat of her

25 Dr Rose’s status in the medical practice is confirmed by Elgar’s diary entry for 26 March 1920. His qualification is taken from the death certificate.

26 Elgar’s diary shows that Dr Rose arrived at Severn House at 7 p.m. on 7 April, less than an hour after Alice’s death.

27 Henriques, Sir Richard, *From Crime to Crime* (London: Hodder & Stoughton Ltd, 2020), 82-157.

28 Devlin, Sir Patrick, *Easing the Passing: the Trial of Dr John Bodkin Adams* (London: The Bodley Head Ltd, 1985).

29 *ibid.*, 22.

30 ‘Lakin’ is the spelling given in Elgar’s diary entry for 6 April 1920. It is possible that he meant ‘Larkin’: Fitzgerald and Harvey, *loc. cit.*

affliction. These things notwithstanding, though, the cough - to which the sources so often refer - remains something of a mystery. One must be wary of venturing into the deep waters of other and loftier disciplines, but recalling the cigar that played a part in the genesis of the *Variations*, and the fact that for more than three decades she had passively endured Elgar’s smoking, is it possible that Alice was suffering from chronic bronchitis, in addition to the illnesses referred to in the certificate? And is it possible that Elgar’s general mode of living played a part? One thinks of the continual oscillation between Brinkwells and Severn House, the frequent entertaining, the frequent visits, the immense administrative burden of managing Severn House and its staff, by letter, whilst resident in Sussex.³¹ All of these things, born out of the restless nature of a somewhat self-absorbed younger husband, may have played a part in lowering her physically and making her more vulnerable to illness. It is a measure of that self-absorption that when Severn House was burgled, in December 1918, Elgar instead of taking charge of the matter himself had allowed ‘poor dear A.’³² to undertake a return journey from rural Sussex to Hampstead, even though there was a ‘cold wind’ and Alice by his own admission was not well;³³ and one must add that as recently as 29 October 1918 Alice had undergone surgery for the removal of a wen.³⁴ Just over a week later, on 7 November, Elgar had advised the Windflower that ‘Alice’s operation was much more of an event than we anticipated’ and that there was ‘a large wound’.³⁵ If Elgar’s reaction to Alice’s death was coloured by the realisation that no one could properly describe him as the most uxorious of husbands, it would not be surprising.

Assuming due observance of the law, and in the absence of administrative incompetence, in the case of every birth, marriage and death in England and Wales after 1837 there will be an official certificate, and it can be obtained without difficulty or undue expense from the Office for National Statistics. Such certificates are necessarily no more reliable than the persons who supply the information they recite, but they are a good deal better than nothing at all, and together with wills, grants of representation (probate, letters of administration), census returns and, where applicable, entries in the 1939 Register, they constitute what ought to be the starting point for anyone undertaking biographical research.³⁶ It is always prudent to obtain these things, and there is no reason not to do so (and enquiries at Companies House and the Land Registry can sometimes yield valuable, even invaluable, information).

II Funeral

The funeral service took place at St Wulstan’s Roman Catholic Church, Little Malvern on Saturday, 10 April.³⁷ There were therefore two clear days between Alice’s death and her funeral and burial.

31 See Westwood-Brookes, Richard, ‘Alice Elgar at Brinkwells’, *The Elgar Society Journal*, Vol. 22, No.1 (April 2020), 15-30.

32 Letter to Alice Stuart of Wortley dated 17 December 1918: see Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: The Windflower Letters*, 218-9.

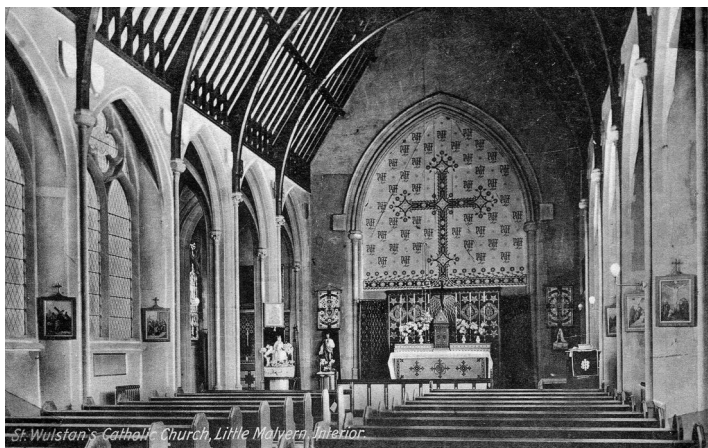
33 *ibid.*

34 Moore, *op. cit.*, 214.

35 *ibid.*, 215.

36 The current (January 2021) fee for birth, marriage and death certificates is £11 per certificate. For a copy of a Will and grant of probate, and a copy of a grant of letters of administration, it is a mere £1.50.

37 The time of the service is not stated in any of the sources examined. According to a report in an undated extract from an edition of *The Leicester Daily Post*, the service took place in the afternoon.



The interior of St Wulstan's from about half-way down the nave. Note the absence of a chancel. The architect was B. Bucknell and the building was completed in 1862.

Present-day mourners (and funeral directors) may well rub their eyes at so brisk a timetable. Nowadays, if the writer's experience is typical, the interval tends to be between three to four weeks, and sometimes it is just over a month. But Elgar's death took place on Friday, 23 February 1934, and he was buried, at St Wulstan's, on Monday, 26 February; so here again there were just two clear days between death and burial. Frank Schuster had died at Hove on Boxing Day 1927,³⁸ his funeral took place at Putney Vale on 30 December. In that case, the interval was three clear days, but perhaps the third day can be accounted for by the fact that it was Christmas. If one skips a few decades and recalls that John F. Kennedy was shot dead in Dallas, Texas on Friday, 22 November 1963 and buried in Washington DC on Monday, 25 November (again, an interval of two clear days) one is more or less bound to reach the provisional conclusion that Alice's funeral took place in accordance with what was then, and what remained for at least forty years or so, an unexceptionable timetable.³⁹ Perhaps the much greater interval that nowadays obtains is something to do with the increasingly secular, bespoke and protracted nature of funeral services, and with the relatives' need for sufficient time to compose poetry and reminiscences, assemble recordings of the deceased's favourite music, and prepare an order of service containing a number of photographs.⁴⁰ At any rate, the parties in 1920 evidently moved with great speed and efficiency. An obituary

38 Dr Anderson states that Schuster died on 27 December 1927, but that contradicts both the death certificate and the grant of probate, which give 26 December as the date of death: see Anderson, R., op. cit., 160. It was on 27 December that Elgar received the sad news, which is perhaps what Dr Anderson was thinking of.

39 Elgar's nephew William Henry Elgar, the elder son of his brother Frank, died on 21 December 1915 and was buried on 23 December: see Simmons, K.E.L., 'Elgar and the Wonderful Stranger: music for *The Starlight Express*' in Monk, R., ed., *Elgar Studies* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1990), 142-213, 178-9. Elgar's sister Lucy died on Friday, 23 October 1925; her funeral took place on Tuesday, 27 October: see Elgar's letter to the Windflower of Wednesday, 28 October 1925 (page 302 of Dr Moore's edition of the Windflower letters). The interval in that case was therefore three clear days.

40 One might add to these things the manufacture of book-marks bearing a photograph of the deceased and a few lines of poetry or scripture.

written by A.H. Fox Strangways appeared on page 12 of the 8 April edition of *The Times*.⁴¹ Dr Rose certified the death. Elgar registered it. Frank Schuster 'begged' W.H. Reed to arrange for a string quartet to attend the funeral, and Reed 'hurriedly' did so: he and his colleagues located their 'dots', rehearsed (one assumes), and made travel arrangements.⁴² Someone dug the grave. Fr Campbell, the parish priest, made his preparations (weary, perhaps, after the sequence of Easter services). The undertakers conveyed Alice from 42 Netherhall Gardens to Little Malvern.⁴³ Accommodation for Elgar and Carice was arranged (perhaps by Troyte Griffith) at Kirklands, the guest house adjoining the church. Relatives and friends were informed, made travel arrangements, and located and brushed down appropriate attire.

II (i) Attendance at the funeral

Philip Leicester arrived at St Wulstan's, with his mother, as the service ended.⁴⁴ It is not clear whether he intended to be present and arrived too late, or whether he had driven (presumably) from Worcester (again, presumably) in order, say, to give his father a lift home. However, he noted a 'score or so' of mourners.⁴⁵ Who were they? Nothing turns on the answer to that question, but a provisional list is given in the appendix. It gives 29 names, but if those of the five professionals (Fr Campbell and the members of the quartet) are deducted, the total is 24, which accords more or less with Leicester's 'score or so'. The following notes refer to the appendix.

- (a) E. Wulstan Atkins provides authority for the inclusion of Ivor Atkins, Troyte Griffith, Hubert Leicester, Landon Ronald and Sanford Terry, who were 'among the very few present other than [members of] the [Elgar] family'.⁴⁶ He expressly states that he and his mother were not present but does not say why (perhaps it was because his return from Shrewsbury School had taken place that very day).⁴⁷
- (b) The name of the priest is taken from the report that appeared on page 17 of the Monday, 12 April 1920 edition of *The Times*. He would almost certainly have had at least one assistant.
- (c) The inclusion of Elgar's siblings, the spouses of the siblings, and the various nieces and nephews accords with the reference by Wulstan Atkins to 'the family', but one cannot of course be certain that all of its members attended. Notwithstanding that Alice seems to have avoided them - for example, she never went to The Elms, the Graftons' home at Stoke Prior⁴⁸ - we can take it that the need to support Elgar was paramount. It is inconceivable that Pollie and her three daughters did not attend, and more than likely that she took a firm

41 I am grateful to Mike Bennett for giving me a copy.

42 Reed, W.H., op. cit., 67.

43 See note 74.

44 Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime*, 336.

45 *ibid.*

46 Atkins, E. Wulstan, *The Elgar-Atkins Friendship*, 306.

47 *ibid.*

48 In his letter to Frank Schuster of 17 April 1920, Elgar wrote, in relation to The Elms, 'Here my dear A. never came so I can bear the sight of the roads & fields': see Moore, op. cit., 339. For the sake of clarity, 'The Elms' means The Elms, Weston Hall Road, Bromsgrove, Worcestershire.

line with her sons.⁴⁹ Because Frank Elgar and Lucy Pipe both lived in Worcester, they and their respective spouses had only to make their way to Foregate Street railway station, from where they could have caught a train to Malvern Wells, where in those days there was a railway station (or they could have driven or been given a lift, or presumably taken a bus).⁵⁰ One tends to think that by 1920 Frank Elgar was something of an invalid, but a photograph of the two brothers was taken at the Gloucester Festival of 1922, and if Frank could get to Gloucester in September 1922 he could surely have managed the journey to Little Malvern in April 1920.⁵¹ It seems that his tuberculosis did not become disabling until some years later: he died from it on 7 June 1928.⁵² As to the attendance of Lucy and Charles Pipe, one can only speculate. Elgar's diary shows that on 22 April Lucy travelled by bus to Stoke Prior, where Elgar was staying; he described it as a 'most extraordinary & enterprising visit'. Charles undertook the same journey on 24 April, when he arrived at The Elms in the afternoon. It is not clear whether these visits were in addition to or in substitution for attendance at the funeral, but we can infer that both Lucy and Charles were in good or at any rate reasonable health. Helen ('Dot') was at that time based in Stroud, Gloucestershire and would not have had insuperable difficulty travelling to Little Malvern, but again one can only speculate.

- (d) The names of the members of the string quartet (Sammons, Reed, Jeremy and Parker) are taken from Basil Maine⁵³ and from the newspaper report referred to above. These are the sources nearest in time to the funeral service and are preferable, for that reason, to W.H. Reed's *Elgar as I knew him*, which was published in September 1936, some sixteen years after the event. Reed stated there that the quartet comprised Sammons, Reed, Tertis and Salmond, but it seems clear that he was thinking of the party at Bray on Sunday, 26 June 1927, when they were joined by William Murdoch for the Piano Quintet, Op.84 and Violin Sonata, Op.82. According to one source, 'Tertis sent his talented pupil, Raymond Jeremy, which was noted by Reed in his second book [i.e., Reed, W.H., *Elgar* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Limited, 1939)], and Parker was substituted for Felix Salmond'.^{54 55}
- (e) 'Colonel Napier Roberts' is referred to by Basil Maine.⁵⁶ Stanley Napier Roberts (b.1844, India, d.1922, Cheltenham) was one of Alice's brothers: it comes as something of a surprise

49 It will be remembered that Will and Pollie Grafton were two of the three witnesses at the Elgars' wedding (the third was General Robert Napier Raikes).

50 Nowadays the site of Malvern Wells station is occupied merely by a signal-box; it is necessitated by the single line through the tunnel at Colwall.

51 It is Plate XIII in the first edition (1968) of Michael Kennedy's *Portrait of Elgar*.

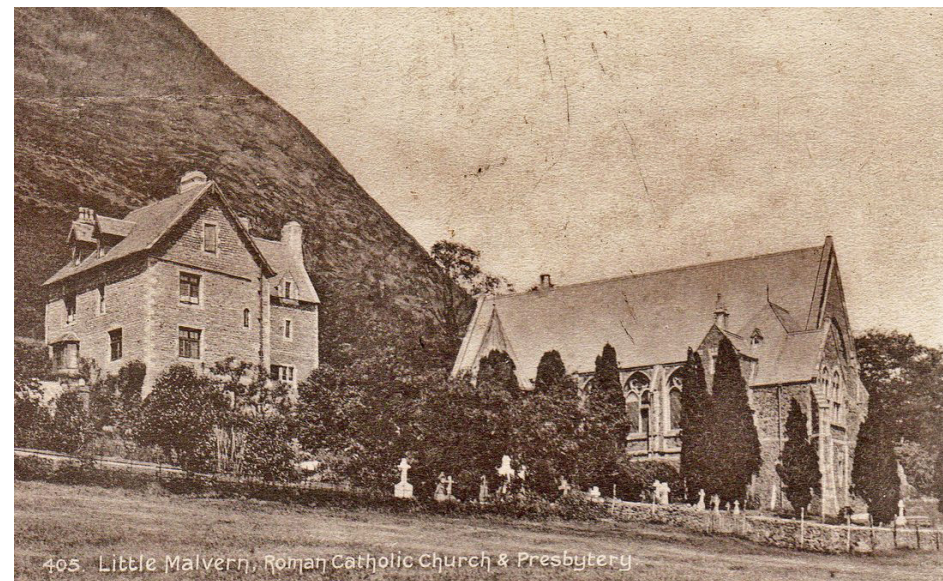
52 Frank Elgar's death certificate gives 'Pulmonary tuberculosis' and 'Intestinal tuberculosis' as the causes of death. See note 72.

53 Maine, Basil, *Elgar: His Life and Works* (G. Bell & Sons Ltd, 1933), Part I, 215.

54 Parrott, Ian, *Elgar* (London: J.M. Dent & Sons Limited, 1971), 24. One hopes that Tertis had more than one talented pupil.

55 Mike Bennett has undertaken considerable research on the subject of the composition of the quartet present at the funeral, but his work is as yet unpublished.

56 Maine, loc. cit.



405 Little Malvern, Roman Catholic Church & Presbytery
St Wulstan's from the south-east. The Presbytery is the building to the left.

to learn that a sibling of hers was still alive in 1920, for Maine and Young appear to be the only writers to refer to him.⁵⁷ As to members of the Raikes family present at the funeral, the sources are silent.

- (f) Frank Schuster's presence is confirmed by many sources, not least among them his subsequent correspondence with Elgar. Alice Stuart of Wortley was in Tintagel at the time of the funeral.⁵⁸ The Colvins sent a wreath.⁵⁹ Rosa Burley was 'in the house', i.e., Severn House, at or at any rate shortly after Alice's death, but whether or not she attended the funeral one cannot say.⁶⁰ One might have expected the Shaws and the Newmans to attend, but once one starts down the 'might have' route one could be diverted for a long and fruitless time.

57 Young, P.M., *Alice Elgar: Enigma of a Victorian Lady*, 182. It appears that the Colonel was known simply as 'Napier Roberts'. The death certificate shows that Napier Roberts died in Cheltenham on 9 April 1922, almost exactly two years after his sister. He was 77.

58 See Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: The Windflower Letters*, 238. It seems that the Windflower left London for Tintagel on or just after 2 April.

59 See *The Times*, 12 April 1920, 17.

60 Burley, R. and Carruthers, F.C., op. cit., 202-3.

II (ii) The music at the funeral

Philip Leicester's note on the funeral refers to 'the wee organ loft', by which he meant the gallery at the west end of the church. The organ at St Wulstan's is a two-manual instrument built for the church in 1870 by John Nicholson of Worcester.⁶¹ It is a charming example of Victorian organ-building and survives today in substantially its original condition. There can be little doubt that Ivor Atkins would have played it, if requested to do so, but the mechanical ('tracker') action of the instrument, its non-standard compasses, and its various other period features would almost certainly have made it seem to him unacceptably primitive, used as he was to the electro-pneumatic action and light touch of the organ at Worcester Cathedral (Hope-Jones, 1896).⁶² We can take it that an early decision was made that the little organ could not complement the service in a manner appropriate to the circumstances, and that an equally early decision was made regarding the attendance of a string quartet.

Every standard source mentions that the 'slow movement' of Elgar's String Quartet, Op.83 was played at the funeral and that Frank Schuster, with the knowledge and approval of Alice Stuart of Wortley, was primarily responsible for making the arrangements;⁶³ but the newspaper report referred to above states that 'the introduction' to the quartet was played as the mourners entered the church and that 'the slow movement' was played as they left it. The use of the phrase 'the introduction' suggests that the reporter was musically unsophisticated (perhaps even ignorant), but he can only have meant that the first movement of the quartet was played before the service, which makes perfect sense. One expects music to be played before a funeral service, and the first movement would surely have made an entirely fitting introduction to the proceedings.⁶⁴

Secondly, is it not time to abandon the phrase 'slow movement' in favour of 'middle movement'? In a letter to Henry Wood of 17 April 1920, Elgar used the latter phrase, which seems more appropriate.⁶⁵ Elgar's direction is *Piacevole* (*poco andante*), not *Adagio*, the metronome mark



The Elgar grave as photographed by Carice in 1940 (with thanks to Arthur Reynolds)

61 The website of Nicholson & Co. of Malvern gives further details. The instrument appears to have been overlooked by those responsible for compiling the National Pipe Organ Register (which in any event is not an entirely reliable source).

62 Clark, R., *Robert Hope-Jones, MIEE: an interim account of his work in the British Isles* (diss., U. of Reading, 1993).

63 The penultimate paragraph of Schuster's letter to the Windflower dated 15 April 1920 shows that she had agreed to meet some portion of the 'expense' involved in engaging the quartet.

64 Percy Young stated that 'music from the slow movement of the Quartet' was played both before and after the service - Young, P.M., *Elgar O.M.* (London: White Lion Publishers Limited, 1973), 201 - but he was writing long after the event and appears to have been mistaken. Moreover, the 'from' implies butchery, and it is hard to accept that Reed or anyone connected with the music-making that day would have been happy with such an approach.

65 Moore, J.N., *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime*, 338.

is quaver = 104, which is not by any reckoning slow, and 'middle movement' usefully underlines the point that the work has three movements instead of the more usual four. It is worth adding that Elgar's *Fountain Dance*, Op.1B, No.4, which has the same time-signature as the middle movement of the quartet, also has a metronome mark of quaver = 104, and Elgar directs it to be played *Allegretto comodo*.

II (iii) Stanford

C.V. Stanford attended the funeral, but he sat at the back of the church and did not join the other mourners when they filed out to witness the lowering of the coffin.⁶⁶ After urging W.H. Reed, who had just descended from the gallery, to convey to Elgar that he felt obliged to attend the service, he left in tears, his face buried in his hands.⁶⁷ Dibble is firmly of the opinion that Stanford, who was recovering from illness, had walked from his lodgings in Great Malvern.⁶⁸ Sadly, it was a gesture to which Elgar reacted with hostility: he regarded it as 'a cruel piece of impertinence'.⁶⁹ But no one seems to have asked the question How did Stanford get to know about the funeral? It is not a complete answer to say that he was convalescing in Malvern at the time. He may well have read the obituary - one imagines that Stanford read *The Times* - but Fox Strangways included nothing about the date and place of the funeral, which was clearly intended to be, and in the event was, a private ceremony; and those outside Elgar's immediate circle would surely have made the logical assumption that it would take place if not in Hampstead itself then somewhere else in London. A possibility is that Stanford obtained the date, time and place from Frank Schuster, for in his letter to Schuster of 18 April 1920, Elgar referred to Stanford as 'an old friend of yours, older than I am & probably more trusted'.⁷⁰ Was Elgar correct about that? Nothing appears to have been said either by Dibble or by Rodmell⁷¹ about a friendship between Schuster and Stanford, but if the two were indeed friends, is it possible that Stanford, having read the obituary, telephoned, or otherwise made contact with, Schuster? Or did he know Troyte Griffith? Stanford often stayed in Malvern and may well have got to know the honorary secretary of the Malvern Concert Club: he may have been aware, if only from the *Variations*, that Troyte was a friend of Elgar's. Is it possible that he obtained

66 Wulstan Atkins states that Stanford 'came into the back of the church' (*The Elgar-Atkins Friendship*, 306) but since he was not present at the service one must assume that this information came from someone else (his father, perhaps). That Stanford did indeed sit at the back may be inferred from the fact that he seems to have been invisible to Billy Reed from the gallery, which is at the west end of St Wulstan's and commands a panoramic view of most of the interior of the church. As a Protestant, he may well have felt it appropriate to adopt a low profile at a Roman Catholic ceremony. Additionally, or alternatively, he may have felt it prudent to keep out of Elgar's field of vision.

67 Reed, W.H., *Elgar As I Knew Him*, 67.

68 Dibble, J., *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), 455. One assumes that Dibble had in mind W.H. Reed's statement to Harry Plunket Greene, that he 'firmly' believed that Stanford had 'toiled [walked?] all the way' from Great Malvern: see Greene's *Charles Villiers Stanford* (London: Arnold, 1935), 158. Why did Reed hold that firm belief? Surely Sir Charles Stanford could afford the cost of transport. In November 2020, the taxi fare from Great Malvern railway station to St Wulstan's, Little Malvern was exactly £10 (personal experience), and one imagines that Sir Charles was good for the 1920 equivalent of that sum.

69 Moore, op. cit., 340.

70 ibid.

71 Rodmell, P., *Charles Villiers Stanford* (Aldershot: Ashgate Publishing Limited, 2002).

the information from him? But perhaps he acquired it purely by chance. Fr Campbell's priestly vows did not prevent him from sharing with those in his own circle the fact that a 'celebrity' funeral was going to take place on Saturday, and news can travel fast.

Relf Clark was admitted as a solicitor in 1982 and after practising in industry and later with a City law firm retired in 2017. He studied with Sidney Campbell at St George's Chapel, Windsor Castle and with Robert Sherlaw Johnson and F.W. Sternfeld at Worcester College, Oxford. His doctorate followed research at the Universities of London and Reading. He is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists and an honorary life member of the Elgar Society and the Royal Society of Musicians of Great Britain.

APPENDIX

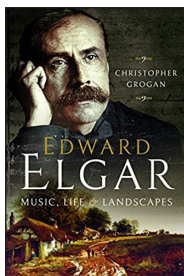
a provisional list of those who attended Alice Elgar's funeral

Atkins, Sir Ivor	
Campbell, Fr	Priest
Elgar, Carice	
Elgar, Sir Edward	
Elgar, Francis ('Frank')	Brother-in-law
Elgar, Francis (younger son of the above) ⁷²	Nephew
Elgar, Helen ('Dot')	Sister-in-law
Elgar, Mary	Wife of Francis
Elgar, Mary (daughter of 'Frank' and Mary)	Niece
Grafton, Susannah ('Pollie')	Sister-in-law
Grafton, Clare	Niece
Grafton, Gerald	Nephew
Grafton, Madeline ('Madge')	Niece
Grafton, May	Niece
Grafton, Roland ⁷³	Nephew
Grafton, Vincent	Nephew
Griffith, A. Troyte	
Jeremy, Raymond	Violist
Leicester, Hubert	
Parker, B. Patterson	Cellist
Pipe, Charles	Husband of Lucy
Pipe, Lucy	Sister-in-law
Reed, W.H.	Violinist
Roberts, Stanley Napier	Brother
Ronald, Landon	
Sammons, Albert	Violinist
Schuster, Frank	
Stanford, C.V.	
Terry, Sanford	
Fr Campbell's attendant(s)	
Undertakers ⁷⁴	

72 The elder son, William Henry Elgar (the younger), had died in Worcester on 21 December 1915: see Simmons, loc. cit. The death certificate gives 'Pulmonary tuberculosis' as the cause of death. Frank's daughter, Mary Agnes Elgar (the younger), died in Worcester on 14 March 1924. The death certificate gives 'Phthisis' (a medical term, now somewhat archaic, for wasting diseases such as tuberculosis) as the cause of death. Francis Joseph Elgar survived his two siblings and died in Worcester on 10 April 1935 (grant of letters of administration dated 19 July 1935). See note 52 above.

73 Percy Young omits Roland (b.1897) from his list of Grafton nephews and nieces: see Young, P.M., *Letters of Edward Elgar and Other Writings*, 344. He does however include Vincent, who is not mentioned in Clause 8 of Elgar's Will but is mentioned in Elgar's letter to the Grafton children dated 2 August 1892. Had Vincent offended in some way, or was this simply an oversight?

74 Elgar's diary entry for 7 April 1920 describes the 'undertaker' as 'Mills'. Perhaps this was the Ernest Charles Mills who in 1935 founded the London-based undertakers now trading as E.C. Mills Funeral Service.



Pen & Sword Books
Ltd

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264 pages

BOOK REVIEWS

Edward Elgar: Music, Life & Landscapes

Christopher Grogan

This book is far from solely another Elgar biography; rather, Dr. Grogan makes use of biographical material to construct a pedagogical travelogue, tracing Elgar's creative responses to the landscapes and places that provided *sine qua non* sources of inspiration from which he intuited his art.

The text is divided into Landscape chapters with Postcard interludes. Dr. Grogan sets out on his journey with a general discussion of the role of landscape in Victorian art and music. We move swiftly on to chapters interpreting Elgar's early-life rural surroundings before receiving a seaside 'postcard' describing the influences on Elgar's music of the opposing seascape themes of deep peace and dramatic turbulence. The opposing landscapes of London and the Malvern Hills form the subject of the next chapter in which Dr. Grogan narrates a rural versus urban 'tug-of-war' animating Elgar's 'soul-destroying' struggle to reconcile his musical ambition with a *modus vivendi* that enticed Edward and Alice to live beyond their means.

Interludes in the form of 'postcards' from Bavaria, Italy and Brazil separate a series of chapters exploring the linkage between backdrop landscapes and large-form compositions. The chapter entitled 'Landscapes of Malvern: *Caractacus*' details the Malverns' terrain references in Elgar's cantata to highlight, 'Elgar's creative engagement with his local landscape as a source of beauty, solitariness and inspiration'.

The outer conflict between landscape and cityscape, reflecting Elgar's inner conflict between his need to cherish his rural idyll and his need to make his mark in the wider world, receives incisive exploration in the chapter on *Cockaigne*. The chapter on *The Apostles* transports the reader to the pastoral wayside of Galilee, the 'Sacred Landscapes' where Christ the Good Shepherd tends his flock and communes with his chosen followers. Here Dr. Grogan persuasively links the themes of Elgar's *Apostles* music to the typological symbols of the Pre-Raphaelite painters, 'as an extension of Romanticism's concept of landscape painting as an attempt to emulate music...to express emotions directly, as they believed music did'.

The chapter entitled, 'London viewed from within: Hampstead and The *Music Makers*' construes the work as a reflection on the loneliness the dreamer of dreams suffers, 'in an unfamiliar landscape, in which the artist feels profoundly dislocated'. Grogan asserts that, having capitulated to the uncongenial congestion of urban life, Elgar turned in on himself to compose arguably his most autobiographical work. The chapter ends by citing *Falstaff* as a further example of Elgar's turning inward. The contrast between the rambunctiousness of Falstaff's London life with the pastoral idyll of the

dream interludes is offered in support of Dr. Grogan's assertion that Elgar's remembered contentment in his West Country past haunted him throughout his London years.

Christopher Grogan brings to his subject a highly regarded reputation for penetrating commentary on English music. After earning a PhD by completing his doctorate on *The Apostles*, Dr. Grogan spent thirteen years as Director of Collections and Heritage at the Britten-Pears Foundation. He is presently Head of Information Services at the Cambridge Theological Federation. Elgarians will know him from his work as Editor of ECE Volume 25 (*Dream Children/Wand of Youth*) published to relaunch the *Elgar Complete Edition* in 2001.

What is astonishing about Dr. Grogan's text and the accompanying illustrations is the encyclopedic amalgam of sources Dr. Grogan marshals to substantiate his assertions.

The book is worth having for the illustrative images alone. Some were familiar, but many were new to me. What is unfortunate is the lack of attribution continuity. Some captions give provenance; others left me wondering where they came from. The book would have benefited from a reference list of illustrations. Not all the captions are accurate. Rosa Burley's photo of Elgar (page 88) places him on the doorstep of The Mount, not Craeg Lea. The illustration on page 144, captioned 'Elgar relaxing in Italy' depicts him actually relaxing at The Hut, Frank Schuster's house near Maidenhead. But these are cavils beside the lavish pleasure Grogan's splendidly reproduced images offer in support of his subject matter.

The text itself amounts to a *tour de force* panoply of supporting source citations. The classical biographies are amply represented, but the wide variety of quotations from post-2000 writing attests to, 'the flourishing of new scholarship' with respect to Elgar's life and work. Some of the excerpts were so interesting and so unfamiliar that I found myself seeking out the source books for additions to my library. References to new writing are accompanied by references to new recordings listed in an Appendix. Dr. Grogan's updating of the written and aural perceptions of Elgar's art concludes with an updating of his music's earth-saving relevance, being in the author's view, 'of inestimable value to humanity at this decisive crossroads in its troubled sojourn on the earth'.

The specialist and non-specialist reader alike will find much to enjoy and learn from the journey through these pages.

Arthur Reynolds



New York: Oxford
University Press, 2020
ISBN 9780190091224
177 pages

Bach's legacy: the music as heard by later masters

Russell Stinson

Russell Stinson is the Josephine Emily Brown Professor of Music at Lyon College, Batesville, Arkansas. His chief interest is, or appears to be, the music of J.S. Bach and in particular the works for organ, but in this latest book of his he ventures beyond 1750 and considers certain aspects of the reception of Bach's music by Mendelssohn, Schumann, Wagner and Elgar. Given that a comprehensive account of that reception would almost certainly involve several book-length studies, Stinson in each of his four chapters very wisely confines himself to an examination of a small number of primary sources. In the Wagner chapter, for example, he looks at some of the entries in Cosima's diaries and at the comments the composer inscribed in his copy of *Das Wohltemperirte Klavier*.

Naturally, British readers will be anxious to establish Stinson's attitude towards their great composer. The very title does of course assist, and the introduction further satisfies one's curiosity, for the author describes his chosen masters as being among 'the most prominent composers of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries'. A little later, he refers to them as 'these titans', and in the Elgar chapter itself such phrases as 'the English master' and 'one of the greatest minds in English music' leave no doubt as to Stinson's view of the composer. When one learns that the author has taken the trouble to visit The Firs, Lower Broadheath, the phrase 'Special Relationship' flashes before the mind's eye in glowing neon letters; and this interest of Professor Stinson's is not a recent acquisition: it has been evident since at least the publication of his *J.S. Bach at his royal instrument: essays on his organ works* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2012), in which he refers to Elgar's transcription of the Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 537 as well as to the revised ending he provided for Esser's orchestration of the Toccata in F major, BWV 540. In the present study, the chapter on Elgar is entitled 'Edward Elgar reads Albert Schweitzer: a case of negative Bach reception'. It relates to Ernest Newman's translation of Schweitzer's *J.S. Bach*, and it examines the comments that Elgar pencilled in his copy of the work, the two volumes of which are held at The Firs (the author thanks Chris Bennett and Sue Fairchild for their 'invaluable assistance' on the occasion of his visiting Broadheath in order to inspect them, and he advises us that their catalogue numbers are 2011.186 and 2011.187). It is evident from the inscriptions in the front of each volume that they were given to Elgar by Newman himself and that the gift was made in November 1911, in the wake of the disappointing reception of the Second Symphony (and at a time when Plas Gwyn, Hereford was about to be abandoned in favour of Severn House, Hampstead).

One thinks of Schweitzer (1875-1965) primarily as a physician and missionary who spent the greater part of his life in the African village of Lambaréné, where in 1913 he founded a hospital. But he studied the organ

with Widor and devoted much of his life to J.S. Bach, and this book of his, which first appeared in 1905 as *Jean-Sébastien Bach, le musicien-poète*, was only one manifestation of a consuming and life-long interest in the composer. Schweitzer later translated the work from French into German, greatly increased its length, and entitled it simply *J.S. Bach*. This later version, which was published in 1908, was the one that Newman translated: his translation, to which he gave an identical title, appeared in 1911, the year of his gift to Elgar, and it was published, like the two earlier versions, by Breitkopf & Härtel of Leipzig.

Stinson begins his Elgar chapter with a few general comments about the composer's attitude towards Bach. For example, he quotes from his letter to Ivor Atkins of 2 February 1926, from which it is clear that Elgar regarded some of the cantatas as 'infernally dull'; and he proceeds from there to the 'multitudinous pencil markings' the composer added to the two Broadheath volumes: these range from mere under-linings to what Stinson describes as 'very substantial inscriptions', and nearly all of them are negative in some way. He deals with Elgar's markings first in general terms and then considers in detail eleven specific examples of them; and the 39 end-notes are impressive evidence of a comprehensive engagement with the literature on the composer.

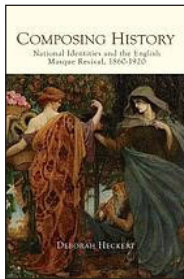
It might be thought that a study of Elgar's marginalia in a book about J.S. Bach is itself somewhat marginal, but who can say what nowadays lies at the core of Elgar studies? The value of the chapter lies partly in the way in which it reveals Elgar in a private context. We are familiar with the registers and idioms which, chameleon-like, he adopts in his letters. The Elgar of those to Carice, for example, is quite different from the Elgar of, say, those to the Colvins. Here, though, relieving his feelings by annotating a book from his own library, he is in a sense writing to himself, and one is immediately struck by the bile he directs towards Schweitzer, whom he describes as 'a sickening ass', 'utterly untrustworthy' as a guide, and an idiot. Perhaps Elgar felt that Schweitzer, who was the son of a Lutheran pastor, was tarred with more or less the same brush as the clergy at Worcester Cathedral, who in 1911 were still objecting to the text of *The Dream of Gerontius*. Perhaps, being a former orchestral musician, and notwithstanding his friendships with Atkins, Brewer and Sinclair, he disliked Schweitzer because he was an organist. Of even greater value is that these comments are to do with music, because Elgar's essentially instinctive approach to composition meant that on the whole it was unusual for him to commit to paper anything about crotchets and quavers: his words to Jaeger about the extent to which G major can be pushed, and to Newman on the subject of the First Symphony, are the more valuable because of their rarity. It has to be said, though, that these marginalia are more revealing of Elgar's taste than the thinking that informed his creative processes; but whether Stinson is right to say that they should be taken with a pinch of salt, or - as he most elegantly puts it - *cum grano salis*, is a moot point.

The remainder of this volume will necessarily be of less interest to those whose focus is mainly or exclusively upon Elgar, but the music of

Mendelssohn, Schumann and Wagner played important roles in the forging of his style, and the other chapters should not be skimmed or skipped. Besides, this is a thoroughly readable book. Stinson is evidently a scholar at ease both with himself and with his subject and one who feels no need to import the vocabulary of colleagues in other disciplines. British readers may frown at ‘authored’ and similar usages, but we are spared the sprinkling of ‘discourse’, ‘meta-narrative’, ‘normative’ and other such things customary nowadays in certain areas of musicology.

Stinson reproduces some of the pages from the two volumes, but Elgar’s handwriting has not emerged from the copying process with complete clarity. Perhaps this will encourage readers to visit, or as the case may be re-visit, The Firs and examine the originals. They are likely to find it an engaging exercise.

Relf Clark



Composing History: National Identities and the English Masque Revival, 1860-1920
Deborah Heckert

Anyone who considered Elgar’s masque *The Crown of India*, and such works of Vaughan Williams as *Job*, isolated modern examples of a genre that faded from English musical life at a point late in the seventeenth century will have been surprised by the very title of this book. In the first of several helpful appendices, Deborah Heckert gives basic information (dates, composers, authors, publishers) about the masques written and performed in England in the nineteenth century, and in the third of them she takes the story from 1901 to 1950. The first appendix is dominated by Arthur Sullivan, who wrote four of the sixteen masques listed; but with the exception of Stanford, who wrote only one, all the other composers are minor figures of whom Henry Bishop, Arnold Dolmetsch and Hamish MacCunn are probably the best-known. The third appendix gives the same information in respect of a total of 43 twentieth-century examples of the genre, but the only truly well-known figures listed here are Bantock, Elgar, Holst, Lambert, Moeran and Vaughan Williams, and in the case of the last-named, some of the works are among his most obscure, e.g., *Pan’s Anniversary*, which remains unpublished. This does not mean, however, that Ms Heckert’s survey is entirely confined to what may be thought of as a byway of English music, for the works are discussed within the context of the English Musical Renaissance, and much space is devoted to familiar matters and familiar figures. For example, Chapter 3 (‘The past speaks in English: historiography and the masque revival’) contains a discussion of the role played by Parry in the revival of interest in the music of Purcell.

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978 1 78327 207 5
238 pages

Chapter 5 (‘‘The Heroic Past and the Earth his Mother’’: the reticence of reception and the burden of imperialism’) deals with Elgar and *The Crown of India*, and it includes a thoughtful consideration of the Birmingham lectures. Chapter 6 (‘‘A typically English institution’’: the masque after the First World War’) deals with Vaughan Williams and *Job*.

This is a volume belonging to the ‘Music in Britain, 1600-2000’ series, of which the editors are Professor Byron Adams, Professor Rachel Cowgill and Professor Emeritus Peter Holman, MBE. The notes on its cover state that Ms Heckert lectures at Stony Brook University, New York, having previously taught at the University of Virginia, at Utah State University and at Brooklyn College (which is a part of the City University of New York); and the extensive bibliography includes her 2004 Stony Brook dissertation *Composing History: National Identity and the Uses of the Past in the English Masque, 1860-1918*, of which the book is presumably a revised and extended version. It includes also Ms Heckert’s 2007 essay *Working the Crowd: Elgar, Class, and Reformulations of Popular Culture at the Turn of the Twentieth Century*, which will already be familiar to Elgarians through its inclusion in the collection of essays edited by Professor Adams and entitled *Elgar and his World*. Clearly, therefore, the present work is that of an academic and one which is aimed at a readership composed largely if not entirely of fellow musicologists. It is certainly not a book for those coming to English music for the first time, although old hands will relish the wealth of information it contains. Inevitably, perhaps, given its academic origins, much of the book is by no means easy to read. This is partly the result of vocabulary (on p. 57 the author achieves the unusual feat of getting ‘topic’, ‘topos’ and ‘topoi’ into just one footnote) and partly the result of what to British readers can seem a somewhat dense, orotund style of writing: there are times when those outside the academic world may feel uncomfortably close to *Ulysses*. Elsewhere, though, Ms Heckert is admirably clear and concise. Where she writes about the Birmingham lectures, for example, and about the masques of Vaughan Williams, she proves herself a good stylist (and at the foot of p. 114 she manages to get into a nutshell of just nine lines an almost unimprovable short introduction to F.R. Leavis).

Looking at it more generally, this is an academic book in the sense that it seems to appraise musical compositions not for the way in which they demonstrate such things as quality of invention, or skill in the deployment of the techniques of composition, but for the extra-musical significance they are seen to possess. Thus, even when a composition belongs to no specific occasion and seems entirely abstract, it is necessarily expressive of its composer’s political beliefs, place in society, philosophy of life, education, sexuality, ancestry, geographical location, etc. In this context, a piece of music is less a work of art capable of being judged in its own terms than part of a narrative to do with commercialism, imperialism, mercantilism, nationalism, pacifism, patriotism, etc. And in the act of composing, musicians are not crafting works of art; they are addressing problems, constructing narratives, pursuing ideological struggles, etc. It is true that Ms Heckert includes a

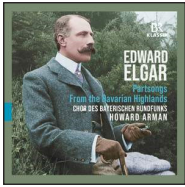
number of musical illustrations, and that at various points she describes in a technical way the music under discussion, but one has the impression that the nuts and bolts of music are regarded, in this context, as occult matters for which one must turn for assistance to the older members of the music department. This is not to suggest that the approach to music exemplified by this book is wholly or even largely misconceived, but it appears to be one based on hypotheses incapable of being tested, and one that lacks the rigour of approaches based upon analysis and the language of music itself. At any rate, musicians and musical historians of a more traditional kind are likely to be a little wary of such a volume, although they may well find it, in part, a useful work of reference. Elgarians will certainly find here a fair amount to engage their attention, and on the whole Ms Heckert's remarks about the composer seem unexceptionable; but there is one point at which she appears to err. Chapter 5 contains a sub-section ('Elgar, "The Crown of India", and the paradox of patriotism') in which the author considers 'the problem of imperialism in music during the period 1895-1915'. In connection with her detailed discussion of *The Crown of India*, she quotes from Elgar's letter to Frances Colvin of 14 March 1912, in which he grumbled that a consequence of writing 'a big serious work' is starvation and going without fires for a year. He went on to say that the fee for writing the masque enabled him to buy scientific works and 'more easily' help his 'poor people' (meaning members of his family experiencing hardship). Ms Heckert in the footnote to page 183 seems to scoff at this, saying (apparently on the authority of Professor Adams) that Elgar was 'only temporarily dabbling in science' and 'very rarely sent money to his family'.

Elgar's interest in science began during his years in Hereford, where he conducted chemistry experiments in an outbuilding, and it extended at least as far as his time at Tiddington House, Stratford-on-Avon, where according to E. Wulstan Atkins he was still making use of his microscope (*The Elgar-Atkins Friendship*, p. 406). It follows that it was an interest of his which may well have spanned nearly a quarter of a century and one that can hardly therefore be described as temporary. Moreover, someone who obtains a patent for an apparatus for making hydrogen sulphide is hardly 'dabbling in science'. Whether Elgar sent money to his dependants rarely, frequently, or not at all is probably impossible to say. What evidence is there? Where would one look for it? What can be said with certainty, however, is that when Charles and Lucy Pipe fell on hard times, he bought them a house of their choice (2 Waterworks Road, Worcester) and allowed them to occupy it rent-free. When Lucy died, in October 1925, Elgar wrote to his brother-in-law and confirmed that he could remain at the property for as long as he wanted to; and in 1932 he drew up a Will under the terms of which it was given to trustees, subject to the life interest of Charles, which terminated in 1938, some four years after Elgar's death. Elgar's letters contain not a few references to his 'invalids', by which he meant not only Lucy (who was profoundly deaf) but also his brother Frank (who suffered from tuberculosis). His generosity towards Lucy more than suggests a deeply moral stance towards his relatives and one which we

can assume was evident throughout the years of his prosperity. In the case of his sister Pollie, support was given by frequent attendance at The Elms (and later Perryfield), by the assistance he gave the Grafton nieces, and during the war by his efforts on behalf of his nephew Gerald Grafton; and under the terms of his Will, all his nieces and nephews (except Vincent Grafton, whose omission may have been an error) took an equal share of the residue of his estate. Elgar was surely indulging in hyperbole when he referred to starvation and going without fires, but his other remarks to Lady Colvin can be taken at face value. A freelance musician wealthy enough to buy a house for needy relatives is one who adopts a pragmatic attitude towards large commission fees. It was fortunate for the freelance Elgar that he lived at a time when coronations and other national events provided him with opportunities to earn such fees (and gain valuable publicity). But his acceptance of commissions to set imperialistic and patriotic texts gave scope for later commentators to engage in debate about his true nature, and by implication about his true worth, as a composer. Ms Heckert herself engages in the debate, so that the claims that Elgar was, say, a hyper-sensitive, neurotic artist are once again set against those of his detractors, who see him as, say, an irredeemable imperialist. Given the many-faceted personality that emerges from the letters, it is surely the case that Elgar was both of these things (and more). Perhaps every new generation needs to debate the matter afresh, but it is hard for some of us not to feel that this once-rich vein has now been more or less completely worked and should be quietly abandoned. Perhaps, too, one could adopt a similar stance towards commentary on the thinking that informed *The Crown of India*, for it is not easy to see exactly what Ms Heckert has added to Nalini Ghuman's broadly similar discussion of the work in her 2014 study *Resonances of the Raj*.

Inevitably, given the length and wide-ranging nature of the work, there are trivial errors here and there. On page 180, Ms Heckert refers to Elgar's '1903 Coronation March'. If this is intended to be a reference to the *Coronation Ode*, Op.44, the date is 1902. If intended as a reference to the *Coronation March*, Op.65, the date is 1911. There may well have been a Charles Peyton in Birmingham in about 1905 (p. 190), but it was surely his kinsman Richard who founded the new chair in music. 'Walford Evans' (p. 88, footnote 16) should almost certainly be Walford Davies, and *Donna Nobis Pacem* (p. 204) suggests unfamiliarity with what to a musicologist should be a well-known text. One hopes that these things will be adjusted if a second edition of this interesting work proves possible.

Relf Clark



BR Klassik 900522

CD REVIEWS

Elgar Partsongs

Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunks

Radoslaw Szulc (violin), Julita Smoleń (violin), Max Hanft (piano)

Howard Arman

One of the problems with Elgar's vocal music is his choice of texts. That said, Cardinal Newman's 'Dream of Gerontius' is a wonderful vehicle, as is actually O'Shaughnessy's 'The Music Makers'. Many words have been expended discussing the midnight oil which Elgar burnt compiling his own texts for *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*, but it can safely be said he made good work of all the librettos for his choral works, whatever their innate quality.

But then we get to the partsongs. Did he really need the pittance of a commission to set some of these dreadful texts? Perhaps early on in his career he did, but surely not after the acclaim following the *Enigma Variations*, *Gerontius*, and the Elgar Festival of 1904.

Preceding his 'arrival', however, his loyalty to his wife Caroline Alice's literary efforts is touching, culminating in the inclusion of her 'In Haven: Capri' in the *Sea Pictures* of 1899.

Most substantial of all his settings of his wife's verses comes of course with *From the Bavarian Highlands*, six choral songs with piano accompaniment (1895) remembering a happy holiday in Richard Strauss' Garmisch the previous autumn. The music is alive with both topographical detail and aspiration (no-one seems to have mentioned that the fourth song, indeed entitled 'Aspiration', is a chordal compression of the harmonic sequence which opens Schumann's *Kinderszenen*).

The performance of the set on this beautifully-packaged BR Klassik CD is fresh and enthusiastic. The excellent vocalists of the Chor des Bayerischen Rundfunks sing with understanding, though the acoustic from which this live recording was taken does cloud their English diction. Max Hanft is the deft pianist, and Howard Arman conducts with persuasive insight.

Arman will be Chorus Master when Sir Simon Rattle moves to the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra as Music Director, the first time Rattle has worked alongside a resident Chorus Master other than Simon Halsey. Coincidentally, one of the earliest recordings Halsey made with the CBSO Chorus was, wait for it, *From the Bavarian Highlands*.

More Alice Elgar settings come with the *Two Partsongs for Female Voices, two violins and piano* (1894). *The Snow* is enlivened by the Central European panache of the string-writing as delivered by Radoslaw Szulc and Julita Smolen, and *Fly Singing Bird* is sheer loveliness.

Five Partsongs from the Greek Anthology are given by the men of the

Rundfunk Chor with thunderous delivery and sonorous chording, before the whole choir comes together again for *Go, Song of Mine*. This deeply-felt and ambitious setting of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's transliteration of Guido Cavalcanti's medieval Italian is my personal highlight on this release, given with such sensitivity to the text, not least the word 'Go!'

The famous *As Torrents in Summer* (arranged for female choir & piano) from *King Olaf* is followed by another Longfellow setting, *Spanish Serenade* arranged for women's voices, two delicious violins and piano. Men's voices take over for the unaccompanied *The Reveille*, Elgar responding astutely to Bret Harte's somewhat repellent verse, contrasting in poor relief to Cardinal Newman's Elegy *They are at Rest*, for mixed voices a *cappella* and indeed another highlight.

Weary Wind of the West (words by Thomas Edward Brown) is a fascinating example of a reworking by Elgar. He composed it in 1902 as a test-piece for unaccompanied mixed voices at the 1903 Morecambe Festival (in front of a daunting audience of 6000!), but in 1930 Novello commissioned a version for women's voices and piano. It is that version we hear here, and it is especially valuable as an example of Elgar's writing for piano at this late stage in his life, redolent of the *Five Improvisations* he recorded around this time.

The Prince of Sleep (Walter de la Mare) for unaccompanied mixed voices makes a perfect conclusion to this collection, grave, reflective and otherworldly.

Though the sequence of works on this programme is well-constructed, this is not a disc I would choose for all-the-way-through listening, but it is so good to be able to pick and choose so many goodies which go a long way to boosting Elgar's reputation in this sometimes overlooked field.

Christopher Morley

Viola Romance. Music for Viola and Piano by Elgar, Brahms, Dvořák, Kreisler, Schumann and Tchaikovsky.

Rivka Golani, viola and Zsuzsa Kollar, piano.



The name Rivka Golani will be best known to Elgarians as the soloist in the premier recording of Lionel Tertis' arrangement of Elgar's Cello Concerto.

Tertis played his adaptation to the composer, gaining his approval in the process. Despite this imprimatur being placed upon his endeavour, it was not until July of 1988 that the first recording was made. On that occasion Ms Golani was accompanied by the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under the distinguished Elgarian Vernon Handley. That performance, now on compact disc, is happily still available.

Elgar's music again features prominently on the present pair of discs with no less than eight of his miniatures included. Naturally it was to those tracks that I first turned my attention.

Hungaroton
HCD 32811-12

I say ‘miniatures’ but that designation is hardly appropriate in the case of *Sospiri*, for while it is indeed a miniature in terms of length, it most certainly is not in its emotional range and impact. Here it receives an appropriately solemn and sonorous reading.

The other works by Elgar date from much earlier in his career – between 1878 and 1891 – and all receive well-characterised performances. They are: *Romance* opus 1, *Pastourelle* and *Virelai* from opus 4, *Mazurka* opus 10, *Mot d’amour* and *Bizarrierie* from opus 13 and finally *La Capricieuse* opus 17.

I was especially struck by the spirited and humorous accounts of *La Capricieuse* and *Mazurka* although it must be regretfully noted that Ms. Golani’s bow control and precision of intonation in the upper register are less immediately impressive than they were in 1988.

Kreisler is the composer and sometimes arranger most comprehensively represented with no less than nine original works, together with another nonet’s worth of arrangements.

I would suggest that this is rather too much of a good thing and, overall, I would certainly counsel against listening to too many tracks at a single sitting (out and out viola fetishists excepted of course!).

One is, however, grateful to the distinguished dedicatee of our Favourite Violin Concerto for his arrangements of five of Dvořák’s most delightful pieces. Again, Ms Golani establishes the various moods of these trifles keenly and, where an opportunity presents itself in, for example, *Midnight Bells* the warmth and sheer personality of her tone production engages the listener.

Clearly, to discuss each of the no less than thirty works presented on these records might stretch the patience of even the most dedicated viola fancier but mention should be made of the sympathetically projected melodic line in Tchaikovsky’s well-loved *Andante Cantabile*, even if it would have benefitted from a broader, more expansive pace to enable it to bloom more fully.

I could also have continued to live a happy life without having heard Kreisler’s chromatic additions to Dvořák’s harmony in the Slavonic Dance no.2 (I wondered briefly if I had strayed into ‘*Rhapsody in Blue*’ territory. Perhaps it was a reference to Dvořák’s sojourn in The Americas?).

So, ladies and gentlemen, if ye fancies two hours of Romantic Viola, look no further!

Neil Mantle

Elgar: Organ Sonata in G op. 28 (arranged for string orchestra by Hans Kunstovny)

Parry: *An English Suite*

Jacob: *A Symphony for Strings*

Südwestdeutsches Kammerorchester Pforzheim, Douglas Bostock



CPO 555 382-2

There is a long and noble tradition of transcribing orchestral music for the organ, particularly before the widespread availability and affordability of gramophone records. Arranging organ music for performance by an orchestra is much rarer. However, many writers have recognised that Elgar’s first organ sonata has a scope and variety that seems to be longing for an orchestral canvas.

Throughout the 1890s Elgar was developing his compositional skills mainly through large scale choral works; big works in every sense but their overall structure managed by the texts. On the other hand, the Organ Sonata may be confined to three staves, but gives us in the words of Jerrold Northrop Moore his ‘first big abstract work in several movements’ and as such is an important landmark. I have always sensed that it was a piece ‘bursting to get out of the box’ with its structure enhanced by the orchestral canvas Elgar was by then evolving, a combination that was to come to fruition in the following decade. I wonder if Sir Adrian Boult had the same sentiment in mind when he was involved in commissioning an orchestral version from Gordon Jacob. A single broadcast performance in 1947 was its only outing until it was brought into the light in the late 1980s by Vernon Handley with a concert and recording in Liverpool, and there have been subsequent recordings conducted by Richard Hickox and Martin Yates. Jacob’s version certainly opens up the box, and is very effective, even if there does seem a touch too much percussion at times. What emerges is a big piece that has brought the music to a wider audience who might not routinely listen to organ music, and not surprisingly a number of writers have dubbed it ‘Symphony no 0’.

But now we have something somewhat different – an arrangement for string orchestra made in 2006 by Hans Kunstovny, at that time the Pforzheim orchestra’s double bass player, and sub-titled by him, ‘Swinnerton’s Dream’ in tribute to Charles Swinnerton Heap, the dedicatee of the Sonata. The booklet tells us that Kunstovny was not at that stage aware of the Jacob transcription. Douglas Bostock has plenty of Elgarian experience with a number of recordings of various byways of the Elgar canon and he is now the chief conductor of the Pforzheim orchestra – so we are in good hands.

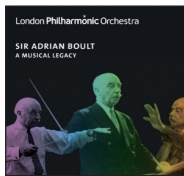
Not surprisingly the middle movements work best. In the second movement, there is a lovely flowing and playful interaction between the instruments with a polished unanimity that almost makes one believe that it is being played by a string quartet, and the booklet confirms that this is a small orchestra numbering just 14 players. The third movement has some lovely things but I do miss, for example, the contrasting muted snarl of the organ reeds. It all sounds more suited to the drawing room than to the concert hall

let alone the big cathedral. And this becomes a more significant hesitation in the outer movements. It is beautifully played but I miss the rich rootedness of the deep bass of the organ or full orchestra. I also miss the sense of struggle; for me it sounds too restrained and polite. There is excitement in the finale and maybe the leaner texture allows a greater appreciation of the structure but I miss the variety of tonal colours that the skilful organist can draw from his instrument let alone the full panoply that the orchestra can bring.

I don't wish to be unduly churlish but to be honest, I don't think I'll want to take this performance off the shelf very often as for me the arrangement goes in the wrong direction by confining the music into an even smaller box than the organ original.

Topping and tailing the Elgar are fine performances of works by Hubert Parry and Gordon Jacob: a beautifully shaped and dapper account of 'An English Suite', familiar through Sir Adrian Boult's pioneering Parry LP made for Lyrita in the early 1970s, still available as a CD, and 'A Symphony for Strings', commissioned by the Boyd Neel String Orchestra in the dark days of World War Two, aptly described in the booklet as 'a powerful and astringent war time meditation'. I enjoyed both of these 'fillers' very much.

John Knowles



LPO-0119
(5 CD Box Set)

Sir Adrian Boult A Musical Legacy

Elgar – Symphony No 1 in A Flat, Op 55 (HMV recording 1949)

In the South, Alassio, Op 50 (BBC broadcast 1955)

With music by Arnold (Organ Concerto – broadcast 1955), Bartók (*Music for Strings Percussion and Celeste*), Bax (*The Garden of Fand* – broadcast 1962), Beethoven (Symphony No 3 'Eroica'), Bruch (*Kol Nidrei*), Butterworth (*A Shropshire Lad* – broadcast 1969), Clarke (*Trumpet Voluntary*), Dohnányi (*Variations on a Nursery Song* – broadcast 1955), Delibes (Music from: *Sylvia, Naïla, Coppélia*), Falla (*Ritual Fire Dance*), Gershwin (*Cuban Overture*), Holst (*The Perfect Fool* – Ballet Music), Saint-Saëns (*Danse Macabre, Wedding Cake Caprice*), Sibelius (*Lemminkäinen's Return*), Stanford (*Songs of the Fleet* – broadcast 1955), Stravinsky (*Circus Polka*), Vaughan Williams (Symphony No 6 in E minor; *The Lark Ascending*) Walton (*Portsmouth Point Overture*), and Wolf-Ferrari (*The Jewels of the Madonna* – Intermezzo).

Patricia Bishop, piano; Christopher Bunting, cello; Frederick Harvey, baritone; Hugh Mclean, organ; Jean Pougnet, Violin; Gwenneth Pryor, piano; Croydon Philharmonic Society; London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult

It has been a delight, and so very interesting, to have this marvellous box of CDs paying tribute to Sir Adrian. Was there ever a more diverse and all-encompassing conductor? He tends to be remembered for his recordings and performances of British music, particularly Elgar and Vaughan Williams, but there is so much more to the conducting genius of this man. This five-CD

set covers a wide range of repertoire ranging from live performances from the British Library archive to already-issued studio recordings. There are some gems, but it is even more a matter of sorrow that we do not have, say, a Brahms Requiem, a Beethoven 9 or a complete Wagner. Sir Adrian's great art was the overall view, not an obsession with detail, and this comes over in the set offered here.

The first disc contains the most generous coupling, with Elgar's First Symphony dating from 1949/50 and Vaughan Williams' Sixth Symphony from 1953.¹ The latter recording has been readily available and given that Boult gave the premiere it is authoritative. Both works had many performances in their first years of existence, the Elgar (as the composer said - before any World War) was 'a massive hope for the future', the VW describing 'anything but' and perhaps the total desolation and nihilism of war. Side by side these represent all that is best in British music and Boult. The coupling is possible because the Elgar is thrusting and quick; never hanging about to make a point; the long view. In the long expansion of the quick motive in the finale he carefully observes all the composer's markings of restraint to give the music sentiment but never sentimentality. For me these two masterpieces are linked in the art of composition by their common thread of the use of the tritone to unify the structure. Elgar takes us from the key of A Flat through D minor and major to the ultimate goal of a triumphant A flat solution. Nearly every phrase of VW's work contains the demonic tension of that very same tritone, an augmented fourth. The *diabulos in musicus!*

The remainder of the discs take us through a journey of treasures. The second pairs a strong, vibrant 'Eroica' Symphony of Beethoven from Sir Adrian's 50s' recording with the LPO, a period of many interesting offerings of standard repertoire (including Tchaikovsky 5 and 6 – both superb. Please let's have those in another box!) Sir Adrian makes sense of the very end of the 'Eroica' symphony; an example of his great judgement. The final *presto* is often a frenetic scramble with note values ignored because it says *presto*. Sir Adrian gives his players time to play and give the music space and dignity, so we feel we have really finished, with the last chords hammering home the most important journey so far in music.

This second disc also contains the very opposite of Beethoven; but perhaps not, given the sense of humour. In his *Eroica* finale a grand dramatic opening is followed by a silly tune - likewise the Dohnányi *Variations on a Nursery Song!* This is live from the Royal Festival Hall in the most marvellous example of the conductor's precision in accompanying a soloist. It is faultless, and the orchestra and fine soloist play a difficult score with superb confidence. All conducting students should listen and watch him if they can and take note. The recent broadcast of Boult accompanying Barenboim in the Beethoven Fourth Piano Concerto was a master class in conducting with a soloist: not following, but with him.

¹ Note that disc one is of 87 minutes in length and may not play on some older machines. Eds

Disc three is all dance; a good recording of De Falla's *Ritual Fire Dance* with excellent tempo and atmosphere created by the conductor and not by recording techniques, is followed by extensive music from three Delibes ballet suites, *Sylvia*, *Naila* and *Coppelia*. The sound on the *Sylvia* recording is rather boxy but the playing, which is so delicate when needed, is superb with many beautifully judged *ritardandi*. I noted that for once the timpani have a good strong defined sound. And there is more; a *Dance Macabre* of Saint-Saëns with a relentless sustained rhythm and a familiar Decca recording of Holst's *The Perfect Fool* ballet, reminding us of his superb conducting of it on an archive video. Boult's way with additive rhythms was exemplary. The disc ends with Stravinsky's *Circus Polka*. Can this really be the Boult we thought we knew? Marvellous fun!

Such relaxed offerings appear on the next disc which ends with Gershwin's *Cuban Overture*. What mattered to Sir Adrian, was what he saw as a duty - to conduct and bring to the world music of all styles. His personal taste was immaterial to his professionalism. Anyway he liked the piece! Two works stand out here: the Sibelius *Lemminkäinen's Return* from a double LP set of all the tone poems. In many ways I wish *Tapiola* had been picked but this performance has the LPO players on the edges of their seats. It is full of drive, energy and vigour. The sound is congested and the timpani dreadfully out of tune but the spirit of the work survives. The main work on this disc is Bartók's *Music for Strings Percussion and Celeste*. This is magnificent; not always technically perfect, but it demonstrates Boult's command of a complicated score. The acoustic is dry, which suits the music but not the occasional weakness in ensemble. There cannot have been that much rehearsal time in that period and to give us this masterpiece in such a compelling way is an achievement. Sir Adrian gets from his players what I would describe as an 'earthy bite'; I can see that large baton sweeping down.

Finally, the fifth disc which is of British music. For me Arnold's Organ Concerto was completely unknown. The performance is totally assured. We have Frederick Harvey as soloist and the superb Croydon Philharmonic Chorus all in fine voice in four of Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet*. No wonder Elgar went to Croydon pre-war to conduct this choir in his choral works; what fantastic singing! What amateur groups we possessed - and still do.

We have a splendid Bax, *The Garden of Fand*, and a find; Butterworth's *A Shropshire Lad* from a BBC Maida Vale broadcast recording. He did it many times and Boult's deep respect and nostalgia for this heart-rending work has never been heard better than here. Likewise the final offering; Elgar's *In the South*. This is another archived British Library offering from a live Festival Hall concert. I know many Elgarians who are uncomfortable with this piece; not Boult whose great skill at sewing a work together is demonstrated. Each section relates to the next and it has an exuberance that one feels being 'in the South'! I felt his final recording of this work rather rushed, the opening a bit of a scramble as if it had to be one beat in a bar. This live version is ideal, albeit the viola solo is rather below par but listen to the rapt *ppp* of the big second tune when it returns in the recapitulation. That 6/4 chord is one of the

best bits Strauss never wrote! I can visualise Sir Adrian conducting that now; this dear man twirling his moustache and giving tiny but precise clicks of the beat and a left hand comforting the softest sounds.

The whole package is a worthwhile tribute; beautifully presented with a colour variation cleverly applied to each disc sleeve picked from the overall black and faintly rainbow coloured box. We do have coloured type face on black substantial paper for the notes and when it comes to read the recording information, I find this very tiny and not clear at all.

Perhaps a balance in favour of more archive material for the collector as opposed to vinyl, already available, might have been possible, but this set cannot be bettered for its comprehensive reflection on this great man.

In addition we have the copious notes and biography of the conductor from Andrew Neill, authoritative, devoted and so clearly written. A long career expertly described with love and insight. This is a wonderful document for all time celebrating one who is still, I fear in many respects, an underrated conductor.

Adrian Brown

[Editorial note: it has come to our attention that some early issues of this set have an editing fault on the final disc and *In the South* is severely truncated. We understand this is being corrected and members who have a faulty set should contact Andrew Neill on andrew@theneills.com / 07703 352027.]

**Elgar: Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 61;
Violin Sonata in E minor, Op. 82.**
Renaud Capuçon, violin; Stephen Hough, piano
London Symphony Orchestra / Simon Rattle



Erato 9029511282

I had all sorts of plans for this review and the comparisons I would make, but it soon became apparent that Renaud Capuçon had won the right to be considered as an Elgar interpreter, free of the shackles of coffee-spoon judgments.

But first, a few generalities. As all good Elgarians know, in giving the premiere of this great concerto to Fritz Kreisler, already shaping up as the leading Austro-German violinist of the day, Edward Elgar was signalling his wish to have the work measured against the Beethoven and Brahms concertos as a European piece. Several factors militated against its acceptance. First, its length, timing at something like 50 minutes (Kreisler himself found it too much, although Reger's even longer concerto had been premiered two full years earlier). Second, Novello's initial policy of charging a high fee for the performing materials (Maud Powell was only one of a number of soloists who were put off). Third, the Great War, which destroyed Elgar's burgeoning reputation among Austro-German performers. Take-up among foreign violinists was never extensive. Eugène Ysaÿe played it in Berlin with

Nikisch in January 1912 and Edgar Wollgandt in Leipzig ten days later with the same conductor. Albert Spalding introduced it to America. One performer I would have loved to hear was Adolf Busch, foremost champion of the Reger and therefore unfazed by the Elgar's heavenly lengths – he was able to give half a dozen performances in the 1930s, including the Italian and Austrian premieres, and his joint interpretation with Barbirolli was given a rave review by Neville Cardus; but it was an uphill struggle – the Swedes turned down the Elgar, preferring to hear the Reger! Franco-Belgian interpreters were few and far between, after Ysaÿe: I once booked to hear Christian Ferras but, true to form, he cancelled (I was quite disappointed to get Ralph Holmes, but later was glad I had heard his fine reading).

Simon Rattle provided such a footling accompaniment, on the previous occasion when he tackled the concerto, that I had some fears; but he is now an entirely different man, with a firm yet never inflexible grip on the orchestra – only once during the long opening *tutti* did I think that he might be losing the tension. So, as he is a full partner in the performance, I shall take his contribution for granted from now on. The LSO is not my favourite Elgar ensemble but everyone is 'onside' here. Capuçon makes his entry with a questioning phrase, which is exactly the way I always imagine it, and continues in an exploratory vein. The 'Windflower' music is inwardly and poetically enunciated. He plays absolutely beautifully, getting the elasticity in the slower passages that Albert Sammons demanded from his pupil Hugh Bean. In the faster sections he is fully the master and the orchestral musicians stick to him like limpets, right to the end. The *tutti* which begins the *andante* is not too slow and Capuçon again is right inside the music; the harmonics introduced by W.H. Reed are perfectly tuned and the orchestra is really hushed when required. When the soloist opens out in the louder passages, he and the orchestra are still searching, rather than giving any feeling that their quest is accomplished; everyone seems to know intuitively that Elgar is a doubter, not the tub-thumper of certainty he is often mistakenly made out to be. The ending of the movement is seraphic. Capuçon is straight into the finale in virtuosic mood, and he really can fiddle. His double-stopping is superb – Kreisler was celebrated for double-stops with absolute 'parallelity', to use my old friend Peter Rybar's word. Themes flash before our eyes in this finale, like episodes in a life, yet luckily no one is drowning. Capuçon gives us lovely trills and the orchestra is fined right down for the start of the *cadenza*, where yet again this soloist is the questing knight. The main 'Windflower' theme keeps being proposed but each time evanesces into passagework; Capuçon muses as if recalling old regrets, before a last evanescing takes us out of the *cadenza*. The final apotheosis is overwhelming – the triumph of selfless love over mere yearning? Can we ever fathom the depths of this great European concerto, here interpreted by a great European musician?

An excellent tempo launches the Violin Sonata, with Capuçon and Stephen Hough very much at home in the more tender, lyrical passages of the first movement. Once again Capuçon's double-stopping adds to the impression of mastery. The air of hesitancy, of improvisation, in the Romance is caught

by both artists. The finale begins deceptively calmly but soon opens out: this movement is not really fast, most of the time, but generates plenty of power which these players realise – the final dash for the line is nicely timed.

I like the recording of the concerto very much – the venue is LSO St Luke's, Old Street. The sound of the sonata – done two days before the concerto sessions, at St Jude-on-the-Hill, Hampstead – is slightly less pleasing. Each time I listen to the opening, I feel that the two instruments are not quite clarified. But if there is a better Elgar record coming this year, I shall want to hear it!

Tully Potter

Kathleen Ferrier - 20th Century British Treasures
Songs by Lennox Berkeley, Bridge, Britten, Ferguson, Jacobson, Parry,
Quilter, Rubbra, Stanford, Vaughan Williams, Warlock, Wordsworth.

Frederick Stone, Phyllis Spurr, Ernest Lush (pianos)

Anna Pollack, mezzo-soprano

EOG Orchestra conducted by Gerald Goodall

London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Hugo Rignold



SOMM
Ariadne 5010

The defining of greatness in art is often a matter of opinion, but there are some art and artists where there is no argument. I was prompted to express this thought having just seen a poorly produced but fascinating programme (BBC4 – 26 December 2020) about Maria Callas, a singer whose art became larger than herself and, it seems to me, destroyed her. I appreciate there are those reading this who find Callas's voice and her interpretations profoundly irritating but will probably agree that she was, nevertheless, a great artist serving in her own passionate way, that unique and wonderful line of composers through Rossini, Donizetti and Bellini, to Verdi and Puccini. Completely different, but equally great, was Kathleen Ferrier whose infectious love of life permeates her art. She never took herself too seriously but was as serious about her art as any great artist. It is obvious she never doubted her worth as an artist and understood her duty to the service of music, be it by Gustav Mahler or the range of English composers included on this disc. If she is criticised today, it is because modern listeners and critics often apply the musical standards and practices of today to those of the time in which she lived. That the likes of Barbirolli, Boult and Bruno Walter recognised her greatness is enough for me.

There is no Elgar on this disc and, of course, there is no recording of any of Ferrier's performances of *The Dream of Gerontius* beyond that test recording made by HMV in 1944 (Dutton CDAX 8019). This new compact disc from the ever-imaginative SOMM label is entirely of British song with one venture into opera in the excerpt from Britten's *Rape of Lucretia*. In addition to her voice there is another reason to buy this disc. The notes are written by the baritone Sir Thomas Allen, whose perceptive understanding of Ferrier's art

is a joy to read as well as a glorious tribute from one great artist to another. This is one example:

To Daisies (Quilter) is, for me, the first indication of something really special. She summons up vocal qualities more often heard in a lighter soprano voice - bearing in mind the contralto that is Ferrier and the dynamic range at her disposal, the gift of only the greatest talents. . . and on the face of it, *To Daisies* is not an exceptional song. In the hands, or rather the mind and throat of Ferrier however, its status is raised to that of a considerable art song.

Of course devotees of Kathleen Ferrier may be familiar with most of these tracks which were either recorded by the BBC or Decca (two Quilter songs from 1952) and only Berkeley's *Four Poems of St Teresa of Ávila* with Hugo Rignold conducting the LSO is issued for the first time (BBC Broadcast 7 April 1952). In the booklet, Sir Lennox's son Michael draws our attention to 'Let mine eyes see thee, sweet Jesus of Nazareth'. This is a profound setting of a powerful statement of faith and, as Sir Thomas says of Ferrier's singing: 'the effect is quite shattering for us, the audience'. All these tracks have been beautifully restored by Norman White which leaves the listener, once again, in awe of Ferrier's art.

Her Quilter songs are brilliant and *Silent Noon* is, for me, one of the greatest interpretations I have heard of Vaughan Williams's miniature. It is an internalised performance drawing us into the world created by the poet and singer and we experience VW's 'visible silence': uncanny! However, Sir Thomas is not uncritical for of Stanford's *La Belle Dame sans Merci*, he writes:

It's reassuring to know that, as great as she was, this song seems to cause her some discomfort...only when we reach the *presto agitato* section of the song does she appear to engage fifth gear. Then it gets her attention, and ours.

Sir Thomas ends his note with:

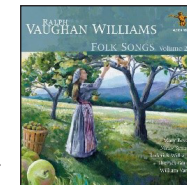
One thing is sure. Consider her journey in this compilation alone. From Parry and the flightiness of *Love is a bable*, to *Lucretia* (Britten) and *St Teresa*, she compressed and encompassed it all. What a blessing, and what tragedy too, that she spent so short a time with us.

Like Maria Callas, who became crushed by her art, Kathleen Ferrier died young (in her case far too young at 41) but unlike Callas she absorbed her art. Had she sung for another ten years we would have many more reasons to celebrate her life and music making but that love, gratitude and respect reaching back over 70 years could not be any greater.

Andrew Neill

Ralph Vaughan Williams: Folk Songs Volume 2

Mary Bevan (soprano) Nicky Spence (tenor)
Roderick Williams (baritone)
William Vann (piano) Thomas Gould (violin)



Albion Records
ALBCD 043

Readers may remember from the last Journal my delight at Volume 1 of this four-part project by the Ralph Vaughan Williams Society and Albion Records to record all 80 of the folk songs in English that RVW arranged for voice and piano or violin. Other, less august, publications such as *The Times* ('an absolute tonic and delight'), the *Daily Telegraph* ('a real jewel') and *Gramophone* ('an absolute must') shared my enthusiasm, so I was delighted to be invited to review this second volume, released in March 2021. As I mentioned previously, we are told that 57 of the 80 songs have never been recorded and, as with the first disc, that fifteen of the 23 tracks on this second album are world premieres. There are nineteen songs on this disc: *Nine English Folk Songs from the Southern Appalachian Mountains*; *Two English Folk Songs for Voice & Violin*, composed in 1913; eight songs from *Collected Folk Songs, Volume 1* from 1917.

For me, these two discs, both equally fine, are ideal lockdown material: they have the interest of the unknown and thus the cachet of new discovery; they promise a major addition to the discography of RVW; they hark back to apparently simpler times that divert us from the present pandemic; above all they are simply lovely, with beautiful singing and playing, excellent engineering and informative notes that all repay time spent on them, time that the present pandemic gives me in abundance.

In my review for Volume 1, I mentioned the dichotomy between folk song as folk art and folk song as art song, and concluded the dichotomy was triumphantly reconciled. If you adopt my recommendation to buy this new disc, I would urge you to pay particular attention to the accompaniments that RVW provided and William Vann, the project's musical director, expertly interprets. They have to meet head-on first the fact that folk song is intrinsically solo story-telling conveyed musically with no need for accompaniment. Secondly, composers who dare to provide accompaniments have to acknowledge that a multi-strophic song requires a discreet but varied accompaniment to reflect the moods within a song and/or to avoid boredom. The accompaniments to the textual challenge of the Appalachian songs are fascinating in themselves, the solution being to break up the words into two- or three-verse groups or breaking up the song into three or four sections with a different accompaniment for each group. The collecting of English folk songs by Cecil Sharp and Maud Karpeles in rural America from third or fourth generation immigrants is a complete novelty to me, and it is a mystery why these splendid songs from 1938 were not published until 1967.

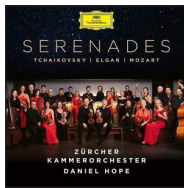
In the *Two English Folk Songs for Voice & Violin*, Thomas Gould's violin accompaniments take us in 'Searching for Lambs' to the sound world of 'The Lark Ascending' and the 'Fantasia on Christmas Carols', but the lecherous

intentions of 'The Lawyer' attract a lively violin accompaniment of triplets and *pizzicati* that dart in and around the words and melody. I am pleased to report that the Lawyer's blandishments were repelled and the farmer's daughter became a poor man's wife whose 'husband dearly loves her ... there's no lady in town above her'. Alas, other songs on the disc end much more unhappily.

The eight remaining songs come from the collection of arrangements by Cecil Sharp and RVW and these are all those by RVW, who wrote much simpler accompaniments, reflecting the didactic nature of such a collection, intended to teach people, particularly schoolchildren, their own folk songs. The variety of texts and sheer beauty of the melodies make this a set to savour and the hilarity of the 'Farmyard Song' makes a fitting finale to a delightful disc.

Steven Halls

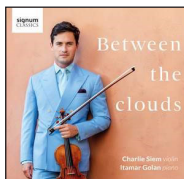
OTHER RECENT RELEASES



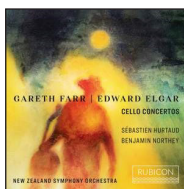
Elgar's *Serenade for Strings* in E minor, together with Mozart's *Serenade* no.13 in G major, K 525 and Tchaikovsky's *Serenade for Strings* with the Zürcher Kammerorchester under Daniel Hope have appeared on **Deutsche Grammophon 4839845**



Callum Smart, violin and Richard Uttley, piano, play Elgar's Violin Sonata in E minor, with works by John Adams, Amy Beach, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor and Kate Whitley on a CD called *Transatlantic: American and English Music for Violin & Piano* from **Orchid Classics ORC 100149**.



Another duo, Charlie Siem, violin and Itamar Golan, piano, play *Chanson de Matin* and *Chanson de Nuit* with pieces by Britten, Kreisler, Paganini, Sarasate, Vitali and Wienlawski on a CD *Between the Clouds* from **Signum SIGCD 652**.

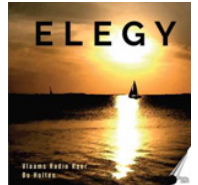


The Cello Concerto played by Sebastien Hurtaud with the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra under Benjamin Northey can be found on **Rubicon RCD 1047**. It is coupled with Gareth Farr's cello concerto, written to commemorate three great uncles who left New Zealand to fight in France in the First World War: all three were killed within weeks of their arrival on the Western Front.

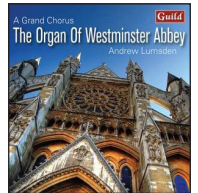
There is a new recording of the Violin Concerto with Triin Ruubel and the Estonian National Symphony Orchestra under Neeme Järvi on **Sorel Classics SCCD 016**. This is available as a download, but a CD can be found from Arkiv Music in America.



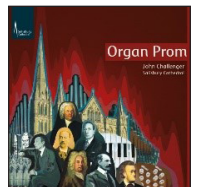
The Flemish Radio Choir under its former Chief Conductor Bo Holten has recorded *Go, Song of Mine* op.57 with works by Faure, Bo Holten, Howells, Janacek, Previn and Rachmaninov with the title *Elegy* on **Danacord DACOCD 731**.



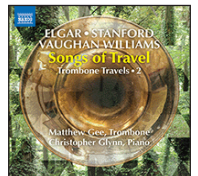
Andrew Lumsden plays the *Imperial March* op.32 with works by Bridge, Howells, Parry, Purcell and Vierne on *A Grand Chorus: The Organ of Westminster Abbey*. **Guild GMCD 7815**.



From Salisbury Cathedral John Challenger plays 'Nimrod' and Edwin Lemare's arrangement of *Pomp and Circumstance March No.1* on the Father Willis organ plus works by Alcock, Bach, Handel, Lemare, Rachmaninov, Wagner, Widor and Walton. **Salisbury Cathedral SCA 002** available from <https://www.hifiusstore.com/product-page/organ-prom-john-challenger-salisbury-cathedral>.



For those with an interest in the unusual, Matthew Gee (trombone) and Christopher Glynn (piano) present a number of arrangements for these instruments, including *Sea Pictures* and *In Smyrna*, with other works by Vaughan Williams and Stanford. **Naxos 8.579080**



Kevin Mitchell and David Morris



CRQ DVD21

DVD REVIEW

Elgar: Variations VIII & IX (*Enigma Variations*); Beethoven: Symphony no. 3 in E flat (*Eroica*).

London Symphony Orchestra/Sir Adrian Boult
Recorded in February 1964 at Associated-Rediffusion Studio 5, Wembley
Classical Recordings Quarterly Editions

But for a producer's diligence at Thames Television and the persistence of George Douglass in obtaining the sole-surviving video tape for publication, this remarkable document, inexplicably never transmitted, would not exist. It exudes a powerful *Zeitgeist* on several levels. First, it is a salutary reminder of how classical music was presented on television in the 1960s (no frills, just musically intelligent camerawork within the technological constraints of the time). Second, we are presented with an all-male LSO in full concert dress in an equally formal-looking TV studio. And third – and most important – here is the first President of the Elgar Society conducting for television a staple of the German classics repertoire. The sound and monochrome picture quality are thoroughly acceptable, the performance clearly unedited, at least within movements. I hope this will disarm any reservations from Society members that Elgar occupies just 5'47" of the programme. The two *Enigma* variations are conducted with affection and gravitas.

Reservations first. Cutaways of mountain streams and rolling hills abound in the Elgar (not a Malvern Hill in sight - Yorkshire Dales?), and the C major episode of the Beethoven Funeral March and part of the Finale feature respectively a turbulent seascape and what appears to be the Scottish Highlands. These absurdities aside, we are treated to an object lesson in unostentatious authority which should be essential viewing for all student conductors. On the surface, no-one could seem to be doing less. There is no gurning, no anguished facial miming of the music's moods. The eloquence is all in the point of the stick, also in those eyes, watchful, missing nothing. When, at moments of heightened tension, a downbeat comes from behind the shoulder, the effect is galvanising (Boult told the young Colin Davis that at such moments he was 'throwing the juice over the orchestra'). It is a style of conducting which has disappeared, the much-missed Vernon Handley offering the closest resemblance in recent times. Not the only way to fire up an orchestra, of course, but unique and powerful. There are three heart-stopping close-up studies of Boult's profile: shortly before the first movement reprise, towards the end of the Funeral March and near the end of the Finale.

Tempi are generally more measured than we are used to these days, considerably down on Beethoven's metronome marks. Yet such is Boult's sense of architecture that the third movement has a poise and tension, the Finale a strength and dignity. Nothing feels simply *slow*. The music breathes.

There is no first movement repeat, which I suspect would have disconcerted a conductor for whom repeats were a structural *sine qua non* (I rather hope that such customs of the time would have similarly irritated him in his two commercial recordings of the symphony in which the repeat is also omitted!). The strings are seated in Boult's preferred configuration: first and second violins opposite each other, cellos next to the firsts, violas to the seconds. The double basses are arranged in a line at the back. No better way, in the opinion of the present writer, to offer depth and presence to an orchestral *tutti*.

Aficionados of bygone orchestral faces will have fun spotting LSO veterans such as Erich Gruenberg (leading), oboist and clarinetist principals Roger Lord and Gervase de Peyer, cellist Denis Vigay and principal double bass Stuart Knussen, father of Oliver. There is an absorbing short essay by discographer Philip Stuart. An unmissable release.

Andrew Keener

100 YEARS AGO...

Elgar's diary is spasmodic at this time, but Carice, given a 1921 diary for Christmas by Landon Ronald, records their life in some detail for that year.

On 4 December 1920 Elgar and Carice lunched with the Colvins before going to see Francis Beaumont's 1607 play *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, with the young Noel Coward in the cast. There followed a Literary Society dinner on 6 December where Elgar met G.M. Trevelyan. Norman Macdermott, the director of the Everyman Theatre, Hampstead came to Severn House with the producer Edith Craig on 7 December, to explore whether Elgar could write music for Algernon Blackwood's forthcoming play *Through the Crack*, but he decided he could not do so. Blackwood came to dine on 10 December and Carice and Elgar went to see *The Beggar's Opera* in Hammersmith on 11 December, which he concluded was 'a jingle of songs & one great proof ... that the English are entirely unmusical'.

Elgar went to the Gramophone Company's Regent Street offices on 14 December to hear discs recorded on 16 November, with mixed results, and on 18 December accompanied Alice Stuart of Wortley to see *The Knight of the Burning Pestle* for a second time: Felix Salmond and Leon Goossens came to dine that same evening, subsequently partaking in plate pool.

On 22 December he and Carice went by car to Stoke Prior for Christmas with his sister Pollie, stopping for lunch at the Shakespeare Hotel, Stratford-Upon-Avon, where he found a Jazz Band and 'jangling rag-time' and lamented the loss of one of his 'peaceful and poetic old haunts'. There was a ceremony in the Chapter House. Worcester Cathedral on Christmas Eve to present Ivor Atkins with his robes of a Doctor of Music at Oxford: Elgar attended and made a congratulatory speech, having contributed to the purchase of the robes.

He and Carice returned to Severn House on 31 December, accompanied by his niece Madge Grafton, and on 1 January all three attended the Kingsway Theatre to see *The Knight of the Burning Pestle*, followed by *Aladdin* at the Hippodrome on 3 January and Blackwood's play *Through the Crack* at the Everyman Theatre on 5 January: Carice 'enjoyed it on the whole, though Father thought it might have been improved – nice music'. They saw *Charley's Aunt* on 7 January and an adaptation of A.E.W. Mason's novel *At the Villa Rose*, at the Strand Theatre on 8 January. He dined at the Garrick Club on 9 January meeting Sir Anthony Hope Hawkins.

On 8 January Beatrice Harrison played the Cello Concerto at Severn House in preparation for a forthcoming concert, while Elgar attended another Literary Society dinner at the Café Royal on 10 January. On the 13th Carice recorded 'Terrible news that Mr Gervase Elwes had been killed in America by a train': he had been a notable interpreter of Gerontius.

Elgar conducted the Cello Concerto with Harrison at the Queen's Hall on 15 January and Carice recorded 'great enthusiasm over Concerto – recalled – good audience - Father looked well & conducted finely'. Much of Elgar's time was taken up with microscopes and the making of slides of garden leaves, gramophone needles and oyster shells, and he bought two microscopes at the end of the month. On 19 January he and Carice visited W. H. Reed's Croydon home, followed by further theatre and cinema excursions – *The Great Lover* on 22 January, a Charlie Chaplin film on 25 January which Carice found 'quite amusing', and at the Hampstead cinema on 26 January the 1917 French film *J'Accuse* directed by Abel Gance, a romantic drama set in the Great War: 'Very good film - Pathé - the best we have seen'. The following day they saw the film *The Edge o' Beyond*, based on a novel by Gertrude Page, starring Owen Nares. He took Lady Stuart to see *The Great Lover* on 29 January 'which he much enjoyed seeing again'. On 1 February Elgar

visited the National Gallery primarily to see Pieter Breugel's *The Adoration of the Kings* which the gallery planned to purchase and on the 7th he attended a Literary Society dinner with Sir Sidney Colvin: Randall Davidson (the Archbishop of Canterbury), A. J. Balfour and H.A.L. Fisher were also present.

On 1 January Sir Ivor Atkins' knighthood (which Elgar had partially instigated) had been announced and he travelled to London on 10 February, staying the night at Severn House, before being driven to Buckingham Palace for the investiture. Carice was 'Very delighted & thrilled with it all'. In the afternoon he and Elgar played through the Cello Concerto, then Atkins returned to Worcester. Percy Hull arrived in Hampstead for a visit on 12 February and the next day Elgar played him records of *The Starlight Express* and *The Fringes of the Fleet*, with *The Sanguine Fan* and *Une Voix dans le Desert* on the piano, which he loved. W.H. Reed joined them for dinner that evening. Elgar and his daughter took Hull to see *The Great Lover* on 14 February which Carice 'enjoyed more than ever'. On the 16th Elgar and Beatrice Harrison played the Cello Concerto at a concert in Guildford; 'great enthusiasm', and W.H. Reed was also treated to *The Great Lover* on 19 February. The next day Elgar and Carice went to Ridgehurst for lunch with the Speyers, where 'Father found many things in lake for microscope wh. he brought back in test tubes', and on the 21st they both saw Shaw's *The Doctor's Dilemma* at the Everyman theatre. For Carice it was a 'Wonderful play'. Shakespeare's *Henry IV* on 22 February was not so successful. Elgar attended William Rothenstein's exhibition on 24 February where he saw his own portrait: 'very good' was Carice's verdict. Blackwood came to dinner and to play plate pool on 28 February and according to Carice 'he looked very well & brown after Switzerland'.

Microscopes, the making of slides, and collecting material to examine, continued to enthrall Elgar so that on 4 March he bought another microscope for £1.6.0 (£1.30). The next day he and Carice attended a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* at the Royal Albert Hall: 'fairly good on the whole'. That day Henry Clayton of Novello wrote of a forthcoming concert at the RAH when *With Proud Thanksgiving* was to be performed, for which an orchestral score would be required. Elgar replied on 8 March to confirm he was 'looking into it'.

On 14 March Elgar travelled to Leeds for a performance of *King Olaf*, reporting to Carice on 16 March 'Concert very good'. He moved on to Bradford and then to Stoke Prior to stay with his sister Pollie, returning to London on 24 March.

Since meeting Samuel Henry Blake in Switzerland during the winter of 1919/20, Carice had continued to see him. On 23 March he asked Carice to marry him; 'which I consented to with father's consent'. She waited until 28 March before telling Elgar: 'Told father about SHB. Very sweet & dear'. Earlier that day Elgar met Sir Edward and Lady Cooke which Carice found 'Very interesting – as he had been head of Powick Asylum years ago & Father & he had not met since – they were much interested in talking over old times & the extraordinary changes in their lives & positions'.

On 29 March Elgar dined with Lady Stuart, Frank Schuster and Adrian Boult at 22 Old Queen Street and the following day he and Carice had lunch with her and Schuster before 'all 4 to *The Great Lover* in afternoon – very good & bears seeing a third time'.

On the last day of the month Carice noted: 'SHB came at 6 – to ask for Father's consent – wh. he gave – all happily settled. Father wonderful'.

Kevin Mitchell

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