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Subheadings: longer articles benefit from judicious use of these.

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Foreign words: if well established in English (sic, crescendo) in Roman, otherwise italics.

Numbers: spell out up to and including twenty, then 21 (etc.) in figures.

Quotations: in 'single quotes' as standard. Double quotes for quotes within quotes.

Longer quotations in a separate paragraph, *not* in italic, *not* in quotes; please leave a blank line before and after.

Emphasis: ensure emphasis is attributed as '[original emphasis]' or '[my emphasis]'. Emphasized text *italic*.

References: Please position footnote markers *after* punctuation – wherever possible at the end of a sentence.

In footnotes, please adhere as far as possible to these forms (more fully expounded in the longer version of these notes):

Books: Author, *Title* (Place of publication: Publisher, year of publication), page[s]. Thus: Robert Anderson, *Elgar* (London: Dent, 1993), 199.

Periodicals: Author, 'Title of article', *Title of periodical*, issue number and date sufficient to identify, page[s]. Thus: Michael Allis, 'Elgar, Lytton, and the Piano Quintet, Op. 84', *Music & Letters*, 85 (May 2004), 198.

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

Titles that are 'generic' in Roman: e.g. Violin Concerto. Others in *italics* (e.g. *Sea Pictures*; the *Musical Times*). Units within a longer work in single quotes, e.g. 'Sanctus fortis' from *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Editorial

A regular task for the editor of the *Journal* is to ensure that the list of society officials printed inside the front cover is up to date. Over the past few years this has meant the removal of the names of rather too many of our Presidents or Vice-Presidents, and the deletion of the name of Sir Colin Davis, CH, CBE, in this issue I find particularly sad.

Somehow conductors seem to remain in my mind's eye at roughly the age at which I first encountered them. So while Sir Colin may have been 85 when he died, to me he was still in his forties, for it was in late 1967 that I had the good fortune to interview him for the first issue of *Incant*, the student magazine of the University of Kent at Canterbury. It speaks volumes for the nature of the man that he should give up half an hour of his time to speak to a couple of undergraduates asking inane questions. Yet he did, with kindness and patience, and he left us feeling that we had had an interesting conversation as equals. We were then allowed to stay for his rehearsal with the BBC Symphony Orchestra, of which he was the newly appointed Chief Conductor. The music was the *Introduction and Allegro*, and the details he picked out and insisted upon at that rehearsal still remain with me today. Not that it was all plain sailing: the orchestra was not going to give him everything he asked for without a challenge! When they balked at being asked to play a particular passage *fortissimo* and with full tone, he simply said 'I know it's not marked *fortissimo*, I just need to find out what you're capable of.' A couple of years later I joined the BBC Choral Society and sang under his baton many times, including in an unforgettable Prom performance of the Berlioz *Requiem* when, standing a few yards from eight sets of timpani in the 'Tuba mirum', I had the unique experience of singing *ffff* while not being able to hear a single sound coming from my mouth.

The record companies are, of course, issuing 'In Memoriam' sets of his recordings, and one of live recordings with the Staatskapelle Dresden caught my eye, for it contains Elgar's First Symphony. I tracked down the original release on a single CD (Profil CD PH05040), available for a little under £8. It is one of the finest performances I have ever had the pleasure of hearing. Here we have a conductor who actually bothers to do what the score suggests and, moreover, brings that touch of indefinable magic to the music; orchestral playing of supreme beauty; a 1997 recording from Mitteldeutscher Rundfunk that is all one could wish for; and a couple of Berlioz overtures to round things off. A performance that all Elgarians should hear, and a conductor whose humanity and musicianship we may remember for the rest of our lives.

Martin Bird

Loving Falstaff

Andrew Neill

When the Editor asked me to write this essay I accepted because I knew it would give me the opportunity to revisit music I have only considered rarely over the last few years. I am particularly grateful to him for I find I have fallen under the spell of this remarkable work of insight and genius once more. Once again I am grateful to Barry Collett for his advice and help in the preparation of what follows.

We love our fictional heroes; figures on whom which we can apply characteristics of our choosing whilst wishing them into a life which is somehow more real than reality. King Arthur may not have existed but thanks to Malory and Tennyson we believe he did. We think we know much about him: the sword in the stone, the lady of the lake, the cuckold who was betrayed and killed by his son. It is all far more interesting than, say, King Alfred the Great whose achievements in education, law reform, the creation of burghs and in putting the Vikings in their place are ignored in favour of an apocryphal incident when the king burnt the cakes. Then we have Sir John Falstaff. He may have existed but not in the form of Shakespeare's glorious invention or by the name by which we have come to know him. Shakespeare created for us a figure larger than life who is all too human; someone we all know – someone we can understand whether we like him or not. Falstaff may be fictional but he beguiles us and, in so doing becomes real.¹

* * *

In September 1913 *The Musical Times* published a long 'Analytical Essay' by Elgar on a work that would receive its premiere at the Leeds Festival on 1 October, his Symphonic Study *Falstaff*. He makes it clear that the listener should forget 'the caricature in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*' for 'the work is based solely on the Falstaff of [Shakespeare's] historical plays'. In composing *Falstaff* Elgar became the most substantial composer to portray the Falstaff of the history plays in music.

Elgar took the high ground, rejecting what he calls 'The idea that Falstaff is merely a farcical character'. All the same, he does not avoid farcical moments in his portrayal for there is enough comedy in Shakespeare's Henry plays to enable Elgar to use his skill with the orchestra to portray Falstaff in every mood. Elgar approaches his characterisation from the opposite perspective of Verdi, who portrays the Falstaff of the *Merry Wives*. However, by the time he composed *Falstaff*, Verdi's greatness as an opera composer is so assured that he has the perception to portray Falstaff as a more rounded character than is implied by the farcical plot lines of his source. Verdi's genius was summarized by Shaw who wrote: '... those of us who, long ago, ... were able to discern in him

1 Robert Nye's *Falstaff* of 1976 will offend many with its detailed but inspired description of low life in Medieval England but his reimagining of Falstaff's life is compelling as it is seductive.

[by the time of *Falstaff*'s premiere in 1893] a man possessing more power than he knew how to use ...'.² It is also worth noting that 'It is occasionally asserted that [Verdi's] *Falstaff*, though a work of enormous vitality and skill, lacks the melodic fecundity of Verdi's youth and middle age. In fact, however, the most striking aspect of the work is its melodic prodigality'.³ Much the same has been said and might said of Elgar's *Falstaff* from twenty years later.

The Premiere

The first performance of Elgar's *Falstaff* shared a programme, conducted by Elgar, with Bantock's *Dante & Beatrice*, Boito's *Mefistofele* Prologue, Harty's *The Mystic Trumpeter* and Mozart's G minor Symphony. All this seems to have affected the *Falstaff* performance as Lady Elgar appreciated: 'E conducted the Bantock splendidly but it seemed long & dreary. A. had drefful fits of nerves – Then Falstaff. E. rather hurried it & some of the lovely melodies were a little smothered but it made its mark & place.' It was not helped by the late arrival of the orchestral parts from Germany on 22 September. However, as Michael Kennedy implies: 'Elgar was missing the attentions of a master-conductor like Richter.'⁴

Elgar and Shakespeare

It is clear from reading the footnotes and quotations to his Essay that Elgar's knowledge of Shakespeare's plays was considerable, as would have been the case with his educated contemporaries. It is hardly surprising, therefore, that Shakespeare's words and characters should appear from time to time in Elgar's correspondence or writings for, in one way or another, Shakespeare helped to form his art. In a notebook dated 'Nov. 19. 1901' Elgar 'wrote the word "Falstaff" at the beginning. There is no direct connection between the work of 1913 and 1901 date, but it is indicative how long the subject had been in Elgar's mind.'⁵

From his setting of Alfred Noyes's 'Shakespeare's Kingdom' in the *Pageant of Empire* of 1924 and the *Othello* quote of farewell: '... pomp and circumstance of glorious war' to his occasional nickname for Jaeger of 'Corporal Nym'; this pre-occupation, whether conscious or not, runs deep. For Elgar, Shakespeare was always there as he acknowledges when he refers to the scenes in Henry IV part one as 'so finely graduated that they exhibit one of the highest flights of Shakespeare's genius ...'. Jerrold Northrop Moore points out that during the 1902 Worcester Three Choirs Festival Elgar 'sketched a musical portrait of Shakespeare's Falstaff – an Allegro in C minor.'⁶ Even when suffering from what Moore calls despondency in 1904 Elgar quoted the final words from Hamlet over a phrase he would later use in the E flat Symphony: 'The rest is silence'.⁷

At the end of his life, 'he wrote another learned letter to the *Times Literary Supplement* about

2 George Bernard Shaw, article in *The World* (London, 13 April 1893). Quoted by Osborne (see below) 306.

3 Charles Osborne, *Verdi A Life in the Theatre* (London: Weidenfeld & Nicholson 1987), 306.

4 Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar* (London: Oxford University Press, 2nd Edition 1982), 256.

5 Robert Anderson & Jerrold Northrop Moore Foreword to Elgar Complete Edition. Vol. 33 *Falstaff, Polonia* (London: Novello, 1992), vii.

6 Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar A Creative Life*, (London: Oxford University Press 1984), 374.

7 Moore, 536

references to Shakespeare in Scott's novels.⁸ It can be no surprise, therefore, that Shakespeare is really at the heart of Elgar's *Falstaff* – in the character and the quotations and in the world Elgar creates – nothing is added in Elgar's version of *Falstaff*, except ideas from commentators such as Maurice Morgann writing 140 years before. His thoughts which meant much to Elgar, only went to enhance this musical portrait.

Elgar's Falstaff

It was Sir Landon Ronald, the dedicatee, who admitted he could 'never make head or tail' of *Falstaff* and a century later he is by no means alone. 'The King has killed his heart'. We know the words of the greatest wordsmith: 'the man of stern reality has triumphed'. Elgar tells us all this too: a side drum in stark relief turns the atmosphere to ice, a bar of silence stops our breath and one beat tells us it is all over. Falstaff is now but a memory. Could anything be more moving? Could any music more accurately match Shakespeare for pathos? Should we not be reduced to tears? Should we not be extolling this music as Elgar's greatest achievement for is it not music we want to love but find difficulty in doing so?

Apparently not for, in mixing my allusions, *Falstaff* is the 'Cinderella' of Elgar's great works and only a few Elgarians call for more performances of *Falstaff* or cry out at the injustice of its neglect. This is, to say the least, unfortunate. Sir Donald Tovey stresses *Falstaff's* musical importance when he points out: 'This enormous mass of definitely different themes is about equal to that of Beethoven's *Eroica* or Ninth Symphony ...'.⁹ As we celebrate the centenary of this elusive music it is necessary to attempt to find answers to the reasons for *Falstaff's* neglect and examine our own emotions in relation to music which seems to appeal to the head rather than the heart.

Elgar, I have little doubt, knew exactly what he was doing, but I imagine he would not be surprised that we are still forced to consider these issues a century later. So, in attempting to understand Elgar's musical portrait, I have first to answer the question: who was Falstaff? Then I look at Elgar's use of the orchestra and attempt to see what the music tells us, in the hope we come to terms with something many of us want to love but somehow cannot.

The Historical Falstaff

Sir John Oldcastle, a friend of Henry V who was executed in 1417 for heresy is apparently the figure on whom Shakespeare based his creation of Sir John Falstaff. There the comparison ends, even if the name Falstaff was substituted for Oldcastle after the first performances of Henry IV. Oldcastle was a Lollard preaching religious reform and therefore a heretic. In the epilogue to Henry IV part 2 Shakespeare makes clear the connection: '... for anything I know, Falstaff shall die of a sweat, unless already a' be killed with your hard opinions; for Oldcastle died a martyr, and this is not the man.' Falstaff is a cad, a thief and a drunkard; a man who would not have had the courage to preach heresy; but Shakespeare's genius is to make us love the man whose humanity it is impossible to resist and whose decline and death are so beautifully managed. It is this man on whom we should concentrate for it is this Falstaff whom Elgar sought to portray in music.

8 Kennedy, 292

9 Donald Francis Tovey, *Essays in Musical Analysis* (Volume IV: Illustrative Music) (London: Oxford University Press, 1937), 3.

Comparisons

I recall the critic William Mann reviewing a concert that combined *Falstaff* and Strauss's *Don Quixote*. Mann ended his review by stating that he considered these two works to be the greatest 'tone poems'. Strauss called his piece 'Fantastic Variations on a theme of knightly character' and Elgar his *Falstaff* a Symphonic Study. However, in this context, 'tone poem' will have to suffice as a general term. Despite its complexity and length Cervantes novel presents a rounded portrait of its characters and Strauss is able to pick scenes that inspired his musical imagination as he progresses through his wonderfully eclectic set of variations. That final variation, the cello telling us of Don Quixote's return to sanity and demise, can be heart breaking. Here is the composer whose music Elgar once called cynical, bringing us to tears. Elgar, who is equally capable of emotion, has the greater challenge for, although he picks scenes from Falstaff's life, Shakespeare's character pops in and out of two plays and his demise is described in *Henry V* by third parties. Falstaff is a bystander, a sub-plot: he is not the central character.

Part of the originality of Elgar's *Falstaff* is that he sticks to the Henry plays whereas most operatic settings (Verdi, Adam, Salieri, Nicolai, Vaughan Williams), use *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as their source. Gustav Holst, on the other hand sticks to *Henry IV*, although the nature of *At the Boar's Head* means that he gets nowhere near the multi-dimensional character that Elgar manages to create in his music. Holst, in his version, largely relied on music from Playford's *The English Dancing Master* of 1651. Tovey points out you could only set *The Merry Wives of Windsor* as an opera, not the Falstaff of the Henry plays. Verdi, the most experienced opera composer of them all somehow manages to get some of the pathos of the Henry plays into his *Falstaff* whilst Vaughan Williams thought the Nicolai setting his favourite¹⁰.

Vaughan Williams' wonderful portrayal of Falstaff in *Sir John in Love* is, in my view, as much a celebration of the English Pastoral as anything else – that golden world of Elizabethan England that is more of the imagination than reality. Elgar, the atavist, perhaps surprisingly, reflects the dirt and squalor of Falstaff's time more clearly in the music as in the scenes in the Boar's Head and the scarecrow army, although he too is drawn to the Pastoral in the two Interludes.

In his *Falstaff* Elgar gives us a man of action rather than a sponging lecher. Lechery is implied, but Elgar resists any temptation to become sidetracked, using the orchestra to colour every aspect of Falstaff's life. He avoids a characterisation that could become two dimensional; when Falstaff reminisces it is not about conquests of women, it is about his progress to a knight, his battles and his falseness – it is nostalgia, something with which his composer was something of an expert. Elgar does let his hair down for in a postscript to a letter to Troyte Griffith of 2 September 1913 he wrote 'Alice is horrified I fear with my honest gentlewomen – of course they must be in – do you think I have overdone them?'¹¹

Unlike Strauss in *Don Quixote* who characterizes Sancho Panza (at times hilariously), Elgar does not give us musical portraits of Nym, Bardolph or Pistol – they exist in the music and are implied. His Falstaff is never still (except when in a drunken sleep) until he meets his nemesis in an old friend who is no more a friend but the new king: 'I know thee not, old man: fall to thy prayers; How will white hairs become a fool and jester! ... Presume not that I am the thing I was ...'.

10 See Michael Kennedy, *The Works of Vaughan Williams* (Oxford University Press, 1964), 385: 'This is altogether delightful. I think it is the best of the operas on the Falstaff saga.' Letter to M.K. 1 July 1956.

11 Percy M. Young, *Letters of Edward Elgar* (London: Geoffrey Bles, 1956), 156.

Questions

So we face two questions: why is *Falstaff* so little played and why is it respected rather than loved? I am the first to acknowledge that I do not 'love' the music as I do the 'Variations', Symphonies or the third part of *The Kingdom*, for example. I respect its brilliance and portraiture and can see why Elgar thought it his finest achievement. On the other hand I realise I have absorbed the music over the years and hearing only one bar out of context induces instant recognition. Recently, I switched on the car radio as *Falstaff* began. I had no idea who was conducting, but I was hooked and had to delay my arrival to hear the end and to find out who (for me) had penetrated to the heart of the music. It was the Solti recording in which Sir Georg, new to the music, seemed to offer a clarity and an understanding I had not appreciated before, even though I have the recording.

Other conductors such as Barbirolli, Boult and Ashkenazy have championed *Falstaff* but Sir Mark Elder's recent performance in Chicago is worth noting, as described by Arthur Reynolds: 'In January 2012 Sir Mark Elder achieved a feat I thought to be impossible: he brought an American audience to its feet for a standing ovation after conducting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in a performance of *Falstaff*. Most of the audience had braved a serious snow-storm to hear Sir Mark's account of the Beethoven symphony that followed a work I doubt many of them had ever heard of let alone heard.'

Sir Mark caught their attention with the assistance of a pair of actors and a cinema screen placed behind the orchestra. Prior to the start of the performance, he turned to the audience and explained how Elgar had divided the work into sections of Shakespeare's play. Then the actors spoke a few lines of dialogue from the relevant sections together with the Interludes, each punctuated by Sir Mark's explanation of Elgar's programme. When the music began, the screen identified each section – Shallow's Orchard, etc. – so the audience could follow the sequences and perceive that what Elgar had accomplished was ingenious.¹²

So, where does the problem lie? Is it too clever by half? Does Elgar dazzle us with his myriad of themes, his brilliant orchestration and understanding of Shakespeare? Does all this overwhelm a relatively short piece of programme music? Is it because there is no long-breathed melody that we have come to expect of Elgar a reason for any disappointment? Is it because it is a difficult piece for an orchestra to learn and to play and a hard work to absorb for a conductor? We all respond in our own way to a work of art and there are those reading this who will have no doubt that *Falstaff* is Elgar at his greatest; but the problem remains and all the issues I have listed militate against the average listener coming to love the music. Nevertheless, it is worth persevering, as Michael Kennedy makes clear: 'The reservations I had about it [Falstaff] when I wrote a *Portrait of Elgar* have long vanished. Its humour, rumbustiousness, nobility and the heart-breaking poetry of the Dream Interludes stamp it through and through as *echt*-Elgar. Its scoring is masterly in every detail.'¹³

Jerrold Northrop Moore reflecting on the work makes the point that '*Falstaff* holds the mirror to a man now hearing in his art an ageing, marginalising talent to amuse: innocence abused and then dismissed. It also shows yet again Elgar's extraordinary power to anticipate a general mood

12 From an email to the author, July 2013. This sort of performance should be encouraged and would fit well into a Promenade Concert. It is worth noting however, that *Falstaff* was performed during this year's season of Proms.

13 Michael Kennedy, *The Life of Elgar*, (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 137.

and world events.'¹⁴ These two great biographers suggest why we might respect and even love *Falstaff* but, contrarily, make it clear why the work causes problems. These, it seems, can only be resolved by looking well beneath the surface and taking time to come to an understanding of their complexity. Consequently it must be up to the listener to use every aid possible to understand what Elgar is doing and what he is saying.

Perhaps any work that requires extensive analysis to convey its meaning is thereby weakened and, therein, lies the heart of the problem: with Elgar's *Falstaff* we need to have explained to us what is going on. A listener who is both an accomplished musician and an expert on Shakespeare's plays may not require an explanation, but they are in the minority and Elgar surely recognized the problem when he published his own analysis of the work. However, for the newcomer I believe a detailed analysis is required. I know I felt I needed this when I first came to try and understand *Falstaff*. What follows below is based on Elgar's and Tovey's analysis with the cue points in turn applied to Elgar's own recording as issued by EMI. I have added a few comments of my own.

Back to Shakespeare

Prince Hal, his life altered by two inevitable and linked events fulfils his destiny without hesitation and neither does he look back, nor does he waiver. He becomes reconciled to his father before Henry IV dies and he is then reconciled to his responsibilities as a king: life is suddenly serious. For Falstaff 'the chimes of midnight' become a peel for a new world and Pistol's announcement of the Henry VI's demise: 'Sir John, thy tender lambkin now is king,' only serves to encourage Falstaff in his belief that 'I am Fortune's steward.' The 'chimes', though, become his knell.

The new King Henry's transformation is complete and, as Elgar makes clear 'the man of stern reality has triumphed' but Shakespeare goes on to preach at Falstaff offering a let out: 'And, as we hear you do reform yourselves, We will, according to your strengths and qualities, Give you advancement. Be it your charge, my lord, To see perform'd the tenor of our word.' This is often forgotten and I wonder, too, at Tovey's comment: 'Prince Hal, who owes Falstaff his love, and who has from the first to last been stealing the pleasures of disreputable "ragging" with the deliberate intention of pompously and publicly disgracing his poor dupes as soon as he is crowned ...'.¹⁵ Was that the Prince's intention or rather did this become a necessity once he realized the obligations of kingship? Is this why Elgar removed the marking *nobilmente* for Hal's theme when it is introduced (Fig.4)? Contrary to what Tovey suggests who feels that 'breeding will tell' and that the passage should have remained marked *nobilmente*. Is it not possible that Elgar is being more subtle and perceptive than Tovey suggests?¹⁶

It is the musical treatment of the following words that ends Elgar's music with the reference to Act 2, Scene 3 from Henry V and Mistress Quickly's moving report of Falstaff's death: 'a' parted even just between twelve and one, even at the turning of the tide.' However, the music offers no redemption, as Elgar's hero dies, his heart broken and his world destroyed: The king is dead; long live the king, or as Elgar put it: '[he] fulfilled the prophecy of Warwick: "He will cast off his followers, and their memory shall a pattern or a measure live."!'.¹⁷

This *Falstaff* is what Elgar wrote, it is all in the music; miraculously so. He did not write a long Lisztian Symphony with each movement describing part of Falstaff's life or character, nor did he

14 Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar Child of Dreams*, (London: Faber and Faber, 2004), 177.

15 Tovey, 7.

16 Tovey, 6.

write an opera; for it would possibly have been of Wagnerian length and probably too complicated even if he felt equipped to write such a work. What is more he had no Boito to rely on; part of the reason why Verdi reigns supreme in his portrayal, although Vaughan Williams had his doubts: ‘Boito’s medicated Shakespeare hardly gives him [Verdi] a chance.’¹⁷

As Michael Kennedy implies, it is in the two Interludes that we come to the heart of the music. There Falstaff, Shakespeare and Elgar almost become one. In the first interval, the composer latches on to the few words that tells us of Falstaff’s past when he was page to the Duke of Norfolk. From his drunken slumbers Falstaff recalls a time seen through the prism of nostalgia. In both Interludes, Falstaff’s sleep is cut short. The first interruption is when he is required to travel to Gloucestershire and the second because he has to rush to London on news of the death of Henry IV. A scene of distant revelry and folk-dance imbue the second Interlude, thrown in to sharp relief by the change at the top of the order. It is all, now, very serious indeed although Falstaff realizes this all too late.

Elgar is at his greatest as *Falstaff* concludes. ‘About the actual end of the work Elgar had been uncertain even when making the MS full score. It was an afterthought to finish with a reference to “the King’s stern theme” with Falstaff dead.’¹⁸ Falstaff dies (in the music) a few bars before the end, soft chords softly intoning his demise as his life is remembered as through a mist. Then the young King Hal is not only a reminder of the dominant character in Falstaff’s life but also how everything is changed and will change, especially for the young king whose short reign of nine years would lead to chaos and civil war.

Even if Elgar’s *Falstaff* requires knowledge and understanding it is more than worthy of this imposition on the listener. In Scene III of Henry V Act 1 Bardolph says in farewell to Falstaff: ‘well the fuel is gone that maintains that fire ...’. It is clear that Elgar’s fuel burned brightly in 1913. It was to be another ten years before his fire was to dim.

‘The man of stern reality’ may have ‘triumphed’ but it is that short scene in Henry V that enables Elgar to reach beyond Falstaff’s rejection and return to memories of green fields and Prince Hal his friend and fellow reveller before the lonely death. This is where Shakespeare and Elgar become one and it is they who should have the last words: ‘The Prince, arrived at his kingly dignity, fulfilled the prophecy of Warwick, “he cast off his followers, and their memory shall a pattern or a measure live”.’ In his music Elgar indeed honours these memories and their begetter, William Shakespeare.

* * *

Elgar’s recording of *Falstaff* was made with the London Symphony Orchestra in Abbey Road Studios on 11 and 12 November 1931, the latter day being when Elgar formally opened the studio. The timings below are from the set of Elgar’s recording by EMI currently available in a 9 CD box set: 0 95692 2. The track numbers are as the CD.

Andrew Neill was Chairman of the Elgar Society from 1992 until 2008.

17 From an article in *Opera* magazine (February 1951). Quoted by Michael Kennedy in his notes for the recording of *Sir John in Love* (Chandos 9928).

18 Anderson & Moore, viii.

Track	Time	
5	0:00	‘An apartment of the Prince’s’ – at Court, - Enter Sir John Falstaff, in Morgann’s words: “we see him ‘in a green old age, mellow, frank, gay, easy corpulent, loose, unprincipled, and luxurious’ or as Tovey puts it: ‘wallowing, protesting, and formidable in his absurdity.’
5	0:15	‘I am not only witty in myself but the cause that wit is in other men.’
5	0:22	Tovey: ‘... scolding, like some aspects of Mistress Quickly or less respectable persons.’
5	0:32	Loud scoldings!
5	0:43	Enter Hal (con anima) ‘in his most courtly and genial mood’.
5	1:20	A change of key and a new theme.
5	1:46	The scolding themes recur leading to a review of all the themes.
5	2:22	Note the ‘tottering bass’ for Falstaff.
5	2:40	Prince Hal and Falstaff repair to The Boar’s Head in Eastcheap.
6	0:00	New themes are introduced – characters in the Boar’s Head who goad Falstaff.
6	0:24	‘A new theme [is introduced], blown up like a bladder with sighing and grief.’
6	1:31	‘A noble outburst of Falstaffian indignation.’ Prince Hal begins his plotting to way lay Falstaff who, in turn, intends to rob the convoy of bullion.
6		‘The conspirators plot in whispers.’
6	2:42	‘Falstaff has become alert but mystified. Something new and innocent makes its appearance.’
6	3:41	‘Ominous rustlings and whisperings.’
6	3:58	Falstaff is lost.
6	4:22	Prince Hal runs in.
6	4:30	The fight begins. Falstaff is out to rout – he returns to the Boar’s Head to drown his sorrows in sack.
6	6:18	Mistress Quickly
6	6:13	Prince Hall holds court in the Boar’s Head.
6	8:38	Falstaff tries to make a speech.
6	9:09	This starts scenes of raillery which engulfs the whole of the Boar’s Head.’
6	10:04	Mistress Quickly scolds Falstaff: ‘You stupid old man.’
6	10:41	Falstaff now sees the world through a drunken mist
6	11:24	He is now asleep and snoring.
7	0:00	Falstaff is now dreaming – ‘Jack Falstaff, now Sir John, a boy, and page to Thomas Mowbray, Duke of Norfolk’.
8	0:00	Falstaff is summoned to Court: ‘He now must play the soldier.’
8	0:11	Falstaff assembles his ‘army’.
8	0:37	At Shallow’s Orchard he reviews his ragged army of recruits: ‘a shirt and a half to the whole company’.
8	1:21	Falstaff leads his army into battle.
8	2:44	‘The tumult dies away’ and we have a glimpse of rural Gloucestershire.
8	3:28	‘A new rustic and reedy motive of laziness.’
9	0:00	Gloucestershire. Shallow’s Orchard.
9	1:20	Pistol arrives
9	1:24	The King is dead!
9	1:44	Falstaff now boasts that he will be the greatest man in the kingdom!
9	2:21	The Coronation – Falstaff is there in the crowd to greet his friend.
9	3:12	In the Abbey – ‘solemn sounds betoken the approach of the coronation procession’.
10	0:23	‘Laughter is in the air’
10	0:50	‘Falstaff shares in the glow of affectionate loyalty to the new King.’
10	1:04	‘Cheers and the waving of caps.’
10	1:14	Falstaff is still convinced of his potential position.
10	1:38	The excitement increases.
10	2:22	The King arrives (grandioso) – Sir John steps forward
10	3:04	He is rebuffed.
10	3:11	He pleads.
10	3:20	‘Falstaff’s heart is fractured and corroborate.’
10	3:54	Falstaff is now on his knees but
10	4:05	The procession moves on.
10	4:52	Back at the Boar’s Head Falstaff lies ‘for the king has killed his heart’.
10	5:12	Memories fill Falstaff’s mind
10	5:56	Shallow’s Orchard is remembered.
10	7:01	‘An unspoilt memory of the prince whom Falstaff loved.’
10	7:42	Mistress Quickly is at his bed-side.
10	7:53	Falstaff dies
10	8:01	‘The man of stern reality has triumphed.’

Falstaff: a modernist musical portrait

Julian Rushton

In 2007, the 150th anniversary of Elgar's birth, the 'Elgar' £20 note was replaced. While there can be no intrinsic objection to redesigning our currency, the timing was tactless; yet a columnist on the financial pages of *The Independent* welcomed the change, suggesting that Elgar was out of touch in the age of Schoenberg and Stravinsky. The *Falstaff* centenary falls close to those of the epoch-marking *Pierrot lunaire* and *Rite of Spring*, but the *Independent* writer didn't explain why Elgar should be evaluated by reference to Stravinsky, a full quarter-century younger, or Schoenberg (b. 1874), who remains problematic for many listeners today. By such criteria, J. S. Bach should be dismissed as an old periwig and Brahms a dull reactionary suffering, as Nietzsche put it, the melancholy of impotence.

A more realistic evaluation of *Falstaff* marks it as modernist within the context of Elgar's contemporaries and English music generally. For some time it may have been most admired by academics, such as Edward J. Dent, who otherwise disliked Elgar, or Donald Tovey, who called it 'Elgar's greatest work'. Dent's admiration was qualified; he thought *Falstaff* depended too much on its overt programme.¹ In his Birmingham lectures Elgar supported the Brahms-Parry view that the symphony without a programme is the summit of musical art, and subsequently he practices what he preached in two symphonies and a violin concerto. Having as it were cleared his conscience, he could safely revert to programme music on the lines of Ernest Newman's prescription for stage-less operas, outlined in his essay 'Wagner and Super-Wagner' that appeared in *The Musical Times* (Novello's house magazine) in February 1913. Newman proposed that 'an exaggerated importance can be attached to the principle of art being "self-sufficing" and "self-explanatory" at the first time of hearing ...'.² A programme enables us to dispense with the apparatus of stage and the caprice of singers. The most admired modernist of the time in England was the erstwhile *enfant terrible*: Richard Strauss, one of whose largest programme pieces (*An Alpine Symphony*) was yet to come. Schoenberg also wrote a symphonic poem (*Pelleas und Melisande*) under Strauss's influence, even Stravinsky produced one (*The Song of the Nightingale*), and when his ballets entered the concert hall they became *de facto* programme music.

Falstaff is admittedly less modernistic than a symphony composed in 1913 by a younger contemporary, at least in its original form. Vaughan Williams's *A London Symphony* was first performed in March 1914, including passages later omitted that evoke James Thomson's 'city

1 On Dent see my 'Elgar and Academe (1)', this Journal 15/4 (March 2008), 27–8; on Tovey and *Falstaff*, 'Elgar and Academe (3)', *ibid.*, 16/6 (November 2010), 18–20.

2 The essay was reprinted in Newman's *Wagner as Man and Artist* in 1914; reprinted 1963 (London: Victor Gollancz Ltd).

of dreadful night' – a poem that also attracted Elgar.³ *Falstaff* evokes the seamier and grandiose aspects of the capital city, and also ventures outside London for scenes of highway robbery, battle, and sleepy nostalgia. To evoke Shakespeare's Falstaff, Elgar composed music as daring as any he ever wrote, and as long: at well over 1000 bars – over 1,400 if one counts the repeats – it is his longest continuous instrumental work. Few composers have attempted such an immense musical span without sung words or a programme.

Falstaff in a minor mode

Elgar was no doubt acquainted with Verdi's characterization of the fat knight, which Neville Cardus thought 'truer' than Elgar's, despite its origin in the *Merry Wives* rather than the 'real' Falstaff of the history plays.⁴ Much as I love Verdi's opera, I can't agree with Cardus here, or with his apparent puzzlement that Elgar should present a Falstaff in a minor key.⁵ Elgar and Verdi both offer a wistful reminiscence of young Jack, page to the Duke of Norfolk: in Verdi this is a tiny aria with a higher vocal tessitura than most of the role, and in Elgar it becomes a 'dream interlude', still in a minor key. Elgar took 'Norfolk' as an cue for a pastoral scene, less overtly rustic than the pipes and tabor of Shallow's orchard (the second interlude, also in A minor), but equally marked by the

Ex. 1 *Falstaff*, from fig. 80 (harp, second violins, and some other doublings omitted)

3 The 1913 version of *A London Symphony* (on Chandos 9902, conducted by Richard Hickox) contains c. 20 minutes of music that Vaughan Williams later cut; the 'city of dreadful night' is part of the Scherzo, no less terrifying equivalent than the equivalent in Elgar's Second Symphony. Elgar's notations for a second London overture, darker than *Cockaigne*, never went very far.

4 Neville Cardus, *A Composer's Eleven* (London: Jonathan Cape, 1958), 204–6.

5 '... bless his heart, what manner of man does he show us bearing the name of Falstaff? A Falstaff in C minor.' Cardus, *op. cit.*, 205.

modal inflections associated with folksong.⁶ The delicate filigree ending this ‘dream interlude’ also signals the pastoral by a ‘drone’, bare fifths in the bass, introduced by through ‘modal’ G naturals rather than ‘tonal’ sharps (Ex.1).

Elgar’s Falstaff transcends buffoonery to touch on tragedy, whereas Verdi’s ends up singing a fugue and joins his fellow-citizens in a midnight feast. Elgar evokes Falstaff’s military credentials and political ambition as well as his louche habits and fondness for low company. The character’s complexity is reflected in the musical language that informs his most characteristic themes. Elgar is, of course, never atonal (as the Schoenberg of *Pierrot lunaire* mostly was), nor even bitonal (as were parts of Stravinsky’s ballets). Twelve-note ‘rows’ were not yet invented, but Elgar, like Schoenberg, knew his Bach. The last fugue from Book I of the ‘48’ is an extreme case, containing all twelve notes of the chromatic scale (Ex.2):

Ex. 2. Bach, Fugue 24 from Book I of *Das Wohltempierte Klavier*

Largo



When a note appears in different octaves it is counted as another example of the same pitch-class, rather than a new one (thus all pitches called C form one ‘pitch class’). And the same pitch may appear in two spellings – in Ex.2, C natural and B sharp. The wide intervals in Bach’s fugue subject also tests our perception of tonal coherence, but comprehension is aided by repetition of small motives in sequence. This description would do just as well for Elgar’s ‘Falstaff’ themes.⁷ Such chromatic near-saturation in melody is one of the more remarkable aspects of this work, but it is markedly reduced in themes associated with dreaming, the pastoral, and, significantly, with Prince Hal. Such a dramatically motivated contrast between chromatic ambiguity and wholesome diatonicism suggests the practice of Wagner (especially *Parsifal*), but Elgar spices it with irony, for Prince Hal is not exactly wholesome and our sympathies may lie with the fat knight, for all his decadence.

Chromaticism is well suited to Falstaff’s Protean nature. The opening of this ‘study in C minor’, besides being centred melodically on G rather than C (which appears only briefly near the end), contains ten pitches from the possible twelve (Ex.3):

Ex. 3 *Falstaff*, opening



6 Such inflections are not uncommon in Elgar’s mature output; they are prominent at the opening of the String Quartet.

7 Elgar himself identified the references intended by each theme: *Falstaff* by Edward Elgar. *Analytical Essay by the Composer* (London: Novello, n.d., reprinted from *The Musical Times*, September 1913).

The missing pitches are C sharp and E natural. C sharp comes in smartly in the next melodic idea (Ex.4). E natural pops up in the wind shortly afterwards (two bars before fig.2), completing the ‘total chromatic’. But this, the last note to appear, is far from insignificant in the work as a whole.

Ex. 4 *Falstaff*, from the 9th bar



These themes don’t define C minor in the clear-cut way in which A flat and E flat are presented, melodically and harmonically, to open the symphonies. Elgar’s third theme (fig.7, ‘Falstaff cajoling’) uses fewer pitches, but is slippery in tonality, starting in E minor and soon landing on a chord of A flat.⁸ His fourth theme increases the saturation, with ten pitches plus an E natural accorded in the accompaniment (Ex.5) (the missing note is A natural, key-note of the interludes).

Ex. 5 *Falstaff* from the 2nd bar of fig. 25

molto grandioso e largamente



Even the scarecrow march uses ten pitches; and F sharp is in the accompaniment, and (last again) E natural follows under the repetition of the tune (Ex.6).⁹

Ex. 6 *Falstaff* from fig. 86



8 This is the second example in *Falstaff* by Edward Elgar.

9 In *Falstaff* by Edward Elgar ... this and the previous example are printed the wrong way round.

It is a commonplace of music that daring, even outrageous, things can be risked by a composer, where there is horror or humour. Elgar's stretching of his melodic and harmonic vocabulary in *Falstaff* is not mere clowning (although it embraces clowning, notably in the bassoon solo based on theme 4 (Ex.5), from after fig.62). Advanced chromaticism suggests decadence and even danger, and this affects even the roistering ladies of the night who complement the seductive jollity of their theme, with its trills, grace-notes, and cheeky rhythm (Ex.7), by more near-chromatic saturation.

Ex. 7 *Falstaff* from fig. 55



The violin tune contains nine pitches, with B natural a grace-note, and a tenth, A flat, tops a chord, marked by cor anglais. The 'Trio' section of this 'Scherzo' (fig. 63–68) bristles with accidentals (Ex.8):

Ex. 8 *Falstaff* from 3rd bar of fig. 63



Elgar's musical language is complex, but based firmly in tonality: major and minor triads, the seven-note scale. But *Falstaff* stretches that language, while the prince, his theme notoriously echoing Schumann (*Frauenliebe*), does not. He comes to represent conservatism and discipline, the latter quality inspiring the harsh sonorities of the March for his kingly entrance (markedly different from the scarecrow march of Ex.6). The tough harmonies this time emphasize C minor (Ex.9).

Ex. 9 *Falstaff* from fig. 115



Elgar was typically generous with thematic material in *Falstaff*, and I haven't mentioned several ideas, including one he aptly characterized as 'cheerful, outdoor, ambling' (from fig.32); this is less chromatic, but it is interspersed with a version of Ex.3 reduced to scurrying quavers, suggesting trouble ahead at Gadshill.

I hope the above discussion explains why, although every reader of this Journal presumably finds *Falstaff* fine and ingratiating, it nevertheless deserves its place in the pantheon of modernistic exploration of musical materials – and no less because it is all accomplished within a framework of 'classic-romantic' tonality and using harmonies familiar to its first listeners from the music of

Wagner, Brahms, and Strauss. The theme fully exposed after fig.19, which Elgar associates with Falstaff as 'a goodly, portly man, of a cheerful look' who 'did good service at Shrewsbury', is nevertheless an example of the kind of harmonic adventure he had used to characterize some of the more mystic elements in *The Apostles*. Here is the beginning of Elgar's eighth example (Ex.10), although he omitted the bounding bass figure:

Ex. 10 *Falstaff* from fig. 19



Elgar associates this with Falstaff singing 'When Arthur first in court', but such slithering harmonies – the melody no more than their surface – are hardly suitable for entertaining his 'cheery companions'. The passage uses two chord-types, oscillating and repeated in sequence: upside-down major triads and 'half-diminished' sevenths, the latter often associated with Wagner's *Tristan*.

Tonality: form and programme

What, really, is the tonal centre of *Falstaff*? Elgar said C minor. If he took few pains to establish this key at the outset, it's still a point from which to take our bearings. Hal's theme (fig.4, 'courtly and genial', as Elgar put it), is associated with the relative major, E flat. The ladies of the night use G minor, also closely related, while the interludes gain a dreamy remoteness from their alien key, A minor, as well as their slighter instrumental forces. Hal's theme, like Falstaff's, is wittily diminished in the Gadshill episode (from fig.41), in G major, and when Pistol bursts upon the Gloucestershire idyll ('Harry the Fifth's the man!') his theme is in E major (fig.108). Such a brilliantly 'wrong' key suggests delusion (Falstaff's, not Hal's). The true and *grandioso* recapitulation, back in E flat major (fig.127), uses the same harmonies as fig.4 (with chromatic elements in the bass), but places the theme in a higher orchestral register, over martial rhythms from side-drum and trumpets. This 'apotheosis' technique derives from numerous examples from the previous century, combining an essential formal element – tonal and thematic recapitulation – with programmatic significance. There follow mainly fragmentary returns of Falstaff's themes, a passage more programmatic than merely formal. Fragmentation also has precedents, at least as early as Beethoven's *Coriolan*; the hero's downfall is marked by broken reminiscences. Berlioz seized on this technique (for instance in his *King Lear* overture), which anticipates leitmotiv treatment in of Wagner's operas.

Critics have been more prone to relate *Falstaff* to Strauss's *Don Quixote* than to Wagner. Cardus hoped for a 'special circle of fire and ice' for those who 'cannot listen' without tracing influences or borrowings between musical works; he cites an alleged allusion to *Don Quixote* in the solo 'cello near the end of *Falstaff* (fig.138–140, and earlier: see Ex.1).¹⁰ Cardus doesn't tell us who proposed this as an 'influence', and he was right to dismiss it. Strauss used the solo 'cello to impersonate his hero, whereas in *Falstaff* it appears briefly as a new colour; near the end it adds to

10 Cardus, op. cit., 203.

that sense of emptying each Falstaffian constituent, as the old man recalls green fields, a sweeter prince, and still sweeter women (fig.143). His dying moments are evoked in the arching clarinet solo (fig.146) which doesn't seem obviously related to previous themes – a glimpse of the beyond.

Calling *Falstaff* a 'Symphonic Study in C minor', albeit with interludes in A minor, makes it sound more conventional than it really is. The ending mingles at least four tonalities. The final memory of Hal (fig.144) is back in E flat; Falstaff's own theme (fig.145), interrupted by rests, steers towards C minor, emphasizing the dominant, G (cf. Ex.3); the clarinet solo is ambiguous in harmony, but when other instruments enter, in a warm middle-register instrumentation, the three-note chord (D/F/A flat) is resolved (to quote Elgar) onto 'a full chord of C major, and Falstaff is dead'. Yet there remains a spasm of life, a muscular contraction, a bitter memory King Henry's march, in E *natural* minor. The big chord six bars from the end, poised high in the registers of wind, brass, and strings, is not the A minor of the bucolic interludes, but the subdominant of E; it leads the ear to expect resolution onto E minor.¹¹ But it decays; the side-drum rattles; and the end is a low, pianissimo, staccato C – plus a nearly inaudible C major chord (E natural on top) on pizzicato violas.

Elgar here achieved a tonal alienation less gimmicky than the end of Strauss's *Also sprach Zarathustra*, where a low-register C competes with high-register chords of B. In evoking Strauss, I am mindful of that fiery and icy circle of hell, but hope to escape, as I am only showing how Elgar matched the modernist advances of the younger composer. Schoenberg's rapid development left his public trailing behind their own time; Strauss and Elgar spoke directly to their contemporaries. I hope none of my readers, if they get this far, will suppose that I give more credence to stupid comments on the financial pages of *The Independent* than I would trust a music critic to advise me on hedge funds. Elgar was, in his own time and place, abreast of developments in the art, and for a composer aged 56 one need not expect more. What one has a right to expect is ripeness; and that Elgar offers in abundance: ripeness of insight into his subject; ripeness of melodic, harmonic, formal, and orchestrational technique; above all, ripeness of musical imagination.

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11 This point is fully made by J. P. E. Harper-Scott, 'Elgar's Invention of the Human: *Falstaff* Op. 68', in *Nineteenth-Century Music* xxviii/3 (Spring 2005), 230–53 (see the example on p. 252), and in his *Edward Elgar: Modernist* (Cambridge University Press, 2006), 107–153 (see p. 152). Other recent accounts of *Falstaff* to which I owe a debt are those of Christopher Kent in Raymond Monk (ed.), *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature* (Aldershot: Scolar Press, 1993), 83–107, Christopher Mark in Daniel M. Grimley and Julian Rushton (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar* (Cambridge University Press, 2004), 162–6; and Daniel M. Grimley in Byron Adams (ed.), *Edward Elgar and his World* (Princeton University Press, 2007), 113–120.

Tales from the Complete Edition – 8 An Unexpected Coda to the Four Lost Songs

John Norris

They say it isn't over until the fat lady sings – particularly if she is singing Elgar's solo songs for voice and piano, it seems. When last Summer I wrote of Elgar's significant revision of the 1888 *Magazine Music* version of *The Wind at Dawn* before republication by Boosey in 1907¹ I expected that to be the most significant finding to emerge from the editing of Volume 15 of the Complete Edition. How wrong I was. As the volume progressed towards publication in the early months of 2013 and our focus moved on from the completed and published songs to the words, sketches and fragments, and songs believed lost, we stumbled across surprise after surprise.

For a start, is Brian Trowell the only person to have recognised Ascherberg's glaring error when they published Elgar's *7 Lieder*² album? Although Elgar never offered Ascherberg any of his works for publication, by a process of take-over and merger they had by 1907 acquired the publishing rights to seven of his early solo songs originally placed with smaller publishers. Ascherberg had significant sales in Germany and, recognising a wider market for the songs, chose to republish the seven unconnected songs in an album format with German words below Elgar's setting of English verse. To provide the German words, Ascherberg turned to one Ed. Sachs,³ whose command of British history proved somewhat inadequate. To Elgar's *Queen Mary's Song* he gave the German title 'Maria Stuart's Lied von Laut' (literally 'Mary Stuart's Lute Song'), thus exposing his historical limitations: Elgar had set words from Tennyson's epic poem *Queen Mary*, an account of the last days of Queen Mary I of England, not of Mary Stuart alias Bloody Mary, Queen Mary I of Scotland. If Herr Sachs was German, as his name suggests, his confusion is perhaps forgivable. But it is more surprising that no-one seems to have picked up his error ... until Brian, that is.

Other, lesser oddities have received far more comment, notably Elgar's switching of Binyon's word order 'they shall grow not old' to 'they shall not grow old' in his setting of 'For the Fallen' and the replacement of three words in his *Sea Pictures* finale, 'The Swimmer' ('See!' replaced by 'So'; 'sunder' by 'under'; 'straits' by 'strifes'). To some composers the poet's words are sacrosanct, thereby justifying comment when discrepancies are found; but clearly not to Elgar. A close comparison of the words he finally set against those it is believed the poet intended show how carefully Elgar refined the poet's words to serve his purpose and for the benefit of the singer.

1 *Elgar Society Journal*, Vol. 17 No.5, August 201, 27-32.

2 Ascherberg consistently printed the album's title as '7 Lieder', never 'Seven' or 'Sieben', presumably to improve international marketability.

3 Similarly, and possibly for similar reasons, Herr Sachs' full first name remained a well-guarded secret. One is reminded that *Salut d'amour* only achieved success after Schott reprinted the work with a French title and the composer's name reduced to 'Ed. Elgar'.

A note of caution is necessary here: a comparison of the words of various poems in different modern editions and on different websites suggests that the poet's precise intentions do become corrupted with time. Except in the punctuation which seems to fluctuate widely, the differences are usually inconsequential and the reasons, whether through carelessness or intention, are unknown. But fortunately a number of on-line sources, notably Google Books, now contain facsimiles of the first (and in some cases only) editions of poems Elgar set. These, and anthologies in Elgar's own library now held at the Birthplace and often marked up with his editorial changes, allow us to distinguish Elgar's changes from those made by others, including the poet him- or herself, with near certainty.

We can therefore be confident that it was Elgar who adjusted the last line of *A War Song* from '... rest in a grave!' to '... rest in the grave!', presumably to add a note of finality to the song; who deleted a sibilant final 's' from two words in 'Where Corals Lie' ('lands' and 'sunset's'), no doubt out of sympathy for the singer; and who, to move forward the emphasis by a beat, changed the word order of a line in *The Pipes of Pan* from '... was once ...' to '... once was ...'. There is less certainty over the total replacement of a full line – the first of the final verse – in the latter song. The poem, published only a few years before Elgar set it, is credited to Adrian Ross, the pseudonym of Arthur Reed Ropes. Ropes was one of the leading lyricists of the day,⁴ contributing the words to songs used in many of the West End musicals of the last decade of the 19th century and the first two of the 20th century so he clearly knew what he was doing: the last verse of his poem begins 'Turn and flee – it is he!' But when Elgar's song appeared, this line had been replaced by 'Ours the fray – on and slay'. Whether the new line came from Elgar's pen or Ropes' is unknown; but surely it must have been at Elgar's instigation and with Ropes' blessing.⁵

Elgar's manuscripts are often particularly illuminating, revealing the gestation of a word change. The song 'Is she not passing fair?' contains the line 'Be jocund or serene' in which the word 'jocund' stands out as particularly dated; not surprisingly for a poem written in the 15th century, one might think. The word, however, is Elgar's, the poem's author, Charles Duc d'Orleans having preferred to describe 'her' as 'lively or serene'. Unusually among the solo songs, there are two chronologically distinct manuscripts for 'Is she not passing fair?', separated by some 22 years, which reveal how Elgar struggled to find the right word. In the earlier manuscript he originally included the Duc's word ('lively') but later crossed it out, replacing it not with 'jocund' but with 'joyous'. This is how the line first appeared in the later manuscript, 'joyous or serene'; but Elgar remained unhappy, leading to the subsequent replacement of 'joyous' by 'jocund' in this manuscript and the first published edition.

In *Queen Mary's Song*, Elgar's final intentions are less clear. Of the passage Elgar chose to set from Tennyson's poem, the third line begins 'Low my Lute' while the fourth line reads 'Low! lute, low!'. Elgar felt the song would be improved by interchanging the two phrases and so they appear in the manuscript; but in both published editions of the song Tennyson's original word order is restored. Elgar's acknowledgement that Tennyson knew best, rather than an oversight of, or

4 Ropes was also one of the founding fathers of the Performing Rights Society, established in 1914.

5 Four years after *The Pipes of Pan*, Elgar sought permission to set another poem by Ropes: *May, June, July*. This poem had already been set to music by Lionel Monckton, however, in which form it had been used on the West End stage in the 1902 musical *A Country Girl*, possibly where Elgar had first come across it. Whether out of loyalty to Monckton or for fear of copyright complications, Ropes refused Elgar permission. By this point Elgar had already composed the music so he turned to Arthur Benson who provided the words to the song now known as *Speak my Heart!*.

disregard for, Elgar's preference? It seems more likely.

Elgar was not of course alone in such uncertainties. His setting of *Sabbath Morning at Sea* contains a number of significant differences from the words of Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem as we now know them, possibly leading to expectations of further Elgarian tinkering. But the uncertainties here are Browning's, not Elgar's. Fortunately the University of North Dakota (but why North Dakota?) has a website devoted to their Browning project, which aims to record all of her poems in their multiplicity of versions, and she was a compulsive reviser.

Sabbath Morning at Sea had a particularly convoluted evolution over a period approaching twenty years. It was first published as a poem of sixteen verses with the title *A Sabbath on the Sea* in an 1838 anthology entitled *The Amaranth*.⁶ Browning was obviously unhappy with the poem for, ten years later, she cannibalised it, removing the second, third and fourth verses and retaining only the metre and rhymes of the remaining thirteen verses. Thus the fifteenth verse of the original:

And how upon that day—that day—
Mine own below'd would help to roll
The old sweet hymn unaltered—
Then kneel where I have knelt to pray,
And bless me deeper in their soul
Because their lips have faltered.

became, as the eleventh verse of its successor:

Love me, sweet friends, this sabbath day.
The sea sings round me while ye roll
Afar the hymn unaltered,
And kneel, where once I knelt, to pray,
And bless me deeper in your soul,
Because your voice has faltered.

In this revised form, the poem was republished under the amended title *Sabbath Morning at Sea* in 1850 in the second edition of her collected *Poems*⁷ (although not in the first edition, published in 1844).

Poems was sufficiently successful to run to a third edition in 1853 and a fourth edition in 1856. *Sabbath Morning* was retained in both later editions, but with further, less substantial revisions to the words, 'your' being replaced by 'the' in the fifth and sixth lines of the above verse in the 1853 edition, but only punctuation changes to this verse in the 1856 edition. It is the words of the 1856 edition which are usually found today, except in *Sea Pictures*, for which Elgar took his words without modification from the 1850 edition, probably for no better reason than that was the edition he owned.

Like most composers of songs, Elgar was constantly on the look-out for verses suitable for setting. His 1914 hymn *Chariots of the Lord* was one of twenty-one religious poems translated or written by Rev. John Brownlie which Elgar marked as candidates for setting in the volume Brownlie had sent him.⁸

6 T. K. Hervey (ed.): *The Amaranth: A Miscellany of Original Prose and Verse for 1839* (A.H. Baily and B.B. King: London, 1839), 73-5.

7 E.B. Browning: *Poems* (2nd edn: Chapman & Hall: London, 1850), Vol.2, 325-8.

8 Revd. John Brownlie: *Hymns of the Early Church* (London: Morgan & Scott, 1913) 174-5.

Having thus identified them, Elgar appears to have given only one of the remaining 20 any further thought.⁹ Other anthologies which survive in the remnants of Elgar's library now housed at the Birthplace, however, show clearer signs of Elgar's intentions, with marginal notes and changes to words and word order. And Alice's diaries, particularly those of the early 1890s,¹⁰ make frequent reference to songs by titles no longer known to us, leading to the belief that a significant number of early songs have since been lost.

To justify our claim to be publishing a *complete* edition, we are obliged to take all reasonable steps to determine what became of these songs. Even if Elgar never progressed his ideas beyond an untitled sketch, or if later or fuller versions of the song have since been lost, it may prove possible to find a poem, annotated by Elgar, with the same title as the lost song, and if words from that poem appeared in one of Elgar's untitled sketches, we could assume with reasonable certainty that we had before us possibly all that Elgar ever composed of the song. Admittedly in most cases it would not be possible to take our research beyond an un-performable fragment: scholarship rather than musicianship; but a necessary part of dotting the crotchets and crossing the semiquavers before finally signing off another volume. Only occasionally are there greater rewards in store.

The first step in launching a search for a missing fragment is to compile a list of known titles. One complication we faced in doing so is that many of the 'lost' works are known only from a single entry in Alice's diary, and Alice had a tendency to give songs her own names, possibly because, at the time she noted Elgar's composition of the song in her diary, he had yet to decide on the title he was to give it. We pondered long and hard over Alice's diary reference to 'The Wave', a song Elgar seemingly composed on 4 January 1894. Another 'lost' song, 'Muleteer's Serenade' has words which could suggest 'The Wave' as a title: could this be the song Alice had heard Elgar composing? The objection to this theory, however, is that Alice uses both titles in the that day's diary entry: 'E. wrote 3 songs. The Wave, Muleteer's Song, From Froissart' from which it seems clear that she at least thought they were different songs.

So we started our search with a list of ten songs falling within the scope of the new volume should they prove not to be lost, incomplete or misidentified. Most are acknowledged in the standard biographies, and all but three are listed in Michael Kennedy's admirable chronology published at Appendix I in his *Portrait of Elgar*.¹¹ They are, listed in the order in which I shall discuss them:

- a: Temple Bar Rondeau
- b: Fair breaks the Spring
- c: A sword a spear/1588: Loose, loose the sails
- d: The Wave
- e: Ophelia's Song
- f: A Phylactery
- g: Muleteer's Serenade
- h: two Millwheel Songs: I – Winter; II – May

9 The other hymn on which Elgar began work is 'The day fades into night'. For dramatic effect Brownlie had chosen words to vary the emphasis of two lines in his verse – 'Still is the eventide' and 'Night of my life draws near' – but this proved incompatible with Elgar's intended setting, so he altered the lines to 'How still the eventide' and 'The night of life draws near'. Having done so, he appears to have progressed his setting no further.

10 Martin Bird (ed.): *Edward Elgar: Collected Correspondence Series V Vol.1: The Diaries: Provincial Musician* (1857-1896) (Rickmansworth: Elgar Works, 2013)

11 Michael Kennedy: *Portrait of Elgar* (Oxford [3rd edn]: 1987), Appendix 1: Chronological List of Works.

a: Temple Bar Rondeau ('If she love me')

Rondels, roundels and rondeaus were three differing types of verse popular during the 19th century. Each had its own, tightly-defined stanza and rhyme structure with which most poets, while claiming to use the form, then took liberties. Elgar set about setting one of each. The best known is his setting of the Longfellow *Rondel*, itself a translation from the chronicles of Jean Froissart, beginning with the words 'Love, love, what wilt thou with this heart of mine?' This is in fact the song which Alice records as 'From Froissart' in her diary entry for 4 January 1894; the song was published by Tuckwood the following year and eventually found its way into Ascherberg's 7 *Lieder*. Some years earlier – the precise date of composition is uncertain; our best estimate is 1887 – Elgar had set a roundel by the poet, novelist, playwright and critic Algernon Swinburne. Swinburne laid claims to having devised the roundel, yet also published an anthology with the title *A Century of the Roundel*. This contained a poem of seven roundels called *A Baby's Death*, from which Elgar set the fourth roundel beginning 'The little eyes which never knew light'.¹² The song was sung by Gertrude Walker, with Elgar as her accompanist, at the Worcestershire Musical Union concert on 26 April 1897, but Elgar seemingly never sought to have the song published.

Which leaves the rondeau, about which there seemed little mystery: only the title and the source of the words required some further exploration. Elgar's fragmentary sketch of the work appears in one of his early sketchbooks¹³ now held in the British Library, this one containing works from his youthful early twenties. The 38-bar sketch would seem to be a setting for the whole rondeau but it is difficult to be certain as Elgar has added the words of only the first three of the poem's fifteen lines, and accompaniment in only twelve bars. But he has also unusually written out the words of the rondeau in full on the page, which he twice annotates 'Temple Bar. Dec 1878.' This has misled others to interpret 1878 as the year of composition; adjoining sketches in the sketchbook place its date of composition at up to a year later.

So what is the significance of the date, and why 'Temple Bar'? Although the phrase has associations with places in London and Dublin (and more recently with Theobalds Park, Hertfordshire, where the archway from London stood for over a century), these are a distraction. A search of the British Library catalogue unearthed *Temple Bar – A London Magazine for Town and Country Readers*, a literary magazine published in London between 1860 and 1906; and there on p.572 of the 1878 volume is the rondeau, attributed to a still-unidentified 'R.C.G.'. At a time when Elgar's library, so often the source of the poems for later settings, was probably quite sparse, we suspect that Elgar came across the December 1878 copy of *Temple Bar* while in his doctor's waiting room and hurriedly scribbled down the words on a scrap of paper, later making the neat working transcription in his sketchbook.

The sketchbook page is of added interest in that it contains, written upside down starting from the opposite corner of the page, two other sketches headed 'Ballet 2 VII 79', presumably early ideas for his *Air de Ballet* of 1881. And between the two sketches is one of Elgar's more unusual tempo markings: 'Warm bath', presumably to be taken very slowly.

12 Elgar seems to have had something of a fascination with infant mortality: Elizabeth Barrett Browning's poem *A Child Asleep*, from which he selected verses for his song, depicts a child which is in all probability dead rather than sleeping.

13 British Library Add.MS.63149 f.17.

b: Fair breaks the Spring

In common with other 'lost' songs for which Alice supplied the words, those of 'Fair breaks the Spring' are not difficult to track down. They can be found at the Elgar Birthplace, a typewritten copy carrying the name 'C. Alice Elgar' and the date 20 April 1890.¹⁴ An annotation in Carice's hand relates that Alice had written the verses in gratitude to Vera, the wife of her cousin William Raikes, after she lent them her house in Upper Norwood, South London, to use as a base while searching for a London home of their own;¹⁵ and that the words had been written on a copy of the *Vesper Voluntaries*, Op.14 which Elgar gave her, having dedicated the work to her. The words are:

Fair breaks the Spring o'er copse and mead
And sunshine steeps the gladsome land in light;
She willingly our wondering steps would lead
To fairer scenes, unknown to wintry night.

So let these strains attune your soul, and bring
Soft floating sounds from restful spheres, afar
From din of circling hours: they fain would sing
Of peace, and those high joys no strife may mar.

But there is uncertainty over whether Elgar ever set *these* words to music. The suggestion that he may have done so comes from a letter dated 2 February 1923, now also in the Birthplace collection,¹⁶ from Vera to Carice Elgar in which Vera recalls: 'I have several of [Alice's] poems & a sweet thing of hers, wh. he set to music "for 'Vera" but only quite a little thing of course!' And a second letter from Vera to Carice¹⁷ tantalisingly reads: 'I enclose the little manuscript of music & y. dear mother's little sweet poem (sent me after that winter they spent at Oaklands)'. Unfortunately, the manuscript is no longer enclosed with the letter, another Carice annotation indicating that she returned it to Vera. Its current whereabouts is unknown, and without it we cannot be sure whether the 'sweet thing of hers' was 'Fair breaks the Spring' or one of the 'several' other poems of Alice's Vera claimed to have.

c: A sword a spear / 1588: Loose, loose the sails

The words of these two songs are also readily accessible at the Birthplace, but again without music. However, the belief of many that at least the first was a 'lost' song displays a misunderstanding of Elgar's intention. The words are not by Alice but by Edward, a single humorous verse which reads:

A sword, a spear, – a spear, a sword,
A spear, a sword, – a sword, a spear!
The audience is slightly bored,
They rush to purchase pots of beer,
And drink it while I'm singing here,
Here, all alone!

14 Elgar Birthplace Museum A64.

15 The search concluded with their taking a lease on 51 Avonmore Road, West Kensington.

16 EBM A144.

17 EBM A144.

... and which he has dated 'Colwall / 25 Aug./ 92' before adding 'pattern / for Song 1588'.¹⁸ Elgar's purpose appears to have been to provide Alice, his 'bag poet',¹⁹ with a template for verses he wished her to write, presumably already having a tune in mind. Alice responded the next day with three verses which initially read:²⁰

Loose, loose the Sails, the anchor slip,
The Moon rides high, the Clouds fly fast;
Pass, pass the cup from lip to lip
Perchance it is the last, the last,
That we may quaff ere life be past
Quaff on and arm!

The grim great galleon rests tonight
And heaves with Every surging wave;
A moment more she'll be in sight,
A moment more the sea may rave
O'er you and me in storm tost grave,
No eye to heed.

But sword in hand we'll board the foe
And show how Englishmen can strike
We'll climb their deck with thrust and blow.
And welcome death or welcome life
Oh dearer for than rest is strife
St George for merry England now.

To the right of the verses Alice has added 'For my / Beloved's / booful Music. // 26 Aug / 92' and at the head of the sheet 'Pease not beat / Will dis do?' To this the answer must be 'seemingly not' for, while the first two verses underwent only one minor change – the rewording of the start of the third line from 'Pass, pass the cup ...' to 'Pass on the cup ...' – the third verse was substantially rewritten to:

But sword in hand we'll board the foe
And shouting loud old England's name
We'll storm their deck with thrust and blow.
Then welcome death or life the same
For dearer far than life is fame
On brothers on! [further changed to 'On comrades on!']

... all possibly in vain, for the evidence that Elgar ever proceeded to set the poem is confused. All we have are three contradictory entries in Alice's diary for late August 1892. On 26 August, Alice

18 EBM 1977.354.

19 The term 'bag poet' describes a poet who will produce verse to order for a composer; a more modern expression would be to say that the poet was 'in the pocket' of the composer. Elgar clearly regarded Alice as his 'bag poet', having explicitly identified her as such on the title page of the orchestral score of *Sea Pictures* (British Library MS 58005) and implicitly on a sketch in the Elgar Birthplace of the 'Welsh tune' from *Introduction and Allegro* which Elgar has labelled 'Pattern for bag-poet'.

20 EBM A74.

recorded that ‘Miss Simpson sang his songs. A. did the words for her Belovèds booful music. 1588.’ But the implication that 1588 is one of the songs Miss Simpson sang is rather contradicted by the following day’s diary entry, according to which Elgar was still ‘writing Songs – 1588 & – ‘ Perhaps the previous day’s performance had shown up a need for revision quickly completed by Elgar for, on 28 August, the Elgars again entertained ‘Miss Simpson to tea & evening. Much Music. Sang E’s Songs, and 1588’. Why ‘E’s Songs, and 1588’ Perhaps the revision proved equally unsatisfactory for Elgar never sought a publisher for the song, of which no trace survives.

d: The Wave

The Wave is another song whose name comes to us solely from a reference in Alice’s diaries: the entry for 4 January 1894 quoted above. Perhaps for this reason, Michael Kennedy believed Alice to be the author of the words but Jerrold Northrop Moore found a poem with this title in a collected edition of Longfellow’s poetry which also contained his translation of the Froissart *Rondel* as well as *The Black Knight* and *Tales from a Wayside Inn*, from which the libretto for *King Olaf* was extracted. Longfellow’s words, a translation of a poem by the German poet Christoph August Tiedge (1752-1841), are:

Whither, thou turbid wave?
Whither, with so much haste,
As if a thief wert thou?

I am the Wave of Life,
Stained with my margin’s dust;
From the struggle and the strife
Of the narrow stream I fly
To the Sea’s immensity,
To wash from me the slime
Of the muddy banks of Time.

But with none of these words to be found in any of Elgar’s surviving sketches, how can we be confident that this was the poem Elgar was setting on 4 January. The answer lies in Elgar’s own anthology of works by Longfellow²¹ in which, alongside heavily annotated copies of *The Black Knight* and *King Olaf*, Elgar has also addressed the wording of *Rondel* and *The Wave*, including a consideration of replacing the word ‘muddy’ in the last line of *The Wave* by ‘earthy’.

e: A Phylactery

Elgar’s propensity for recycling musical themes, whether cross-referentially as in *The Music Makers* and ‘The Fourth of August’ or by trawling his sketchbooks for an old, unused idea, committed to paper years ago but well suited to his current purpose, is well established. His sketchbooks proved particularly useful when he found himself under pressure to provide new works to meet contractual deadlines: *Rosemary*, a late replacement for *Sospiri* to complete his 1914 contract to provide Robert Elkin with two companion pieces for *Salut d’amour*, came from the sketchbooks, as did a number

21 EBM 1977.44: *The Poetical Works of Longfellow* (London: Frederick Warne & Co, 1887). *The Wave* appears on p.519.

of late works written to fulfil his Keith Prowse contract of a minimum of three new works a year. And most of the music that Elgar collected together for his unfinished opera *The Spanish Lady* took the form of sketches and fragments he had penned many years earlier.

The material which Elgar identified for the opera included a song now generally referred to as *A Phylactery*, this being the title of a poem by the American statesman and poet John Hay although it seems that Elgar gave the resulting song the working title *Memento Mori*, the words which conclude each verse. The full words of the three verses which Elgar set are:

Wise men I hold those rakes of old
Who, as we read in antique story,
When lyres were struck and wine was poured,
Set the white Death’s Head on the board –
Memento mori.

Stop not to pluck the leaves of bay
That greenly deck the path of glory,
The wreath will wither if you stay,
So pass along your earnest way –
Memento mori.

When old age comes with muffled drums,
That beat to sleep our tired life’s story,
On thoughts of dying, (Rest is good!)
Like old snakes coiled i’ the sun, we brood –
Memento mori.

Elgar had set another of Hay’s poems, *Through the Long Days*, as long ago as 1885, and it may have been this which led to the assumption that, in common with other material earmarked for *The Spanish Lady*, *Memento Mori* recycles material which Elgar wrote many years earlier. But there is no evidence to support this. The sketchbooks contain nothing which can be linked to either title, and all surviving source material for *Memento Mori* is now to be found at the British Library in the folder of material Elgar had identified for *The Spanish Lady*.²² The material runs to some 15 sheets, all clearly written out and labelled with various permutations of ‘Engine’s Song’ (Engine being the character in *The Spanish Lady* who was to sing it), ‘MEMENTO MORI’, ‘John Hay p.122’, ‘Act I’ and ‘BJ’ (‘Ben Jonson’ or ‘Barry Jackson’, Elgar’s librettist) in the same ink as the music. The uniformity and labelling of the material left no doubt that it had all been written out specifically for the opera and, with no other more fragmentary material, we were forced to the conclusion that Elgar had set this poem specifically for *The Spanish Lady*.

We expected uncertainties over the remaining songs to be easier to resolve: we had British Library catalogue references to the sketchbooks containing Elgar’s ideas for all but one setting (‘May’, the second Millwheel song); and we had high hopes of locating the full words Elgar might have set had he completed each song: Ophelia’s Song comes from Act 4 Scene 5 of Shakespeare’s *Hamlet* while Kennedy lists the remaining songs as being to words by Alice. We also anticipated that the sketches for at least two of the four songs might be familiar from the later works in which we understood Elgar had re-used them. And so it proved, but there were still surprises ahead of us.

22 British Library MS 71128. Facsimiles of several of the pages can be found in Elgar Complete Edition Vol.41: *The Spanish Lady*.

f: *Ophelia's Song*

Elgar's single-page sketch²³ of his setting of *Ophelia's Song*, undated by Elgar but probably from around 1892, confirmed our prior understanding that Elgar had re-used it in *The Light of Life*. Many of Shakespeare's words have been obscured by a form of nineteenth-century Snopake and in their place, in green crayon, have been added the opening lines of the blind man's first solo:

O Thou, in heaven's dome, heaven's dome,
In Light's eternal home,
For whom the cloud
Of night's endowed

More green crayon facilitates the adaptation of the music to serve as a short score for bars 52-63 of the oratorio's second number ('Seek Him that maketh the seven stars') and, in large letters at the top left of the sheet, Elgar has helpfully indicated that it is to be performed 'in G mi'. But while the first two lines follow the sketch closely, Elgar has crossed through the thirteenth bar of the sketch (equivalent to bar 59 of the oratorio) heavily in pencil, writing 'new music'. This, it seems, is indeed what happened for there is little equivalence between the remainder of the sketch and what eventually surfaced as *The Light of Life*, just eight bars of *Ophelia's Song* surviving in the later work.

But what of the sketch itself. Once the crayon and pencil annotations are removed, what remains has far more of the appearance of a completed work than a fragmentary sketch. Although sufficient of the original words can be deciphered to determine that this single sheet sets only the first three of the ten lines of Shakespeare's song, there are indications in the last bar that the setting continued on another sheet, now lost. Our belief is that Elgar completed his setting of the solo song but, having re-used eight bars from the first sheet, realised that there was little point in holding out for a publisher and destroyed or mislaid the remaining sheets – a portent of what was still to come.

g: *Muleteer's Serenade*

And so we come to the songs Elgar was known to have subsumed into *King Olaf*. Kennedy was mistaken in his belief that Alice provided the words to all three songs. Those for *Muleteer's Serenade* are taken from Cervante's *Don Quixote* but not from the translation familiar to us today. First published in 1885, this is by John Ormsby (1829-1895). But Elgar took his words from the translation published by Peter Anthony Motteux (1663-1718) in 1706²⁴ which, though much earlier, was in all probability still more widely known when Elgar embarked on his setting in 1894. The words of Motteux's two verses are:

Toss'd in doubts and fears I rove
On the stormy seas of love;
Far from comfort, far from port,
Beauty's prize, and fortune's sport;
Yet my heart disdains despair
While I trace my leading-star.

23 British Library Add.MS.47900A f.155.

24 *The history of the renowned Don Quixote de la Mancha. Written in Spanish, by Miguel de Cervantes Saavedra. Translated from the original by several hands: and publish'd by Peter Motteux. Adorn'd with sculptures* (London: 1706).

But reservedness, like a cloud,
Does too oft her glories shroud.
Pierce to the gloom, reviving light!
Be auspicious as you're bright.
As you hide or dart your beams,
Your adorer sinks or swims!

Originally a bundle of loose sheets, Elgar's sketches for *King Olaf* have been collated in two bound volumes by the British Library.²⁵ For neither *Muleteer's Serenade* nor *The Mill Wheel* were the relevant sheets difficult to identify as both start with a title page; and for the former the hardest task had already been completed some years ago by Brian Trowell.

While Elgar had adapted *Ophelia's Song* and *The Millwheel* for subsequent use simply by adding pencil and crayon amendments to the existing score, he obviously felt constrained by a lack of space on the *Muleteer's Serenade* manuscript and instead stuck six blank staves over the existing vocal staves of the *Serenade*.²⁶ While this obviously simplified the task of introducing the new vocal line for *King Olaf*, it fully obscured the tune and words of the *Serenade*. Since both are primary sources for their respective works, Brian persuaded the British Library to come up with an unusual solution based on the design of *The Very Hungry Caterpillar*: the *King Olaf* paste-overs have been removed from the two pages of score of *Muleteer's Serenade* and hinged to the stubs of pages preceding each full page of original score. It is thus possible for *King Olaf* researchers to lower the fingers of later vocal staves to view the pages as Elgar left them for the cantata, and for us to raise the fingers to view the score which Elgar had abandoned as a solo song.

It did not require too detailed a perusal of the score to establish that Elgar had effectively completed *Muleteer's Serenade* before setting it aside. He had removed some notes from the accompaniment for *King Olaf* but these were still clearly visible and easily restored; and the song also contained a repeat section, retained in *Olaf*, for which Elgar's precise intentions required some careful interpretation. But having completed these basic tasks, only one point requiring an editorial intervention remained.

Elgar had intended the reworked song to form part of the Epilogue to *King Olaf*, a setting of the words:

She heard in the silence
The voice of one speaking,
Without in the darkness,
In gusts of the night-wind,
Without in the darkness,
Now louder, now nearer,
Now lost in the distance,

25 British Library Add.MSs.57994-5. The sketches for both songs are to be found in the second of these volumes: those for *The Millwheel: I - Winter* are at MS.57995 ff.66-72; those for *Muleteer's Serenade* are at MS.57995 ff.93-192.

26 Not the only occasion on which he has displayed such economy. For a number of his choral works for which an arrangement with piano or organ accompaniment was published before he embarked on an orchestral arrangement, he cut the vocal staves out of a printed copy of the former and stuck them on blank stave paper to save himself the effort of copying the vocal line before adding the orchestral accompaniment. And where copying was unavoidable, he would often get Alice to undertake the chore.

The voice of St John,
The beloved disciple,
Who wandered and waited
The Master's appearance,
Who wandered and waited
Alone in the darkness,
Unsheltered and friendless.

But the song fell victim to cuts requested by Novello and, while Elgar retained the words of the first verse in *Olaf*, the solo song remained unheard and unknown until publication of the Complete Edition volume. Now heard, the solo song clearly inhabits the wistful sound world of the *Olaf* Epilogue ... and if you listen carefully to a recording of the lines 'Now louder, now nearer, Now lost in the distance,' there, faintly in the accompaniment, can be heard the opening line of *Muleteer's Serenade*, no doubt heralding the lost song.

h: Two Millwheel Songs: I – Winter; II – May (A Rhapsody)

Alice did write the words for both *Millwheel* songs, however; they are still to be found, written in her own hand, at the Birthplace:²⁷

I – Winter

On and on the water flows
Stops the mill-wheel never,
Crashing on & on it goes
Hearts may ache forever.

Once it sounded joyously
Hearing it together,
All the birds sang merrily.
Bees hummed in the heather.
Then we stood and watched the spring,
Watched the rainbow quiver
Gone is sunshine, past is May
Dreary rushes shiver.

Touch of hand is but a dream
All Love's gift is hidden,
Sweetest eyes no more may beam,
Sorrow comes unbidden.

II – May – A Rhapsody

Oh! the rush of the water free
Oh! the hum of the joyous bee,
Oh! the singing of birds in May,
Oh! the blue of the heavens today.

For it's Oh! My own love is here
While the Mill Wheel is crashing near,
And the blossoms and birds arise
And they welcome their sister eyes.
And I've touched both her hand and brow
Oh! the Mill Wheel may thunder now,
Let it splash, let it dash at will
For our hearts' song is louder still.

The British Library sketchbook contains six sheets from *Winter* but seemingly nothing of *May*. The title page is followed by four pages of a reasonably coherent, though in places heavily amended, sketch but the final page dissolves into a succession of incomplete bars, deletions and indecipherable squiggles. It is easy to see why anyone looking at this page would be drawn to the conclusion that Elgar had abandoned the solo song half-completed. The crucial evidence to the contrary appears at the foot of the preceding page. Here, beneath the page's final bar, Elgar has written and then deleted 'Attacca No.2'. 'Attacca' is a musical instruction telling the performers to continue without a break, in this case to the second *Mill Wheel* song. The obvious implication of this is that the first *Mill Wheel* song ended at the 'Attacca'; and cross-reference to Alice's manuscript in the Birthplace confirmed this as the bars preceding the 'Attacca' contained repetitions of 'Sorrow comes unbidden', the final line of her poem.

We therefore felt confident that we could ignore the final page completely and focus on restoring the first four pages of score to the state in which Elgar had abandoned the solo song. Here as elsewhere he was kind to us, having used a variety of coloured crayons and inks for different layers of corrections to the underlying composition in his familiar, now faded, black ink. The two verses of *King Olaf* words had been added in pencil and red ink respectively, and a line for double bass clearly had no part in a song with piano accompaniment, so we had no hesitation in removing not only these but other changes made in the same medium. This included the restoration of four bars heavily deleted in pencil, after which we realised that we were looking at a song which, while 'unfinished', was substantially complete.

There remained a number of puzzling alterations in unusually faint blue crayon, an implement Elgar usually saved for late additions, and Elgar had saved effort by extensive use of repeat signs in the accompaniment, both for whole bars and occasionally for repeated phrases within a bar. A number of these did not make musical sense, not least a repeat section in which the first time final bar ended with ties in the accompaniment linking to rests in the continuation bar at the start of the repeat, a nonsense which Elgar would surely have corrected had he ever got round to revising the solo song for publication. And then the penny dropped: this was precisely the purpose of the blue crayon amendments. Not only did they clarify Elgar's wishes on points left obscure in black ink; the presence of blue crayon amendments to the song convinced us that Elgar considered his composition of the solo song to be complete. It remained only for us to take an informed view on a handful of other ambiguities created by his use of repeat signs and we had a fully reconstituted song. It will be familiar to all who know *King Olaf* in which it survives, immediately recognisable, as the basis for 'The Death of Olaf'.

Few volumes in the Complete Edition can provide such fertile territory for exploration and discovery as this. Should we be surprised? Probably not, for not only are Elgar's songs unjustly neglected but most of those in this volume were composed when Elgar was still a struggling

27 EBM A86.

provincial musician. Following the first public performance of the *Muleteer's Serenade* and *Winter* at the Elgar Birthplace on 2 June, one news agency which filmed the recital added their coverage to YouTube. This attracted a typically ill-informed comment: 'if the composer thought they were unworthy of public performance then they shouldn't be performed'. Far from thinking them to be unworthy of public performance, his re-use of two in *King Olaf* and the republication of others is an indication of his faith in them, a belief that more could be made of them and an indication that he drew little distinction between the merit of his compositions in different forms. Haydn Wood rewarded Elgar's faith by turning four of the early songs – *Rondel*, *Queen Mary's Song*, *The Shepherd's Song* and *Like to a Damask Rose* – into orchestral miniatures.²⁸ Perhaps we should also reward his faith by giving the songs a fairer hearing.

Among many people who assisted in the publication of the latest Complete Edition volume, I particularly wish to acknowledge the contributions of Professor Brian Trowell, the volume's editor, a font of knowledge on Elgar's songs and a constant source of inspiration; Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore for his help in identifying verses Elgar may have set in songs now lost; Chris Bennett for providing copies of Alice's words from the Birthplace collection and for searching what remains of Elgar's personal library for poems carrying incriminating annotations and amendments; and Barry Collett, who persuaded me that the solo songs were worth a closer listen – he was right.

28 They can be heard on Dutton CDLX 7148.

MUSIC REVIEWS

Elgar, Solo Songs with Orchestra

Elgar Complete Edition Vol. 14, edited by Julian Rushton (Rickmansworth: Elgar Society Edition Ltd., 2012)

It is, I expect, every editor's dream to discover something in the sources which can transform our sense of a familiar work, and it may be that in his edition of Elgar's orchestral songs, Julian Rushton has made such a discovery. There is no need to trash all currently existing recordings, because while evidence for the revision is percipiently observed, it is not indisputable; but I am nevertheless persuaded that *Sea Pictures* may be even more beautiful than we have previously thought. Since we have been in the dark since 1899 the reader will forgive me for keeping the cat in the bag for the moment.

For most of the songs in this volume this is the first publication of their orchestral versions. The volume, like the others in the Elgar Complete Edition, is beautifully presented, in an attractive red hardback binding, on high-quality paper, and with good, clear printing. Rushton's foreword provides an informative (and sometimes gently humorous) introduction to the background of the orchestrations and their performance, and is admirably clear on the editorial principles that he has employed. Four pages of good reproductions from Elgar's often quite scruffy manuscript full scores give a sense of the headaches that any editor undertakes for our benefit. The editorial decisions, and justifications for them, are given after each song, or in the case of *Sea Pictures*, after the complete cycle. The editions themselves seem to me extremely accurate in their notation and convincing in their decisions. I was particularly pleased to discover that the horrible G major chord that mars the conclusion of Vernon Handley's recording of 'The Torch' (contradicting the G minor which ends the piano and voice version) is the wrong chord after all. Future recordings may correct this: the edition will serve scholars, listeners, and performers equally well.

Elgar's total output in the genre of solo orchestral song is not large, and not all of it is significant. There are fifteen songs in total, of which one (the recent discovery, 'Kindly do not Smoke') is a nine-bar joke; two ('Follow the Colours' and 'The King's Way') are occasional pieces, the latter with a text, set largely to the Trio of *Pomp and Circumstance* No. 4, by Lady Elgar; and two more ('The Pipes of Pan' and 'The Wind at Dawn') are, though it be heresy to say so, a little dull. But what is left is often wonderful, and listening again to the piano and orchestra versions of these songs while scrutinizing the edition the reader is constantly struck by the brilliance and inventiveness of Elgar's orchestration, even when he is treating materials that perhaps do not warrant the careful attention he gives them. Little can be deduced from the three songs which exist only in sketches, though those for the setting of



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260 pp + xix.

‘Ozymandias’ are tantalizing. It is a pity, if one enjoys irony in art, that Elgar, staunch monarchist, never completed his setting of Shelley’s anti-imperialist sonnet, but it is good to have the surviving material presented.

The act of gathering the songs within a single volume, a necessity of a complete edition, encourages a comparison to similar bodies of composition by Elgar’s contemporaries such as Mahler and, particularly, Strauss, whose contrapuntal and orchestral style, and tonal vocabulary, at least in his songs, are all much closer to Elgar’s. Those composers were both more natural and more prolific composers of solo song than Elgar, and in Strauss’s case, of course, much more interested in writing for the voice altogether. Yet comparisons are suggestive nevertheless, and focus the mind on the particular qualities of Elgar’s achievement as an orchestrator.

Often it is in the smallest details that wonders are found. Most listeners with even a passing acquaintance with Strauss will be aware that he uses super-sweet violin solos (blissful in ‘Morgen’, rapturous in ‘Beim Schlafengehn’ from the *Four Last Songs*) to generate much of the greatest beauties in his orchestral songs; but Elgar, no mean composer for strings, relies on no such habitual device. Even when the text suggests it, as when the vocalist sings of ‘sea-sound, like violins’ (at figure E in ‘Sea Slumber-Song’ from *Sea Pictures*), Elgar has too much taste and intelligence to do the obvious thing, i.e. to spotlight the violins. Over a sustained minor third in *divisi* violas, oboes, and bassoons, he does in fact present a bar of beautiful, idiomatic, and very Elgarian alternating sixths and thirds in the first violin part (see Fig. 1), but the most striking element of the orchestration in this, the most lightly scored bar of the song, is a swelling harp arpeggio. In the same way that adding salt to chocolate simply has the effect of making the chocolate taste more chocolatey, here by underpinning them with warm and reedy tones which are not part of their natural character, and by – as it were – externalizing in the harp the frisson that a listener feels upon hearing this kind of violin line, this typically resourceful orchestration has the effect, through specifically avoiding an obvious focus on violins alone, to make the moment sound ‘more violinny’. To prolong the effect, but without weakening or cheapening it, there is an afterglow two bars later. This is now an octave lower on violas, with second violins accompanying them beneath. (A lesser orchestrator might have the ‘lower’ instruments, the violas, play the lower part, but Elgar wants the violas’ warmer tone to carry the main line and vary the colour of the first statement.) The harp’s arpeggio begins a quaver later than before, which expedient enables it to hit a high point an octave lower and so sound an echo which does not banally repeat, and so lessen the beauty, of the preceding effect. Such details dapple Elgar’s orchestration.

Strauss often rethought his songs when orchestrating them; Elgar less so. Extra bars, new contrapuntal detail, even changes to the melody were quite common for Strauss. Perhaps the most remarkable, and certainly the most charming, case is that of ‘Zueignung’, which had been given a serviceable but bland orchestration by the conductor Robert Heger before Strauss

made his own.¹ Strauss dedicated the orchestration to the soprano Viorica Urseleac, who had recently performed the title role of his *Die ägyptische Helena* in a revival of that opera, and during the grandiose final cadence he has the soprano sing a new melody over the interpolated text ‘du wunderbare Helena!’ (‘you wonderful Helena!’). It is a glorious, comic moment of joy, as

1 For an idea of the difference in impression that the two orchestrations create, think of Parry’s own orchestration of ‘Jerusalem’, and then think of the ecstasy of Elgar’s realization of the hymn’s ‘arrows of desire’.

if the composer were leaping onto the stage to give her a hug. Such an effect is not imaginable from Elgar, but in ‘The River’, op.60 no.2, we come close. It has the largest scoring of any of Elgar’s orchestral songs, an honour it shares with the curiously overblown orchestration of ‘The Wind at Dawn’ (I do not intend the pun, but would not be surprised if Elgar did). In the original version the piano accompaniment for the melody first given at figure A is a sequence of spare, strongly articulated chords, essentially the same for each repetition. But the orchestral version introduces considerable variety. The first statement has string accompaniment, with a simple broken chord on harp with sustained clarinet and bassoon chords on the apostrophe to the river (‘Rustula!’) which frequently punctuates the line. The second statement, at figure D, is now accompanied by a brass choir, with strings providing the accompaniment to *two* broken harp chords on ‘Rustula!’. On its third statement, four bars after figure F, the accompaniment is on full orchestra, and the river’s name is accompanied by a high-speed, (almost) five-octave *ad lib.* harp arpeggio, *ff*, up then down. I dare any listener not to beam. None of this is subtle, but not to worry: Elgar informs us that the text was written by a white rabbit (Pietro d’Alba), and it is scarcely abased by such delightful treatment. Here, as at times in his Bach orchestrations, we sense Elgar having enormous fun, and it is infectious.

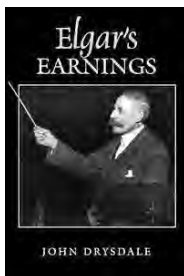
But *Sea Pictures* is the highlight of the volume. These, Elgar’s only official song cycle, were also the only orchestral songs previously available to us in print in full score.² And Rushton’s work on the new edition has resulted in a small but significant change at the opening of ‘Where Corals Lie’. At the opening of the Boosey full score of the third song, ‘Sabbath Song at Sea’, the two violin parts are marked ‘senza sord.’ to cancel the muting of those instruments in the previous movement, ‘In Haven’. Rushton has observed that in the manuscript full score for ‘Where Corals Lie’ at bar 30, Elgar marks the violin solo ‘senza sord.’, which implies that, as in ‘In Haven’, the two violin parts should also be muted from the start (though this is marked neither in the Boosey full score nor in the manuscript, probably owing to oversight: Rushton notes that Elgar was doubtless preoccupied with *Gerontius* while correcting proofs for *Sea Pictures*: p.x).³ There might be a case for muting more of the strings, but given Elgar’s practice in the second song of the cycle and much precedent in other music, it would be perfectly normal for only the violin parts to be muted. This is a wonderful discovery, and I hope that it will be swiftly incorporated into the performing tradition of this work. Of course,

- 2 Challenging the notion that *Sea Pictures* is unique in Elgar’s output, Julian Rushton has himself argued convincingly that the three Parker songs, op.59, ‘can be experienced as a short cycle on poetic and musical levels’ (‘Lost love and unwritten songs. Elgar’s Parker cycle, op.59’, in J. P. E. Harper-Scott and Julian Rushton (eds.), *Elgar Studies* (Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 270–83 at 275).
- 3 Because this page starts at b.26, and the solo violin has one bar of tutti playing remaining, the ‘senza sord.’ has inadvertently been printed in b.26 rather than b.30 in the new edition.

in a sane world conductors might from time to time suggest that the violins put on their mutes simply because it creates the effect they would like from this song, and perhaps some conductors have already thought to do so – just as Britten and Colin Davis at least were happy to have the bass drum roll through the silences after figure 9 in *Gerontius*. But these are not times of great freedom, and conductors are apt, particularly in music after Wagner but also before him, to treat the instructions in the score as sacrosanct, even when they are clearly an error. In this context, having the editorial encouragement to try something new might provide the authorial justification that conductors tend to seek. Rushton deferentially says that ‘conductors should feel free to ignore the suggestion’ (p.x), but I suggest that they ignore this get-out clause, and risk discovering something yet more beautiful.

For making the orchestral songs available for easy consultation in reliable and illuminating full scores, Rushton and the Elgar Complete Edition (and the Elgar Society) are to be thanked.

J.P.E.Harper-Scott



BOOK REVIEWS

John Drysdale: *Elgar's Earnings*

Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013

244 pp + xii

ISBN

978-1-84383-741-1

This is a rare, maybe even unique, book. It is no less than an economic history of one of the first 'serious' composers to attempt to earn his living primarily from his compositions, set against the social background of the time. As someone with a degree in economic and social history, I hope I may be forgiven for elbowing others out of the way and reviewing the book myself, though I must declare an interest in that I assisted John Drysdale in a small way with some of his research.

John had had an impressive career in merchant banking and had already gained one doctorate in musicology before embarking on this latest investigation, so was ideally qualified to delve into the economics of composing in the late 19th and early 20th centuries. In particular he pored over the Novello Business Archive (fortunately preserved intact at the British Library, unlike their correspondence archive) and the Boosey & Hawkes Archive at the Royal College of Music and unearthed a fascinating tale which adds immeasurably to our knowledge and appreciation of Elgar and his character.

The book is exceptionally clearly laid out in a manner which helps the reader through the complexities of royalties, copyrights, performing fees and the like without ever making him feel that he, too, requires a degree in economic history to understand what is going on (or feel thankful that he hasn't got one). It sets out the opportunities open to British composers and contrasts those opportunities with the vastly superior ones available to authors and painters of similar stature. It covers Elgar's relationship with his major publisher, Novello, in considerable detail, and leaves one with the distinct impression that, beneath their friendly exteriors, those in charge rather exploited Elgar, who was gullible and innocent enough in business matters to allow it. Chapters are also included on Elgar's earnings from broadcasting, recording and conducting, and on the family's wills, including those of his notorious aunts.

Elgar frequently protested that he was an impoverished composer, and when one learns that the 'Enigma' Variations had earned him less than £50 by 1921 one has to admit that his protestations were justified. Yet I was astonished to discover that his annual income between 1928 and 1933, in no sense his most productive period, averaged £140,000 a year in current values.

An unexpected, revealing, and truly fascinating book and one which I recommend wholeheartedly to all members.

Martin Bird

Ulrich Tadday (editor): *Musik-Konzepte 159 - Edward Elgar*

München: Richard Boorberg Verlag GmbH & Co KG, 2013



ISBN

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This German volume of six academic essays is the latest in a long series covering composers of all nationalities, British composers previously highlighted being Delius and Sullivan. To me, it divides neatly into distinguished familiar and unfamiliar scholars, the former being the Anglophone Benedict Taylor, Julian Rushton and J.P.E. Harper-Scott whilst the latter three German experts comprise the musicological publicist, translator and Sullivan scholar Meinhard Saremba, the British orchestral music analyst and Max Reger researcher Jürgen Schaarwächter, and Michael Gassmann, senior luminary in the Stuttgart International Bachakademie who has also published work on Elgar and the German symphonic tradition. The editor of both this volume and the *Musik-Konzepte* series, Ulrich Tadday, is Professor of Historical Musicology at the University of Bremen and editor of the *Schumann Handbook*.

From the outset I must state how much I enjoyed these differing essays, which cover the search for an Elgarian Aesthetic (Taylor), Elgar & Religion (Rushton), Elgar's relationship with Britain and its Empire (Saremba), Elgar's Vocal Music (Schaarwächter), and Elgar's simultaneous 'modernity' and 'epigonality' (Gassmann). None of them is necessarily ground-breaking, being universally syntheses of secondary sources rather than analysis of primary sources (*pace* Harper-Scott's fascinating analysis of *In the South*). The values of such a volume are, however, the intrinsic worth of each essay as a thing in itself by a scholar of genuine academic heft – Saremba's German 'take' on the British Empire, for example – and the cross-referencing of themes, opinions and insights from one essay to another. That having been said, I use this review to urge our *Journal's* Editor, Martin Bird, to seek to reproduce in the *Journal* the doubtlessly English originals by Messrs Rushton, Taylor and Harper-Scott so that our own readership can enjoy them, and thence consider commissioning translations of the other three for a similar purpose. In the hope that he will quickly enable a wider readership to enjoy the Anglophone essays, I devote the rest of this review to giving readers a taste of the German contributors' essays.

In his survey of Elgar's vocal music, Jürgen Schaarwächter started by pointing out how Elgar, like other nineteenth century composers, set 'contemporary' verse for his songs and choral music as this was verse in circulation at the time. He then mused on Elgar's limited engagement with his beloved Elizabethan literature and especially Shakespeare's work, diverting his predilection onto the orchestral masterpiece *Falstaff*. His central (but not original) thesis, though, is that Elgar's vocal style was conventionally limited whilst he kept a rein on his personal feelings. He then examined the situation in Elgar's time that had a limited British operatic tradition but opportunities for religious music, choral music in the oratorio tradition and a thriving demand for music in stage entertainments. Elgar of course satisfied

such demands at various stages in his career, and Schaarwächter contends that Elgar was correct in writing to Alice Stuart Wortley that he had written his soul into the Violin Concerto, the Second Symphony and *The Music Makers*, itself a work of originally symphonic rather than choral character.

It is interesting to observe Meinhard Saremba, a non-Brit (however formidably well read in English literature), tackle Elgar's relationship with the English nation and the British Empire. Starting with the critical views on Elgar after his death, he comments on Elgar's relationship with the 19th century view of Britain's imperial position, its promotion of artistic institutions and the Royal Family's role in both. Traversing the familiar landscape of Elgar's humble beginnings to his connection with Queen Victoria via Walter Parratt, his friendship with Edward VII and his disappointment with George V, Saremba points out the composer's subconscious desire to join the higher society of his wife via his fascination with British history exhibited in the early choral works, the flirtation with a 'Gordon' Symphony, the enthusiastic and masterly responses throughout his life to commissions for ceremonial works of pageantry for royal occasions, the stage, or municipal town halls (although not necessarily including the *Pomp & Circumstance* marches). Elgar's output and intrinsic optimism about Britain's political stability, the desiderata of its social structures and the benign nature of its Empire gave him first the status and honours he craved along with the artistic self-confidence to produce great abstract works in tune with the times (cf. the First Symphony's "massive hope in the future"). The First World War tempered this outlook and, whilst he produced works that chimed with the needs of the times – either for "utility" war pieces or escapist works', Saremba contends the *Spirit of England* most nearly reflects Elgar's changed worldview.

In Michael Gassmann's fascinating essay 'Leap in Time: Elgar's Compositional Technique and the Simultaneity of the Non-simultaneous'(!), he examines and attempt to reconcile the paradox of the intrinsically familiar sound world of Elgar with his apparent (certainly to Richard Strauss) modernism. Some of the same ground is also covered in J.P.E. Harper-Scott's contribution. Gassmann examines the history of Elgar criticism that posits him as an epigonal musical figure, and then covers his musical education. He points out that the musical education of the eighteenth and early nineteenth century composers such as Mozart and Beethoven depended much on their arranging and transforming the works of earlier masters and building on a practical tradition in a milieu of extensive metropolitan musical and cultural opportunity. However, the subsequent rise of the conservatoires led to a fracturing of musical education into specialisms via different teachers of both practice and theory. Gassmann contends that Elgar's education resembles that of the earlier time, but with only the opportunities of a provincial cathedral city. His was an intensely practical autodidacticism, where (thankfully, in Gassmann's view) his lack of formal musical education excluded him from academic positions, his Catholicism excluded him from Anglican cathedral posts, and his lack of funds and social status excluded him from buying his way up the hierarchy. Thrown onto a pragmatic education, and with an

intense knowledge of musical history and tradition, Elgar built on the past and the musical milieu available to him whilst feeling his way towards a unique style and status. His arrangement of multifarious music however also allied him to the practice of contemporaries such as Schönberg and Stokowski and made him as self-aware as any of the revolutionary modernists, encapsulated in the small-scale *Contrasts; The Gavotte AD 1700 and 1900*, op.10 no.3 (1899). Gassmann finishes with interesting asides on Handel and Dvorak and concludes that Elgar's alleged 'Englishness' actually resides in nothing more than that only in England in the second half of the Nineteenth Century could a composer receive such a musical education and attain what he did.

Steven Halls

Angus Trumble and Andrea Wolk Rager (editors): *Edwardian Opulence: British Art at the Dawn of the Twentieth Century*

New Haven: Yale University Press, 2013

From high atop the Royal Exchange, the painter shows us London in 1904. Converging streets brim with energy, while the stately columns of Mansion House establish London as the new Rome. As our eyes are drawn through the coal smoke to a distant horizon, a capital of impressive dimensions stretches before us. And crowning it all is the dome of St. Paul's, which links London to the skies, as if to say: here is a mighty new empire, doing the work of Heaven itself.

Neils Moeller Lund's painting, 'Heart of Empire', which serves as this book's frontispiece, seems to be a straightforward affirmation of imperial wealth and power. However, this survey of the visual arts in Edwardian Britain demonstrates that the era's imagery is often more complicated and conflicted than it appears.

Published in conjunction with an exhibition at the Yale Center for British Art in New Haven, Connecticut, this volume was edited by the show's curators, Angus Tremble, Senior Curator of Paintings and Sculpture at the YCBA and Andrea Wolk Rager, Assistant Professor of Art History at Case Western Reserve University. It contains an illustrated and extensively annotated catalogue of the show's more than 200 items and eight extended essays that discuss their cultural context.

The collected works, which took nearly a decade to assemble from across North America, Europe and Australia, include paintings, drawings, photographs, sculpture, garments and other objects, and they are more varied, both in subject and mood, than the show's title suggests. There are extravagant designs for furniture that reach back to pre-Revolutionary France for their models, but there are also expressionist landscapes by James Dickson Innes and Derwent Lees, clearly influenced by contemporary French painting. John Singer Sargent, William Opren and Giovanni Boldini – the leading portrait painters of the day – are well represented. But we are also treated to the work



420 pp + xiii,
illustrated

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of Laura Knight, whose 'Flying the Kite' celebrates the carefree pleasures of a summer afternoon.

Most disarming are the full-colour photographs made with the newly developed Autochrome process; these bring us face-to-face with people who look surprisingly unguarded and contemporary. Meryn O'Gorman's 'Christiana in a Garden,' casually posed and delicately lit, might be the cover of next month's *Vogue*.

This is the most comprehensive overview of British art of the period since *The Edwardians: Secrets and Desires*, a 2004 exhibition at the National Gallery of Australia. In fact, exhibitions of Edwardian art are not very frequent, and there may be a reason for that. The era still casts a spell over us, as the television series *Downton Abbey* and *Parades End* have once again proven, but the British artwork of the period pales beside the work of the best Continental artists. Germany's Blue Rider group, the Fauves in France and the Futurists in Italy were showering gallery walls with colour, while much of British art had become stiff and rhetorical.

If we trace the changes in British music, at the hands of Elgar, Delius and Vaughan Williams, from *Cockaigne* in 1901 to the first performance of Vaughan Williams 'A London Symphony' in March of 1914, we see a series of richly imaginative masterworks. Following the nation's visual arts during those years reveals something very different. As John Russell, former art critic of *The Times*, once observed:

Had King Edward lived to be 75 ... historians could remark on the transformation of English art over the twenty-five years in question, and some part of the credit might well have been ascribed to the robust, adventurous and Frenchy appetites of the monarch himself. As it is, the art and art-life of the Edwardian era stop where they began: in mid-movement.¹

Editors Trumble and Rager cannot claim that British art in the early twentieth century was the equal of either British music or the visual arts of the Continent, and, to their credit, they don't attempt to. Instead, they use the works gathered for this show to create a social history of the period, concentrating on the lives of the British upper classes. Their central thesis is that Edwardian Britain was an age of 'divisive tensions and marked dualities'. People throughout society felt the pull of powerfully conflicted forces, including 'tradition and technology, rural and urban, local and global, nation and empire [and] conservatism and progressivism' (p. 3).

Though the authors don't dwell on this theme, the elite clearly saw these tensions as a threat to their dominance and reacted, in part, by using the visual arts – everything from paintings to tiaras – as a way of asserting their wealth and social position. These efforts could extend to the absurd: catalogue item 13B is a Fabergé bell pull to summon a servant, encrusted with gold, diamond, ruby and amethyst.

1 Simon Nowell-Smith, ed. *Edwardian English: 1901-1914*. (London: Oxford University Press, 1964), 330.

The book's eight essays give each writer the chance to develop these topics at length. Trumble's essay, 'The Solider, The King and the Proconsul', shows that the period's mood was far from complacent. He provides a thumbnail description of the 1906 Liberal landslide and the ensuing constitutional crisis that led to a greatly reduced role for the House of Lords. Against this backdrop, Trumble discusses the efforts of John Singer Sargent and other artists to project imperial power even as the nation's power centres were shifting. In cases like Sargent's swaggering portrait of Sir Frank Swettenham, this produced regrettable works of art.

Part of the shift in power underway was the infiltration of the upper classes by those who would likely have been barred a generation earlier. In 'The Glittering World', Andrea Wolk Rager describes the transformation of Mary Curzon, the daughter of a self-made Chicago millionaire, into the Vicereine of India, and compares that process with the 1909 opening of Selfridge's, which promised middle-class women a similar kind of social elevation, although on a much more modest scale.

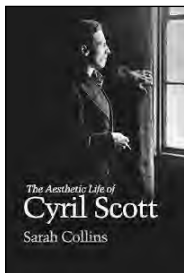
One response to the changes roiling Edwardian life cut across social barriers: an intense nostalgia for earlier, less stressful times. That often meant a yearning for the countryside. Elgarians will be especially interested to read Tim Barringer's 'That's the Life for a Man Like Me,' which explores attitudes about rural life during the period, as portrayed in art and music. He focuses on Brinkwells, the home of painter Rex Vicat Cole, and the place where Edward and Alice Elgar found refuge from the commotion of wartime London. Illustrations include Cole's moody painting of the Brinkwells garden – one of the most memorable in the show – and an evocative photograph of the cottage's interior as the Elgars would have known it.

Despite the curators' interest in the era's clashing forces, they seem to ignore its central contradiction: the conflict between opulence and the abject poverty that accompanied it. The Edwardians themselves were well aware of this, and voices were being raised in opposition. 'Public penury, private ostentation – that perhaps, is the heart of the complaint,' wrote C.F.G. Masterman, a leading contributor to the Liberal journal, *The Independent*.²

Inspired by Masterman's writings, 30-year-old novelist E.M. Forster created a character with a tenuous position as an insurance clerk: here was one of those hundreds of thousands who worked in the blocks of offices stretching across Lund's cityscape. Few such men have their picture painted, but Forster gave us, in *Howards End*, a vivid portrait of Leonard Bast. I wish the show at the YCBA had included a glimpse of those Edwardians and the lives they lived in the nation's offices, factories and mines, on its farms, docks and railways. They made this age of opulence possible.

Frank Beck

2 C.F.G. Masterman. *The Condition of England* (London: Methuen, 1909), 25.



Sarah Collins: *The Aesthetic Life of Cyril Scott*

Woodbridge: Boydell Press, 2013

280 pp + xii

ISBN

978-1-84383-807-4

The composer Cyril Scott came from Liverpool, in the early twentieth century England's centre of greatest musical activity after London. From there at this time came other significant figures in the later history of British music, including Sir Thomas Beecham, and the baritone-composer Frederic Austin. In fact, the Scott family home, 'The Laurels', was in leafy Oxtun, Cheshire, a suburb of Birkenhead across the Mersey. Although in shipping, Scott's father was a Greek scholar, and at an early age he sent his son to Germany, the country both regarded as the premiere centre of culture. Thus he learned the German language in his teens while living with a German family and studying music. In the 1890s Germany was still the fashionable destination of young English musicians seeking to continue their studies abroad.

Having departed from England at the age of twelve, Scott lived in Frankfurt for a continuous period of eighteen months, and after an interlude back in Liverpool returned to Germany in 1895. He became one of the 'Frankfurt Gang', that group of young British composers who studied at Frankfurt's Hoch'sche Konservatorium and included such contemporaries as Roger Quilter, Balfour Gardiner, Norman O'Neill, and the young Australian Percy Grainger. As a composer, Scott is an extraordinary example of a once leading figure, early on writing in an apparently advanced idiom, who in the inter-war years increasingly became *persona non grata* among the musical establishment for apparently rejecting the radical idioms of the day. But he was first seen as a notable young modernist, thought of by many as the pre-eminent *avant-garde* musician of his generation (Schoenberg had not yet made the impact which he would make later). In his late teens and his twenties he was enormously active, and many works conceived then were revised over a lifetime, not achieving their final form until much later. Scott rejected much of his early music, but it was collected and preserved by his friend Percy Grainger, and recent recordings of some of these scores make clear they have an integrity and personality all their own, heard most recently in the glorious early Piano Concerto in D, Op 10, which has been made performable by Martin Yates, whose BBC Concert Orchestra recording with pianist Peter Donohoe is on Dutton CDLX 7302.

Thus far we have had to rely on a small and rather dated literature about Cyril Scott, including his two volumes of autobiography (*My Years of Indiscretion* and *Bone of Contention*). There was also Eaglefield Hull's *Cyril Scott, Composer, poet and philosopher*, published in 1918, Ian Parrott's short study of his piano music and, most recently, Laurie Sampsel's pioneering *Cyril Scott: a bio-bibliography*, invaluable for its catalogue of the music, but already needing updating because of the recent growth of interest in Scott. However, one had long held the suspicion that many commentators on Scott had never heard much of the music and it is only with the appearance of fine recordings, especially from Chandos and Dutton Epoch, that we find ourselves

surprised by the remarkable musical personality that has been revealed. Half a dozen theses also explore individual aspects of Scott's life and music but none appear to have achieved the detail of the volume under review.

Sarah Collins, in this fascinating study of Scott, contributes to the pioneering exploration started by the record companies, with swathes of new information and a remarkably detailed analysis of his non-musical interests and cultural background. Thus we have seven substantial chapters plus extensive introduction and epilogue. The chapter titles will, perhaps, suggest whether it is for you: Matters of Biography, Autobiography and Anonymity; 'Music, melancholy, Apprehension, Sex and the Church'; 'An Artist-Autocrat of the Most pronounced Type'; 'The Most Absorbing and Romantic Interest of My Present Incarnation'; Music: Its Secret Influence throughout the Ages; and The Immortal Artist; Theory and Practice. As the author writes (pp. 9-10): 'Although there is little doubt that Scott identified himself primarily as a composer ... it is also true that after the 1920s a significant portion of his income would have come not from music royalties, but rather from his literary publications on health and the occult. ... Scott himself ... refer[ring] to his "twofold career as a musical composer and a writer on occult and other matters".'

Scott's early championship of the German poet Stefan George is well-known. His interests developed from the Symbolism that George introduced him to, and encompassed a variety of beliefs and lifestyles – alternative medicine, yoga, Theosophy, therapeutics, vendantism and occultism. His many non-musical books include several on alternative medicine such as *Constipation and common sense*, *Crude Black molasses*, *the Natural 'Wonder food'* and *Cider Vinegar: Nature's Great Health-Promoter and Safest Cure of Obesity*.

Sarah Collins writes in her introduction: 'To study the development of Scott's thinking is to engage in a fairly comprehensive tour of late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century intellectual history. In Frankfurt and Berlin Scott was drawn into a literary milieu that fired some of the most revolutionary "isms" of modernity...'. Collins' book is especially valuable in researching Scott's various little-known volumes of autobiographical fiction that he published anonymously. In her introductory overview she writes: 'The existence of Scott's anonymous works speaks to a central aspect of his personality and will here be used as a conduit to the discussion of his neurotic self-awareness and impression of his own "cosmic mission", which came to define his life and work.'

This is an absorbing and eye-opening study based on wide research, illustrated by a variety of fascinating photographs. As Sarah Collins summarises most eloquently in her introduction: 'At its core Scott's intellectual development was underwritten by a desire to discover an alternative system of values that could replace that of his mother's cherished Christianity. Stefan George's Symbolism offered an ecstatic vision of the ecstatic realm and a means by which this experience could be distilled into a poetic gesture. The gesture or symbol served as a vehicle through which the intuitive reader could

accede to knowledge. The beauty of the utterance was therefore the sole value of concern.'

That's fine as far as the impressionistic pre-First World War scores are concerned, but it leads me, as someone primarily interested in Scott's music and its performance, to a problem. As a commentator I have to say I do not warm to most of Scott's various non-musical interests, and I am concerned that an undue concern with them may become a barrier to the wider disseminating of some fine music just as it is being rediscovered. As Scott himself seems to have made clear, there was no intentional expression of his mystical philosophy in his music. For me, I would have much preferred first having a detailed account of the music, which could have been followed by Sarah Collins excellent work. None-the-less, Collins provides a wonderfully researched window on a hitherto obscured world. Just one quibble: Boydell's new standard format for their scholarly texts are maddening to the reviewer, because the tight perfect (i.e. glued) binding will not lie open, flat, while one is trying to write a few lines about this page or that.

Lewis Foreman

Members may purchase *Elgar's Earnings* and *The Aesthetic Life of Cyril Scott* direct from the publisher at a saving of 35%.

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CD REVIEWS

Symphony No. 2, *Sospiri*, *Elegy*

Royal Stockholm Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Sakari Oramo



BIS-1879

In 2007 Sakari Oramo was awarded the Elgar Medal by the Society and, on the evidence of this CD, never was one more richly deserved, for the performances are a revelation. I thought I'd known for the last half century that Elgar was a fine orchestrator, yet with his acute eye and ear Oramo lets us hear touches on almost every page of the symphony's score that make me realise that I, for one, have vastly underrated Elgar's skill. It's in the quieter passages that I hear things I've never heard before, and as much credit is due to the ability of the Stockholm players to listen to each other and produce magical sounds, and to the BIS engineers for capturing the results, as to the conductor's skill in realising the possibilities of the printed page.

What's more, the orchestra sounds as though it is thoroughly enjoying itself, and as though it truly believes in the music and understands what it is playing and why. There have been many occasions on which an orchestra has switched to cruise control when playing Elgar: this is assuredly not one of them.

My overall impression on first hearing was that the symphony, especially, could do with a little more freedom. So I turned to my old favourite, Barbirolli's 1964 EMI recording (and similarly coupled on my CD reissue) and was shocked to find it rather crude by comparison, especially in the orchestral playing. The playing of the Hallé and even of the Philharmonia is not a patch on the refined sounds produced by the Stockholm players. Barbirolli, too, sounded surprisingly over indulgent.

So I very much hope that this is the first of many Elgar recordings from these forces. From the results achieved here it will be very much a labour of love by Oramo and the orchestra and very definitely (as they're unlikely to make a fortune from Elgar recordings) a labour of love on the part of BIS. Their benevolence is much appreciated and I do hope that as many members as possible will buy this disc.

Martin Bird



Editions Hortus

HOR103

Vesper Voluntaries, Organ Sonata, Imperial March, Chanson de Matin, Chanson de Nuit, 'Nimrod', Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1

Jean-Luc Etienne, organ

It is always interesting hearing a skilled, continental organist playing English music and it can often give insights, particularly interpretative ones, which perhaps are less to the fore in performances from organists of the UK. Add to this a wonderfully versatile and justly famous organ in a warm acoustic and you have the ingredients for an exciting disc.

This CD is a mixture of original Elgar organ music, such as the Sonata in G and the *Vesper Voluntaries*, and arrangements of well-known works including the *Pomp and Circumstance* March No. 1, 'Nimrod' and the *Imperial March*.

It is the *Imperial March* that opens the disc, introducing the listener to the many colours of the 1912 Stahlhuth organ in the Jann de l'église Saint-Martin à Dudelange, Luxembourg which was restored in 2002, and it is refreshing to hear this attractive march played at the suggested, steady tempo. The main chorus of the organ is commendably solid while the reeds, especially the full swell, sound remarkably English. In the Sonata, the player negotiates the many technical difficulties of the first and last movements in particular, and the many subtleties of registration change are managed without awkward shifts in colour and volume. The player's interpretation of the arrangements are convincing and *Chanson de Nuit* and *Chanson de Matin* show once again what a master Elgar was when writing lighter music.

My only reservations are minor ones. Firstly, I miss the impact of an old-fashioned English 8' Tuba cutting through the full organ texture and secondly, I find some of the speeds a little wayward. The *Pomp and Circumstance* March sounds laboured to me and the middle movements of the Sonata feel uncomfortable.

Jean-Luc Étienne's playing is, from the first note to the last on the disc, of high quality and assurance. His engineers have succeeded in capturing the atmosphere of the organ and church but without comprising on clarity. I enjoyed listening to this disc and I recommend it highly.

David Halls



Nimbus Alliance

NI6220

Elgar: Quintet in A minor for Strings and Pianoforte

Dvořák: Piano Quintet No. 2 in A major

Albani String Quartet with Philip Ledger

These performances were both recorded in November 2001 live in the Matt Thomson Concert Hall at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music & Drama, and were released this year as a tribute to Sir Philip Ledger's legacy, overtly as pianist, but encompassing a lifetime as organist, continuo harpsichordist, choir trainer and orchestral conductor at King's College Cambridge and elsewhere, and latterly as Principal of the Royal Scottish Academy of Music

and Drama, and then composer.

A musical life led so successfully and with such distinction deserved recognition from the institution that he led and enhanced, and those of us who know his recording of the *Coronation Ode* with the King's College Choir and Philharmonia Orchestra, *inter alia*, can welcome another recording featuring Elgar.

From personal experience, I think it is a difficult work to bring off in public and then hope it to be blemish-free for repeated listening. As the first slightly ragged bars opened, I was concerned that the faults would outweigh the performance's expected qualities, and this feeling intensified with the small unevennesses at the second subject's 'Spanish' precursor. However, it settled down, and a fine, sensitive and nuanced performance emerged. Lacking the fire and, sometimes sheer speed, of the John Ogdon/Allegri Quartet interpretation that has always been a favourite of mine, the recording under discussion showed much sensitivity and suavity in the first movement and an exemplary use of *rubato* and other changes of tempo.

Matthew Souter's lovely viola playing starts the second movement and it was here that I felt the suavity of the string players did not actually plumb the very depths of this most emotional of movements. I detected a difference in vibrato between the Leader, Howard Davis, and the others that just slightly marred my enjoyment. However, the sound was fine and the huge climax in the middle of the movement was terrific, though the exciting 'cello part was for me too reticent.

The finale is the most successful of the three, making it exceptional. Leaving aside the odd mistake, the performance is fiery when it needs to be and yet relaxes properly elsewhere. The string colours are at their most varied and the tempo changes are nicely judged, especially when the themes from the previous movements are reviewed, particularly the 'Spanish' elements. Ledger is as fine and sensitive as he was throughout the performance. So, a thoroughly enjoyable interpretation, and a mostly enjoyable performance that has sustained repeated listening. It sounds as if the audience enjoyed it, too.

To my mind, the Dvořák (recorded two days later) is a shade more satisfying than the Elgar. This genial work elicits appropriately genial and characterful playing, particularly from Ledger, and the strings show greater homogeneity throughout. The whole performance is relaxed, the ensemble better, the interpretation sensitively varied.

In conclusion, whilst Philip Ledger's legacy will more aptly endure in some of his other recordings from the studio, this CD is a fitting tribute to his abilities as an exceptional chamber musician, relishing making music with his friends, and affording pleasure to many more than those at the actual concerts.

Steven Halls

LETTERS

From Bill Marsh

Julia Worthington

I was fascinated by the piece on Julia Worthington in the April issue. But may I make one small correction? Shawnee on Delaware is in Pennsylvania, not New Jersey. Worthington Park is across the river, however, in New Jersey.

As stated at the end of the piece, Fred Waring put Shawnee on the map for many years. There were summer choral courses there, and my choir director at Lafayette College in Easton, PA, also on the Delaware, John D. Raymond was a key faculty member there in the summer. Fred also started the Shawnee Press which continues to this day issuing choral octavos.

From Andrew Keener

The Cello Concerto

In his well considered review of the new Weilerstein/Barenboim CD of Elgar's Cello Concerto, Barry Collett draws our attention to the soloist's added glissando to a high E at Fig. 45 of the finale. Jacqueline du Pré did the same, but only, it seems, in her recordings and performances after meeting Daniel Barenboim. Of which there are many preserved: when I wrote a chapter on du Pré's relationship with the work for Continuum's 2007 collection of essays, *Elgar – An Anniversary Portrait*, there were eight known recorded performances by her. The two well-known accounts with Barenboim – Philadelphia Orchestra (1970) and the New Philharmonia (Christopher Nupen's 1967 film) – both feature the upward swoop. As the producer of the new Weilerstein recording, I enquired into her own thinking behind the embellishment. It was the maestro's idea, came the reply. He was out of the room at the time, and I forgot to ask him. Maybe he reads the *Journal* ...?

From Robin Taylor

The Second Symphony

I entirely agree with most of what Tom Kelly says about the Second Symphony's first performance.

It does however seem to be pushing it too far to suggest that Billy Reed wasn't there. Surely it's hardly relevant that Henry Wood didn't allow deputies. Couldn't Elgar, as composer, have permission for Billy to add himself to the regular players, not necessarily as leader? After all, in his remark to Billy he uses the present tense.

Elgar, of course, always prepared to be hard done by (not always unjustifiably), and leaving out of account his own quiet ending, would have *felt* that the symphony was a failure, the more so noticing the empty seats.

As for the size of the audience, I confess that if I'd been pushed for cash and I'd seen the rest of

the programme I'd have kept my five bob in my pocket and gone for a walk by the river. Wicked of me, I know.

From Carl Newton

Richard Strauss

I hesitate to differ from such Elgarians as Kennedy and Taylor but I cannot accept their view that Richard Strauss was the greatest composer of the 20th century (April Journal p.56). Strauss, Sibelius and Elgar were all great composers but they were products of the 19th century and their music reflects its concerns, language, and prejudices. They all 'faintly trusted the larger hope'. Surely the greatest composer of the 20th century is Shostakovich who knew that hope is irrelevant and whose music is expressive of the savagery, endurance and human catastrophe of the time. Of course other candidates might be put forward – Mahler, Walton, Hindemith, Stravinsky, but Richard Strauss, writing the lushly romantic and backward-looking *Four Last Songs* as late as 1949 and *Capriccio* in the midst of the Holocaust – oh no, no, no!

100 YEARS AGO ...

The Elgars were based in Severn House for the whole of May. They went to see Joseph Benrimo's *The Yellow Jacket* and were 'quite delighted with it – so different from any other play'. Elgar enjoyed it so much that he saw it a further six times and became friends with the author. Elgar's mood changed frequently: on 1 May he 'effervesced the whole time & kept the company spellbound & crying nearly with laughter' at a party, whereas next day he 'did not dine at the Royal Academy – I went in, found they had omitted my OM & put me with a crowd of nobodies in the lowest place of all – the bottom table – I see no reason why I should endure insults'. Later in the month he was 'doing Income Tax', and the next day he was 'still doing Income Tax. Raser depressed'. But on the 25th Alice noted that he was 'beginning to turn to Falstaff' and on the 26th 'going on with Music Gott sei Dank'.

June brought unwelcome news, for on the 9th 'Very sad - Had a cable saying our beloved Pippa had passed away.' This was also the date of Elgar's last concert of the season with the L.S.O., at which he gave the first London performance of *The Music Makers*. A few days later he was 'feeling vesy badsley. Unable for anyth.', so Alice 'Ordered car & he & A. & C. drove to The Hut' for a few days. The 15th brought more sad news, as 'Lord Northampton died suddenly at Acqui'. A dear friend of Elgar, he had taken part in Worcester Amateur Instrumental Society concerts in the 1880s. A further blow came at the end of the month when the L.S.O. ended Elgar's tenure as their Principal Conductor.

July saw Alice going 'to Novello for E. to see Mr. Littleton about Falstaff - Were they going to have it? A. Littleton wanted it. So it was arranged', and the next day 'E. happy with his work. A. to Novello with 1st portion'. Work continued at the Hut, and Billy Reed came too to bow the string parts.

At the end of the month they 'Decided to go to Tan-yr-Allt', a friend's house in Wales, so on 5 August Elgar was 'down at 4 a.m. A. made him tea &c &c & finished his great work Falstaff – D.G.' before they set off. Elgar spent the time in Wales 'vesy busy with his notes on Falstaff' while Alice found the 'shops & people very irritating.' A few days later she was still 'furious with the uncourteous people'. They remained in Wales until 1 September when Alice declared fervently: 'Very glad to leave the house wh. we disliked very much - cold & ugly & uncared for. Sorry to leave the Sea - delighted to leave the disagreeable Welsh'.

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