

MUSIC REVIEWS

Elgar: The Overtures

Elgar Complete Edition Vol. 28, edited by Sarah Thompson (Rickmansworth: Elgar Society Edition Ltd., 2013)



ISBN
978-1-904856-28-3

268 pp. + xxxiii.

After sojourns among lesser-known treasures in recent issues, Volume 28 of the ‘Complete Edition’ returns to familiar territory. To the *Froissart*, *Cockaigne* and *In the South* overtures are added only the embryonic remains of the *Scottish* [sic] and *Lakes* overtures, and of *Cockaigne* No. 2 (‘City of Dreadful Night’).

This familiarity of content brings with it both pitfalls and responsibilities. Of the former the most obvious is that many will possess scores of the overtures, and the appearance of six pages of fragments is unlikely to create unprecedented demand: when Novello still took more than a passing interest in Elgar’s music I never felt the need to buy a ‘Complete Edition’ volume when I already had a miniature score unless I was going to conduct a performance. Any edition that strives to be ‘complete’ will, inevitably, cover familiar ground while pursuing its aim of providing ‘an authentic text of all the composer’s surviving music’.

The edition as a whole ‘is intended for both scholarly and practical use’, and that is where I feel the editors have particularly onerous responsibilities. With the best will in the world orchestras are not going to replace their Novello and Boosey parts with new ones from Elgar Works, even if (and when) available, so it is incumbent upon editors to ensure that it is a relatively straightforward matter for the ‘authentic text’ to be reflected in what an orchestra is actually playing.

The first ‘practicality’ is to ensure that the layout of the score doesn’t mean that the prime function of the conductor’s left hand is the turning of pages. All ECE scores are now originated using ‘Sibelius’ software which, if left to its own devices, has a habit of being over-generous in terms of numbers of pages. *In the South* here takes 108 pages compared to Novello’s 98, *Cockaigne* 80 compared to Boosey’s 69: an entirely acceptable increase given the wonderful clarity of the result.

Serendipitously, shortly after I bought Volume 28 I found a second-hand copy of Norman del Mar’s book, *Conducting Elgar* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1998). This contains a wealth of sage advice not only on how to approach the music, but also on the Novello and Boosey editions of both the scores and parts. Of *Cockaigne* he says: ‘For many decades the material was available on sale, but sadly this is no longer the case, and an eye has to be kept open in hire copies for misprints, which are not uncommon’: of *In the South* ‘The 4th horn here [11 bars after fig.15] should read B natural instead on B flat, one of several surprising misprints in a generally reliable edition’. Now I’ve played

all three overtures with amateur orchestras, and no conductor has ever pointed out or corrected a single misprint! The ECE edition ‘naturally’ has the correct horn note, reinforced by a natural sign in square brackets signifying a ‘minor editorial amendment’: but nowhere does it point out that this note (or any other) was incorrect in the Novello edition. Much of the aim of providing an authentic text for ‘practical use’ is surely lost if these corrections to the original editions are not clearly indicated?

And while my bonnet hummeth with bees, an editor has to be absolutely sure that he is right and Elgar wrong before adding his ‘minor editorial amendments’. In *Froissart*, for example, at 5 bars after [A] and in a similar place at 1 bar before [F], can we be totally confident that Elgar just forgot to mark a sforzando in the double bass part? All the other string parts have a sforzando at this point, so the assumption is at least reasonable. But if the editorial addition to the bass part is justified, why is there not a similar addition to the identical contra-bassoon part before [F] when that instrument alone among the wind band lacks a sforzando? Or maybe Elgar knew what he was doing all along: those unadorned double bass notes are reinforced in each case by timpani rolls which will produce a far more subtle effect than a herd of double basses crashing in with a sforzando. And the natural bowing of the phrase will result in a down bow (of itself a stronger stroke than an up bow) on that note anyway. Frankly, when neither I nor anyone else can be sure of Elgar’s intention here, surely the light touch of ‘leave well alone’ is the best editorial policy? We just can’t afford to second guess. There’s a passage for horns of six quavers in *Gerontius*, for example, that appears three times: twice it’s slurred four quavers and two; once two quavers and four. Is that careless penmanship, a thoughtful change, or merely a consequence of the fact that by the time he came to score the third occurrence, the first two were in a section of the score that was 100 miles away being used to produce the band parts?

As ever with the ‘Complete Edition’, in addition to the dots we get a comprehensive Foreword and an interesting selection of photographs. The paper used, while superb for the reproduction of the printed score, is less than ideal for the reproduction of photographs: I suspect there’s no real practical or economic solution to that. The Foreword gets off to a bad start by believing Elgar’s hype in his 1904 interview for *The Strand Magazine* that he ‘once ruled a score for the same instruments and with the same number of bars as Mozart’s G Minor Symphony, and in that framework wrote a symphony’. Mozart’s first movement is some 300 bars long: if you look at his manuscript, you see that Elgar completed just 17 before running out of steam.

Mention is made, too, of Elgar’s 1878 *Introductory Overture*, now presumed lost, written for a local group of Christy Minstrels organised by Elgar’s dentist, Robert Surman. But are we certain that it’s lost? On 13 August 1939 Carice recorded in her diary that she ‘Went to see Mrs. ___ (R. Surman’s daughter) & fetched Christy Minstrel music’. (Now I wonder where she put it?)

Reading through this review I realise I’ve dwelt on the negatives rather than reinforcing the many and wonderful positives of this and every other volume in the series. As a scholarly edition it is admirable: as a practical edition less so. As I’ve said before, Elgar wrote his music for us to hear and enjoy, not to look at. The printed score can only be the means to his end, and not an end in itself: we must ensure that the scholastic achievements of the edition are readily transferable to future performances.

Martin Bird

BOOK REVIEWS

Martin Bird (compiler): *An Elgarian Who’s Who*

This addition to the splendidly developing publication of Elgar diaries and correspondence series is without even the attenuated narrative of letter collections, which are ordered chronologically. The *Who’s Who* is a work to consult while reading the diaries and letters, when one is uncertain, as well one might be, of the identity of persons mentioned there. It follows that it’s not a book one can actually read through, which creates a problem for the reviewer. The material and its ordering are governed by the book’s conception; it is a mass of detail, ordered alphabetically. Accordingly there seems little to do but to potter about looking for mistakes, or lacunae. My search in this respect has (happily) been unprofitable; so it is best to start by congratulating Martin Bird for his imagination in conceiving such a thing and his outstanding diligence in carrying it through.

Who is in, and who is not? The policy is generously inclusive. The introduction suggests that musicians about whom information is readily obtainable elsewhere are omitted, although there are in fact entries for several (Fauré, Parry, Stanford, Sullivan, Strauss, and from a later generation Holst and Vaughan Williams). I am surely not the only one who will fail to recognize a very large proportion of the other people named within (also included are a number of dogs). It is good that some of the Elgars’ servants are acknowledged. Was one of their cooks really called Mrs Honeybun? It seems too good to be true; and one wonders why she only lasted a month at Severn House. Several other names might tempt the waggish, or simply those of us who marvel at the richness of European nomenclature (the letter G is particularly fruitful: Gasquet, Gleichen, Gloyne, Gore, Greffuhle, Grindrod, Groundsell, Gwatkin). Some names, too, will remind us of persons of a later generation that we know or used to know; I at least am wondering whether they are related. But to have details of descendants and relations would, again, have swollen the work-load, and the book, to unmanageable dimensions.

Mrs Honeybun is one of several brief entries marked with an asterisk, which signifies that even Martin Bird has failed to discover anything much other than their names and their location in the diaries. For instance, someone otherwise unknown might call at the Elgars’ home (one such is called merely ‘Miss Big’), or even come to tea. The Introduction explains that the asterisks are added ‘in the hope that readers may be able to provide further details’, to be posted in due course on the Society’s website. It seems likely, however, that most of what we need to know will already have been inserted between these hard covers; and some entries are likely to remain mysterious. With ‘Mr Crooning*’ Alice Elgar admits she may have got the name wrong (was he by chance a tenor?); and in 1919 Elgar lunched with an entry ‘H., Sir*’: ‘by the time Alice came to write up her diary, she had forgotten his surname’.



Rickmansworth, Elgar Works, 2014

562 pp + ix

ISBN
978-1-904856-53-5

She must have forgotten his first name as well, since she would never refer to someone as (for instance) 'Sir Parry'. Maybe H stood for Henry, as in Sir Henry Hadow, who (we learn on the opposite page) had been knighted in 1918. I was tempted to suggest the H-rich Herbert Hamilton Harty, but he was knighted only in 1925.

Another assumption I made proved negative. 'Mrs Gray and Cecil' visited Forli in 1893; Elgar met them at the station and they stayed three hours. This sounds important, but it was not his mother bringing a young and promising musician called Cecil Gray to see the great man, for the composer and critic Cecil Gray (in adulthood no friend of Elgar's music) was born two years later. My error detection is negligible, but those who in 2007 attended a commemorative study day 50 years after the death of Edward J. Dent will be surprised to see a death-date of 1968. I wondered whether a trumpeter (a class prone to high blood pressure) had really lived to 97, but *Grove* confirms John Solomon's dates as 1856–1953. Adjacent to him is the pianist Solomon who, according to Bird, played the Chaikovsky's first concerto in public at the age of seven; *Grove* more cautiously says eight. It would be impressive even at 18.

Returning to Grays (there are nine entries with that name), that Elgar called one of them (not to his face) 'that fool Gray' is tactfully passed over.¹ This is one sign of Martin Bird's rigorous exclusion of the anecdotal, or of anything extraneous to the matter in hand, which is identification. The risk of a certain dryness, acknowledged in the introduction, had to be taken, as to include every interesting detail would make an already substantial volume unwieldy. Thus he manages to include Beatrice Harrison without mentioning nightingales; Elgar's first fiancée Helen Weaver figures in an entry headed with her brother's name, without her married name or her voyage to New Zealand (nor are we reminded of Lady Mary Lygon's trip to New South Wales; Variation (***) remains open to speculation). Consistency is virtually impossible: I noted that while Joseph Bennett's authorship of the programme booklet for *King Olaf* is mentioned, Herbert Thompson's rather longer one for *Caractacus* is not, and nor, indeed, are Jaeger's substantial 'analyses' of the later oratorios.

Where to put people with more than one name? For our benefit, Martin Bird has included 'Dorabella', but the entry directs us to 'Penny'. We are also directed there from the entry on her eventual husband, one of two Richard Powells (the other being Binyon's brother-in-law). I had not known that the opening trio of *Così fan tutte* ('La mia Dorabella') was a glee-club favourite, but I suspect it's not quite right to say that Elgar called Miss Dora Penny 'Dorabella' 'after the comic trio' rather than after the character in Mozart's opera. But when one is reduced to niggles like that, one has really run out of reviewing steam. It remains to say that this book is sure to become a

1 Letter to Jaeger, 29 August 1898, in Moore, *Elgar and his Publishers*, p. 87; the context is Elgar's frustration at lack of rehearsal time allowed in Leeds for *Caractacus*. The reference is to Alan Gray, who may have been favoured because he was a Yorkshireman.

valued companion to all Elgarians, and to regret that so many questions about these people must end in doubt. As, indeed, does the alphabetical section, for the final entry, asterisked although she came twice to tea at Forli, is a 'Mademoiselle Zweifel'.

Julian Rushton

Did you ever wonder about Olga Isabella Nethersole (1866-1951)? Probably not but, and here is the point about this book, you might need to check the name in relation to Sir Edward because ... well just because her name 'rings a bell' somewhere in your mind. Well, this book will tell you that she worked as a nurse during the Great War and established the People's League of Health. Nethersole wrote to Elgar in 1928 asking him to set a poem for the League. This is hardly important; but this entry is a reflection of the thoroughness with which Martin Bird has compiled this remarkable book that will have to stay close to any writer about the composer in the future.

Opening the book at random I find I can sort out the different Legges who were involved in Elgar's life either in a large or small way: there was Walter (of EMI), Sir Henry the Secretary to the Order of Merit and the music critic, Robin. Wisely Martin has grouped families together such as the Atkins, Rodewalds, Webbs and Probyns. Who are the Probyns you may well ask? I had not heard of them either but you will find the answer in these 562 pages. The book begins with Abbot-Anderson, an important doctor in Elgar's life, and ends with Mademoiselle Zweifel who may be from Ruritania for all I know. What I do know now is that she came to tea at Forli in 1892!

Martin Bird states that the volume 'lists every person mentioned in Edward's and Alice's diaries and every person for whom correspondence with Edward and Alice is known to survive.' Just reading that and the later statement: 'A supplementary directory is planned to cover those mentioned in Carice Elgar's diaries of the 1920s and 1930s who do not fit the criteria for the present volume' is witness to his energy, determination and contribution to Elgar scholarship. In my own attempts to engage in this field I have, already, found this volume to be of inestimable value. I found one small error (by chance), for no book of this nature can be 100% accurate, but, knowing the quality of Martin Bird's research and work I doubt that there are many more.

If you want to know a little more about Ethel Hobday (the pianist who made the first recording of the Piano Quintet) it is all there. Opposite this entry is that for Mr. Hogarth. Apparently he 'played for Carice's dance at Severn House in February 1919'. Happily Alice 'thought him "very good – quite different from common dance music".' So 'that's all good then' as is this splendid and unique piece of research.

Andrew Neill



Hereford Choral
Society, 2013

80 pp

ISBN
978-0-9927781-0-1

Timothy Day: *Hereford Choral Society, An Unfinished History*

It would be easy to imagine a history of a choral society to be a rather dry document, yet Timothy Day (Vice-Chairman of the West Midlands branch of the Elgar Society), while being extremely scholarly, has a delightfully light touch which makes his new book anything but boring. This work was commissioned by the Hereford Choral Society, which has done a truly superb job with its production, and I was amazed to hear that the manuscript had been completed in only a year. Printed on lovely thick paper, and copiously illustrated, I also feel this book to be a real ‘bargain’ at £12.

The thing that interested me most was seeing the huge extent to which attitudes towards music making have changed during a comparatively short time. Apparently during the nineteenth century gentlemen were ‘more ready to encourage their workmen and servants to sing than their sons and daughters’. Was this unique to Britain? The same would surely not have been true in, say, France or Germany! The First World War, however, devastating though it was, clearly brought changes, for Percy Hull is quoted as saying in 1920 that the members of the Society ‘would find nothing under the sun to take the place of music’. He said to them that in his prisoner-of-war camp in Germany ‘men went mad’. Putting on plays and games helped keep them sane, but above all else ‘it was music, making music and listening to music, that calmed and inspired and gave hope to his fellow prisoners’. Nowadays we know of course how useful music can also be in therapy.

So much has been said and written about our Society’s hero having had ‘a chip on his shoulder’. I am glad Timothy Day says that Elgar ‘may have been hyper-sensitive’, not that he was, because I personally have always believed that he had very good reason for feeling discriminated against on account of his background and the ‘lack of education’ caused by his family’s financial constraints. Reading this book puts what Elgar suffered in context, and what an incredibly prejudiced context it was!

I now appreciate more than ever how privileged we in the twenty-first century are to be surrounded by so much talent and to have so many opportunities to go to truly superb concerts – not only in Hereford. Timothy has rightly entitled his book ‘An Unfinished History’; I am sure that the Hereford Choral Society will well outlive our grandchildren as well as ourselves, continuing from strength to strength.

Will Gloucester and Worcester now be clamouring to have their stories documented?

Ann Merivale

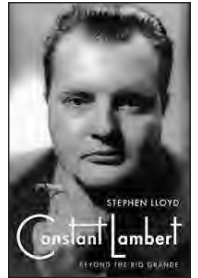
Stephen Lloyd: *Constant Lambert, Beyond The Rio Grande*

In 1947, the journalist C.B. Rees wrote of Constant Lambert in *The Penguin Music Magazine* that Lambert was ‘too familiar a figure in our musical life to need a “biography” in these pages’ and mentioned the conductor’s ‘powerful constitution’. With the hindsight of 70 years, it is bitterly ironic to note that Lambert died just five years after that article at the age of only 45, and that he is nowadays only occasionally glimpsed by most of us flowing past on the great *Rio Grande*, as it rolls down to the sea, with only balletomanes aware of his enduring contribution to the ballet in this country.

Yet this was the man about whose death Hubert Foss (*quondam* Head of the Oxford University Press Music Department) wrote ‘I do not exaggerate when I urge you to regard this brilliant young man’s death as comparable historically in English music to the death of Purcell at the age of 36’.

Two questions therefore confront this reviewer: ‘Why do we want a new biography?’ and ‘What has Lambert to do with Elgar?’. To answer the second question first, Lambert began to flourish as a very young man during the First World War, was immersed in the Ballets Russes phenomenon, had cosmopolitan and perceptive enthusiasms, absorbed an astonishing range of knowledge across a wide spectrum of art forms and lived through the death and reputational decline of Elgar. Far from dismissing the great composer, however, Lambert through his roles as conductor, critic, BBC broadcaster and journalist supported and admired the older musician, and his pronouncements on Elgar’s death and subsequently have proved to be perceptive and discriminating. As some correspondence concerning *Rio Grande* attests, Elgar admired the new work and Lambert was grateful for his kind words. In return, he lauded Elgar for not being ‘rustic’ at a time when a generation of composers busied itself with the English folk idiom. His admiration, his perception and his quixotic and often inconsistent views are exemplified in his comments on Elgar’s First Symphony: he wrote of the ‘frankly appalling melody that starts off the symphony’, he opined it was not as great as *Falstaff* or the ‘Enigma’ Variations, but he also felt the symphony was the quintessence of Elgar’s output, liked conducting it, and mentioned its ‘absolute mastery of technique, the sureness of conception, and the way in which the themes instead of being repeated in a set mechanical frame are really given a new and more vital significance as the work proceeds’ (whilst noting that others may find it ‘repellent in thought and colour’.

So we Elgarians can note that the opinions of this man about Elgar might be reasonably trusted and we general musical enthusiasts might reasonably infer that a biography of Lambert will provide us with a wealth of knowledge about post-Elgarian musical life in Britain. In this, the volume does not disappoint: if Lambert to you is simply a footnote or a name mentioned in the context of more famous figures, then this most handsomely produced book will be a revelation. It certainly provides exhaustive, and occasionally exhausting, detail about Lambert himself, and is furnished with a detailed index, list of his works, discography, iconography, chronology, summary of his broadcasts



Boydell Press, 2014

622 pp

ISBN
978-1-8438389-8-2

and journalism and other appendices of interest. There are even examples of his witty and boisterous limericks that give a glimpse of substance to the comments from people on his brilliant and amusing conversation.

Backed by his near omniscience of the times in which Lambert and his friend William Walton flourished (cf. his *William Walton, Muse of Fire*, also published by the Boydell Press in 2001), Stephen Lloyd takes us on the journey of Lambert's life, packing in the work and artistic, personal and social context of this English cosmopolitan. Well researched and well written, it provides more than you might ever thought you wanted to know of the man whom Arthur Bliss felt was 'almost kaleidoscopic in his talent ... whose influence on English music is liberal and compelling'.

You will have noticed that I have yet to answer my question 'Why do we want a new biography?'. Despite being readable and of interest to the general and specialist reader alike, this fine biography enables us to put Lambert's life and achievements objectively in context. During his life he absorbed, appreciated, described and took part in many of the kaleidoscopic influences, breakthroughs and currents in different art forms of the first half of the Twentieth Century. As a young man he was recognised for his extraordinary abilities and knowledge way beyond his years. In an age of supremely talented musicians, Gordon Jacob stated 'He was the most brilliant musician I have known in my lifetime, I am bound to say. Extraordinary chap', even if Stephen Lloyd notes Lambert lacked that 'single mindedness [through which] Walton ultimately was to emerge as the finer composer'.

Lloyd therefore puts the man in context. Perhaps he was over-lionised in his youth; perhaps he has been unfairly neglected and perhaps belittled since his death (*pace* Foss's encomium quoted above). He won't, however, be the first to enjoy and suffer such a swing in opinion. Another English composer underwent the same fate. Of his opus 1, the respected critic, Henry Fothergill Chorley, wrote 'There has been no such first appearance in our time'... [it may]... 'mark an epoch in a man's life; and, what is of more universal consequence, it may mark an epoch in English music, or we shall be greatly disappointed. Years on years have elapsed since we have heard a work by so young an artist so full of promise.'

And where in the pantheon of English music was that young composer in Constant Lambert's era, and where is he now? His name, by the way, was Arthur Sullivan, and he does not feature in Stephen Lloyd's index, nor was probably anything more than mentioned in the broadcasts and journalism Lambert published, no more than 50 years after Sullivan's death.

Steven Halls

CD REVIEWS

Symphony No. 2

Staatskapelle Berlin conducted by Daniel Barenboim



DECCA

478 6677

Barenboim has always been an interesting if not always a compelling interpreter of Elgar. His first recording of the Second Symphony, with the London Philharmonic Orchestra in 1972, positioned him only slightly outside a mainstream of Elgar conducting (a mainstream capacious enough to carry Boult, Barbirolli, Solti, and Elgar himself), but its recorded sound is rather drab, and as with his First Symphony recording, the tempo is sometimes heaved about in bewildering ways: it is in no sense a favourite recording. This new recording with the Berlin Staatskapelle, with which Barenboim has forged a relationship and a performing style something like that of the old Berlin Philharmonic with Furtwängler, is altogether a different experience: richer, more complex, more individual, and ultimately more successful. Even superficially there are differences. The recording is cleaner and more transparent than before, and the orchestral playing in Berlin even more virtuoso than the L.P.O. Indeed, there are moments in this recording which sound more beautiful than any I have ever heard in this symphony. Barenboim's tempos are (even) brisker now than on his first recording, although sometimes the difference is, in terms of bald numbers, not large: for instance, only around fifteen seconds are clipped off the slow movement, relative to the earlier recording. Throughout, there is plenty of Barenboim's Furtwängleresque rhythmic freedom on display, but experienced Elgarians will find in this performance relatively little either of Elgar's scrupulously notated rubato or of the traditional ambrosia that his familiar interpreters pour in.

The new recording's qualities take time to come into focus. Barenboim establishes an unemotional mood as seems possible in the extrovert opening movement. The rhythms are all well sprung, the invigorating counterpoint joyfully projected, and the big structural moments, such as the blaze of dissonant brass immediately before the recapitulation, are all well considered; but for me, the total effect was underwhelming. Although the tempo presses on – Solti is reserved by comparison – I had expected more of what Elgar tells us to expect here, the 'spirit of delight'. Only gradually did it dawn on me not only that this (relative) emotional understatedness would characterize the performance of the whole symphony, but also that there would be something very powerful about Barenboim's interpretative decision, conscious or not, to deny to fulfil the expectations raised by this symphony.

This symphony often seems quasi-Baroque in its fixation on affect. The first movement is, except for the development section, boisterous and pugnacious; the slow movement an epic of grief; the scherzo nervous and ultimately febrile; the finale a touch pompous, but self-consciously so, sensitive to the fugitive quality of its own fake confidence, and eventually –

well, make of the ending what you will. But even these most basic qualities of the movements are challenged by Barenboim's interpretation. The slow movement is perhaps the most arresting conception of all, and it is worth pondering the effect of a key moment of it.

Barenboim is, for me, the greatest living conductor of music expressive of noble mourning, whether for Siegfried or for Beethoven's hero. Most conductors recognize something of this quality in the 'funeral march' of Elgar's Second Symphony, but Barenboim apparently does not. Listening to this movement I missed familiar beauties and strongly wanted to resist the pressure of the beat, which I consistently felt was too fast. But I think that is the point. Barenboim simply doesn't feel the music that way. In his new version there is still somehow a strong sense of loss – and bewilderment in those breathtaking moments of stillness, when all but the strings disappear: passages which Tovey said sounded almost as if Bruckner had learnt how to phrase – but it is a loss for which we cannot stop to grieve.

I have already mentioned that Barenboim takes the movement at a rather brisk pace. The funeral cortege might only take fifteen seconds fewer than in his earlier recording, but it feels appreciably faster now; and if we consider that this is a full two *minutes* quicker than Colin Davis's recent recording with the London Symphony Orchestra, which by no means drags, it is clear that the normal ceremonial of this movement, the emotional centre of the symphony, is being rushed for some reason. And it is not simply a matter of tempo. The build-up to the big brass theme at 5:25 is less intense, the strings more reserved and objective, than one would expect. Barenboim presses on through moments where most conductors, including himself in his earlier recording, hold back tenderly. When it comes, the brass chorale is less warm and sonorous than we usually hear, too. But for me, the moment which changes the impression not only of this movement but of the whole symphony is the subtly orchestrated preparation for that chorale (starting at 4:11). In his earlier recording Barenboim made this sound like everyone else does, a yearning chromatic rise, repeated, with delicate string arpeggios seeming to pick out points of light that glisten on the surface of a lake. But now the light has gone and instead it is as if we are being troubled, bitten, stung, by a swarm of insects. This twitchy, actually slightly frightening, impression is the continuation of a nervous tic established in the music in the development of the first movement. I have never heard this mosquito quality before but it is absolutely there in the score, which Barenboim has meticulously observed. For me, it is in this moment that Barenboim's whole unsettling conception becomes clear.

His is ultimately an extremely disturbing performance, compellingly so, and it persuades me that the symphony is even more unnerving than I had previously thought, its optimism more shallow and more pockmarked by the history of psychological malaise. I have never previously noticed so much nightmarish, mechanistic hammering in the orchestration. It is there in the weird climax of the Rondo, of course, which Elgar described in frightful terms evocative of suicidal fear; but Barenboim, who never misses a Nibelung, has

found it in the other movements too. The rondo is in fact perhaps the best performance on record. Elgar becomes here a Viennese composer, sounding often like Mahler and occasionally like Webern. This movement always seems in a sense to be pushing the slow movement aside, but here the effect is heightened. It is as if the Remembrance Day crowd, having already been hurried by a clock-watching master of ceremonies, were brusquely cleared off Whitehall in order to let a goods lorry through. By contrast, the finale is more assured than it often can be, and the final pages of 'sunset glow', pining for empire, or whatever, are more touching for the fact that this succour, normally given in the slow movement, has been so long delayed.

So what does it all amount to, and can it be recommended as a recording? The second question is easier to answer than the first. This is a unique recording, challenging and rewarding. I doubt that many Elgarians will return to it as frequently as other recordings such as Andrew Davis's or Barbirolli's, but hearing it will sharpen the awareness of the beauties of the other recordings, and what a listener feels that 'the work' really 'is'. When a new interpretation challenges what we take to be the basic premise of a piece of music, and does it as persuasively as Barenboim's new recording does, it is worth a hearing. Listening to this recording might make the comfort of old performances feel more welcome, or it may make them seem unreal, and so limit their potential to soothe. So do listen, but *caveat emptor*.

J.P.E. Harper-Scott

Elgar: Sonata for Violin and Piano in E minor
Strauss: Sonata for Violin and Piano in E flat
Steven Moeckel, violin; Paula Fan, piano



Close your eyes and think of Arizona. What comes to mind? Merciless sun? Saguaro cactus? The Grand Canyon? Elgar?

Elgar? Yes; Steven Moeckel, the leader (sorry, Concertmaster) of the Phoenix Symphony Orchestra, a German-American virtuoso, is a committed Elgarian. I'm ashamed to say that his is a new name to me, but his playing of the violin concerto has been widely praised for its energy and intensity. Here, with his long-term musical partner the Chinese pianist Paula Fan, Moeckel gives us his interpretations of the sonatas by Elgar and his friend Richard Strauss. They are well worth listening to, the Strauss perhaps more than the Elgar.

Strauss's sonata of 1887 antedates that of Elgar by 30 years. It is unashamedly the work of a young man passing through chamber music on his way to mastery of the operatic and orchestral genres, already with *Don Juan* in his sights. Elgar's, on the other hand, is one of a handful of late small-scale works into which, most of his creative labour accomplished, he distils the experience of a lifetime. So what we want from a performance of the Strauss is a display of the confidence of youth; from the Elgar, the serene wisdom of maturity. Steven Moeckel, we can tell, is a young man, still the

Steven Moeckel
84501 62422

right side of 40.

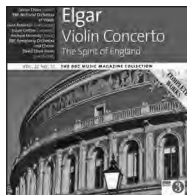
Elgar indicates that the opening of his *Allegro* first movement is to be played *risoluto*. Moeckel hits the ground not just running but racing. It is as if he takes *risoluto* to mean ‘with gritted teeth’, whereas in the context of this contemplative inward-looking work I feel it should suggest nothing more forceful than ‘confidently’ or ‘straightforwardly’, in contrast to the tentative soliloquising of much of the subsequent material. He makes a good many changes of tempo, more than are indicated by Elgar’s occasional *poco allargando* markings, and he seldom plays quieter than a solid *mezzo piano*. The effect is to render banal the *tranquillo* second subject where a wistful melody is picked out by the first quaver of slurred groups of four. What could be dreamy and introspective if played *pianissimo* sounds forthright and prosaic when done *mezza voce*. In the second movement, too, exaggerated changes of speed disrupt what should be a meditative dialectic between what is certain and what is to be questioned. The last movement, on the other hand, I think is exemplary in pace, mood and interpretation. Good but not special has to be my verdict overall.

In the Strauss, however, Moeckel hits top form – a young man rejoicing in a young man’s music and impeccably supported by Fan’s secure musicianship. It is apparent in the sonata’s opening declamatory passage that this is an outward-facing work. Its depths, paradoxically, are all on the surface, and Moeckel’s fine technique shows them off perfectly. In the luscious melodies of the last movement particularly Strauss’s ability to make two instruments sound like a full orchestra is admirably and sometimes movingly displayed.

The technical quality of this recording is irreproachable. To my ear, the tone of Moeckel’s instrument (by the French maker Lupot, dated 1817) sounds a little tight in the lower register, reducing the contrast between its muted and *naturale* voices. But there is some fine playing here, and – if I can say this without being patronising – the artists deserve to be heard.

Roger Neighbour

Members interested in acquiring this disc should contact Steven Moeckel at moeckelsteven@hotmail.com



BBC Music
BBCMM372

The Spirit of England; Violin Concerto

James Ehnes (violin), BBC National Orchestra of Wales conducted by David Atherton

Susan Gritton (soprano), Andrew Kennedy (tenor), BBC Symphony Orchestra and Chorus conducted by David Lloyd-Jones

Strange bedfellows, but nonetheless welcome for that. The Canadian violinist James Ehnes recorded the Concerto live at the Queen Elizabeth Hall in May 2007 with the Philharmonia and Andrew Davis, a performance that elicited

suitably ‘rave’ reviews. This performance was recorded at the Richard Hickox Memorial Concert at Swansea’s Brangwyn Hall in February 2009 and is, simply, among the greatest I have ever heard. Ehnes’s technique is impeccable, so strong in fact that there is never a moment in which one notices it rather than the music. In an accompanying interview he responds to a question about ‘the secret of a successful performance’ by saying ‘you mustn’t get into the musical equivalent of stopping to look at every tree and missing the forest ... It’s all about finding the right combination of a large shape and some excruciatingly wonderful moments’. And he does – supremely – and is supported by some equally wonderful orchestral playing, a conductor in total sympathy with the music and Ehnes’s view of it, and, not least, an ideally balanced recording that gives equal weight to both soloist and orchestra. Maybe it was the special circumstances of a memorial concert for a much loved musician – I cannot say – but somehow there is a spirit in this performance that transcends the mere playing of notes. It is as if Elgar himself was silently directing proceedings. Elgar performances do not come better than this, and I urge you to hear it.

The coupling is David Lloyd-Jones’s fine reading of *The Spirit of England*, recorded in The Colosseum, Watford, in February 2006. Astute readers may notice that this is in fact a reissue of the Dutton recording, reviewed enthusiastically and at length by Andrew Neill in the *Journal* of November 2006. This seems to have escaped the notice of the editor of the CD’s booklet, who recommends the Dutton issue as further listening ...

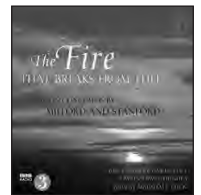
But it is the Violin Concerto that’s essential listening here. I realise that by the time this review appears the July issue of *BBC Music Magazine* will have gone from the shelves, but there is a ‘back issues service’, which can be contacted by telephone at +44 (0)844 826 7350 or by email at bbcmusic@dovetailservices.com.

Richard Wiley

Stanford: Violin Concerto No. 2, Op. 162
Milford: Violin Concerto in G minor, Op. 47
Holst: Walt Whitman Overture, Op. 7

Rupert Marshall-Luck (violin), BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by Owain Arwel Hughes

That enterprising lady Em Marshall-Luck has done it again: the first recordings of two British violin concertos from between the wars. The cover claims these to be their first performances, though the booklet details two broadcasts of the Milford, the last in the 1940s, and a ‘very recent’ public performance of the Stanford. By definition the music is going to be new to orchestra and conductor, and this shows especially in the performance of Holt’s *Walt Whitman* overture of 1899, which I’d not only never heard before but had never heard of before. It is very neatly played, though orchestra and conductor seem content with presenting all the right notes in all the right



EM RECORDS
EMR CD023

places rather than adding that extra touch of flair in pointing and phrasing that would give the performance a much-needed lift. The concertos, of course, have the advantage of a soloist who has lived with the music for rather longer, and with a greater realisation of their potential. The Milford was, in fact, edited by the soloist for publication.

Stanford's second Violin Concerto dates from 1918. His first was written in 1899 for his 'friend Enrique Arbos' and played by Kreisler at the 1904 Leeds Festival, where it was rehearsed by the composer immediately before Elgar took the rostrum to go through *In the South*. Is it too fanciful to imagine in its slow movement and cadenza and in Kreisler's playing the spark for Elgar's own concerto?

The Second Concerto was never orchestrated by Stanford: just abandoned as a completed violin and piano score. It has been orchestrated with considerable acumen by Jeremy Dibble. I can only guess at Stanford's reasons for ceasing work on it, but one may well be a realisation that he had done it all before, and rather better, in 1899. Listen to the ease and flow of Anthony Marwood's magnificent recording (Hyperion, CDA67208) of the First Concerto: by comparison the Second seems rather hard work, laboured even. This impression is not helped, it must be said, by a closeness in the balance of the solo violin which condemns Rupert Marshall-Luck's playing to a pretty constant mezzo-forte. But the concerto fully deserves to be heard and I for one am indebted to all concerned with the production of this disc for making this possible.

Incidentally, by one of the wonders of the internet, a scan of Stanford's violin and piano manuscript may be downloaded, free of charge, from the Petrucci Music Library.

Robin Milford (1903-1959) was the son of Sir Humphrey Milford, founder of the Music Department of the Oxford University Press, and his Violin Concerto dates from 1937. If you were to ask me what the Concerto was like I'd say 'English pastoral with a touch of thunder' but add 'buy it and listen for yourself, and be sure to listen with the well-written essay by the soloist to hand which will keep you on track'. If pressed further to name names, then I'd say 'Finzi with a touch of Vaughan Williams': both great friends of Milford. The performance seems to me to be outstanding, and the most committed of any on the disc. The balance, too, while still favouring the soloist, does not do so at the expense of orchestral detail. To my ears the work has its *longueurs*, and there were times when I wondered whether 'the extensive cuts that are indicated in the manuscript' were being observed: but do not for a moment assume that your ears will react in the same way! If you are interested in British music of the last century – and as a member of the Elgar Society you probably are – then this very attractive disc is most worthy of your consideration.

Martin Bird

Stanford: Mass in G, Op. 46
Parry: from *Songs of Farewell; Jerusalem; Dear Lord and Father of mankind; I was glad* (1911 version)
O'Neill: *Flyht*

Betty Makhariinsky (soprano), Caitlin Goreing (contralto), Tom Castle (tenor), Will Dawes (bass), Tim Muggerridge (organ), The Choir of Exeter College, Oxford, The Stapeldon Sinfonia directed by George de Voil



EM RECORDS

EMR CD021

Knowing, as I hope you do by now, my enthusiasm for all things by that great all-rounder Stanford, you will not be surprised to hear of my immediate attraction to a CD entitled 'Charles Villiers Stanford – Mass in G and other choral works' performed by the Choir of Exeter College, Oxford.

I was in for a double surprise when it arrived: the first was that the Mass was a full-blown orchestral setting (the Stapeldon Sinfonia didn't get a mention in the advertisement), and the second was that the 'other choral works' were not by Stanford (something else that somehow escaped mention).

In the event I was delighted to find that the disc included Parry's *Songs of Farewell*: distinctly less than delighted to find that the last of the six, *Lord, let me know mine end*, was omitted. Why on earth would anyone choose to do that? It's by a country mile the finest of the six, and anyone wanting a recording of the *Songs of Farewell* is not going to buy one that is incomplete. Its inclusion would have taken the disc over the magic 80 minute mark, but that could have been rectified by sacrificing *Jerusalem*, for example, or, dare I say it, Nicholas O'Neill's *Flyht*, a first recording. Now, truly, I've nothing against either Nicholas O'Neill or *Flyht*, which he composed in 2013, but what on earth is it doing on a disc of Stanford and Parry? To me it smacks of programming of the 'I know it's modern and people won't like it, but it's only short and if we slip it in amongst the more familiar stuff it won't be noticed' variety. My objection to its inclusion is not a comment on the quality of the music, but purely because stylistically it slams into the ears, without so much as a 'by your leave', seconds after the gentle conclusion of Stanford's Mass.

But let us consider what we actually have. For starters, we have an absolutely tip-top chamber choir, singing magnificently throughout. I don't think I would ever have bought a disc purely to listen to a Parry hymn, even one I had had at my wedding, but its performance is simply stunning: confident, intelligent and well-balanced singing by a first-rate group who both understand and are able to convey the meaning of the words they are singing. Their conductor, George de Voil, is something of a find, too. He may be young, but his innate musicianship, his feeling for line, for balance, for phrasing, for the placing of chords, is exciting. We'll surely hear much more from this team, and deservedly so.

Stanford's Mass, of which this is the first recording, dates from 1892, when the composer was 40. It is predominantly gentle in feeling – an enticing blend of the contemplative and the pastoral – and was written for liturgical rather than concert use. This gentleness is reinforced by the Stapeldon Sinfonia, budding

professionals from the London music schools and the University of Oxford, who play with a reticence, especially in the small string section, that provides a cushion rather than a sense of direction and purpose in support of the singers.

A flawed disc in many ways, but nevertheless one to which I find myself returning again and again. Bravo to Em Marshall-Luck for her enterprise in promoting it.

Martin Bird



NAXOS

8.573191

Vaughan Williams: Piano Quintet in C minor, *Romance* for Viola and Piano, Quintet in D, Six Studies in English Folk Song

London Soloists Ensemble (Lorraine McAslan (violin), Sarah-Jane Bradley (viola), Karine Georgian (’cello), John Lenehan (piano), Anthony Pike (clarinet)), Chris West (double bass), Tim Jackson (french horn)

This CD was recorded in the Music Room at Champs Hill, Coldwaltham, a mere five miles from Flexham Park and its ‘sad dispossessed trees’. I mention this only because I was struck, in this performance, by the similarity of mood between the first movement of Elgar’s Piano Quintet of 1918 and that of Vaughan Williams, written fifteen years earlier. It is, like the majority of the music on this disc, a relatively early work, and until the late 1990s an embargo was placed on its performance.

It is written, not for string quartet and piano, but for the forces employed by Schubert in the ‘Trout’ (a fact for which many a double bass player will be eternally grateful), and, as the liner note says, reveals ‘a young creative artist attempting to establish his own musical language’. Curious, then, that the affinity of mood with the later Elgar Quintet is so marked. It does mean, however, that those who love the Elgar should also enjoy the Vaughan Williams, especially at Naxos’s modest price. The bass player, too, is modest, coming to the fore only in his few solo passages: the resulting balance means that one rarely hears a firmly grounded chord unless the bottom note is doubled in the left hand of the piano.

The Quintet in D, for violin, ’cello, clarinet, horn and piano, is an even earlier work, dating from 1898. It is light and thoroughly engaging, though one would be hard-pressed to identify its composer – Brahms, for example, seems to have been particularly generous in donating off cuts from the slow movement of the Fourth Symphony.

The lovely *Romance* is beautifully played by Sarah-Jane Bradley, and the delightful ‘Studies in English Folk Song’ are delightfully played in the version for clarinet and piano.

Whilst it must be admitted that the earlier Hyperion double-CD by The Nash Ensemble of all the early chamber works contains more polished performances, better recorded, that set costs nearly four times as much as the present CD, which deserves to be investigated by all who are drawn to Elgar’s Quintet.

Martin Bird

LETTERS

Reaction to ‘Elgar’s Dream Children’

As might be imagined, Lynn Richmond Greene’s article in the April ‘Journal’ generated a considerable and entirely positive response.

From Robin Taylor

I’d like to thank Lynn Richmond Greene for her article in April’s *Journal*.

As well as illuminating it was kind and tactful, and it knocked firmly on the head one or two speculations of mine. It made me more sympathetic to both husband and wife.

Probably like all Elgarians I’ve long believed that amongst the greatest virtues of his music is a deep tenderness, an unsurpassed understanding of the ‘insidest inside’ of the human heart. Now, with some knowledge of perhaps one of its most important sources, I believe it more than ever.

From Richard Abram

Congratulations to Lynn Richmond Greene – and indeed to the *Journal* – on the article about the ‘Dream Children’: a really sustained and brilliant piece of personal and musical detective work; humane and moving, too.

May I add one tiny observation? As Ms Greene says, it is not necessary to know what the initials AWB/Awb actually stand for. But besides the Elgars’ familial use of the language, there are one or two direct pointers in the diary entries (e.g. ‘Braut’, ‘nicht’) that suggest the letters represent German.

I have discussed this point with my long-time German translator Gery Bramall. She makes the possibly brilliant suggestion that the letters stand for ‘Alice wieder Braut’: that is, Alice once more virgin, referring perhaps in part to the blood of the bridal night. (She thought unlikely any direct German equivalent of ‘Alice’s womanly bleeding’.)

From Kevin Allen

No doubt there will be various reactions to the article in the April *Journal*, ‘Elgar’s Dream Children’. For my part it underlines the value and importance of a complete publication of Alice’s writings in prose and verse, towards a greater understanding of the lady herself, and the wider cause of Elgar studies; a project worthy of the Society’s support.

A number of other letters and comments have been received which were not intended for publication. Brief quotations from some of these are given below.

‘I am enormously impressed by her research and scholarship.’

‘This is one of the most important and good things ever to appear in the *Journal*.’

‘The tone is absolutely right and wise.’

‘... a beautifully written piece and one that, perhaps, could only have been written by a woman.’

‘I’ve just finished reading the beautiful essay in your *Journal*, and it gives me a new dimension on Elgar, Alice and Carice ... The meaning behind AWB is very clear to me, even if the exact equivalent in words is not. (I wonder if the W is simply womb). However intimate the story behind this, knowing it throws so much new light on the marriage – and on *Dream Children*.’

From Geoff Sansome

Claines churchyard

Edward Elgar’s links with Claines Church are well known in as much as his maternal grandparents’ grave is in the churchyard. But another link has now been established that brings to life an old story about Elgar.

There are numerous references in Elgar biographies to the time when, as a boy, he would fill his pockets with bread and cheese and go out into the countryside to study musical scores of the great composers such as Beethoven. It has been believed that one of Elgar’s favourite haunts for his score reading was in Claines Churchyard, sitting on a tomb by his grandparents’ grave.

In a letter to ‘Windflower’ from 1910, Alice Elgar says: ‘E. & I have just been out to a fine old Church & seeing the tomb of “Helen Leslie” early last century but E. used to think it a pretty name & used to walk out of the town with a Score perhaps Pastoral Symph. & sit on the stone & read it’

I have been puzzled for years as to the whereabouts of Helen Leslie’s tomb and whether it was at Claines. The graveyard has some fine altar tombs which would be great for sitting on, but none of them provided any clue to Helen Leslie. All the graves were researched and documented in the 1970s also but there was nothing from that time. But over the years some of the tombs have obviously become broken or moved and there was a significant ‘tidy up’ in the 1950s.

Fortuitously a gentleman named Vincent also took some records of Claines churchyard in 1874, and buried away in the Worcestershire Record Office are his notebooks. He made reference to a grave with the name of Leslie on it. On researching this I found that Helen was buried in the family vault of one Reverend Gregory Boraston, Helen’s father, a former Vicar of Broughton Hackett who was buried in Claines in 1851 with his first wife and four of his six children who died before him. Helen, his youngest daughter, died at the age of 16. Originally this was an altar tomb with a large top slab and sides. Only the top slab exists now and this has been laid flat with the ground. It is now very difficult to read, but we can now categorically put some substance behind the tale of Elgar sitting on a tomb in Claines and point to the exact tomb and location.

From John Knowles

Daniel Barenboim and the Elgar Symphonies

In the early days of the London branch, the committee met in EMI’s offices in Wardour Street. I remember one evening Douglas Putney, a member of the committee and EMI’s Classical Promotions Manager, telling us with some amusement that when Daniel Barenboim had been to see them that afternoon to discuss future projects and had suggested that even though his conducting career was in its infancy he would like to make records of the Elgar symphonies, they had responded that he should come back and see them in a few decades when he would have more experience. So it was that within the year Barenboim began his series of Elgar records for CBS with the Second Symphony, its first recording not conducted by Elgar, Boult or Barbirolli. I fancy to suggest that not many would have ventured to suggest in the early 1970s that, four decades on, Barenboim would be recording the Elgar Symphonies for Decca in Berlin, let alone that EMI would no longer exist!

RECORDING NOTES ...

As we have seen, Elgar's first visit to a recording studio (21 January 1914) produced *Carissima*: a modest result by comparison with the mammoth enterprise which preceded it in November 1913 when, for the first time, an eminent, named conductor (Arthur Nikisch) recorded a major work (Beethoven's Fifth) more or less complete and as written and with a famous, named orchestra (the Berlin Philharmonic). But the experimental recording of *Carissima* was considered a success, the record was put on sale and by May 1914 Elgar had been 'signed up' as an exclusive Gramophone Company artiste. He remained with the Gramophone Company (trading as 'HMV') for the rest of his life; he attended functions, made records and on countless paper record sleeves in 1927 he endorsed the latest range of wind-up machines as follows: 'Sir Edward Elgar, O.M., says "Without doubt the most important invention in the history of the Gramophone"'. But this is looking ahead. He had first to prove himself in the studio.

On 26 June 1914, he was driven from Severn House with Lady Elgar to the new studio at Hayes, where five titles were successfully attempted now (as I write) nearly one hundred years ago. Our friends in 'The Symphony Orchestra' were squeezed into the recording room (literally: there is a well known photograph of them posing in the old studio with Sir Edward, smartly turned out in his suit, stiff collar and spats for the *Carissima* session). Elgar won his spurs that day in June, for the blank wax discs they cut were publishable. They did not over-run the space available or 'blast' or fail the 'wear test'; note that mistakes could not be edited out at that time and the records could not even be played back straightaway without rendering them useless. It was first necessary to use the wax recordings to make a metal 'master', from which test pressings could be stamped as required and played *ad lib*.

To modern ears, the first records from this early session have a slow and ponderous feel and must be listened to with indulgence. The first and fourth *Pomp & Circumstance Marches* (2-0511 & 2-0517) are heavily abridged – 'cut' is not strong enough a word – and even *Salut d'amour* (2-0512) seems a little wooden. Still enjoyable are 2-0519 & 2-0530 (*Bavarian Dances* 2 & 3, slightly cut), which were recorded at the end of the session when doubtless all concerned were more relaxed and confident. Nevertheless, it was *Salut d'amour* which first captured my imagination when, at a very young age, I discovered a battered copy in a pile of old 78s which had somehow eluded the salvage drives of two World Wars. These records were later doubled as D179 (the two marches), D180 (*Salut d'amour* and *Chanson de Nuit*) and the *Bavarian Dances* on D175 & D176 (with the first *Bavarian Dance* and *Carissima* respectively). As a newcomer to the dark arts of recording sound by the acoustic process, Elgar had clearly acquitted himself well. He had listened to the advice he was no doubt given, prepared his scores accordingly and achieved publishable results. He would return to all these pieces in the future when electric recording superseded the old process whereby the volume of sound itself cut the recording onto the wax blank, sufficient to register the sonority of the music without overwhelming the gramophones of the day (and causing distortion and premature wear).

Michael Plant

100 YEARS AGO ...

May started much as April had finished: 'Drove to Hendon in aftn. & saw flying'. Nikisch was conducting Wagner at Covent Garden, and Elgar saw *Die Walküre*, *Götterdämmerung*, *Die Meistersinger* and *Lohengrin*. In between he 'painted wall in garden red' and 'painted the drive green like a duck pond – Very nice'. 8 April was 'Our Silver Wedding Day – D.G. for giving these years & for all the constant love – very sweet little day – Sir Philip Burne-Jones to dine – Plate Pool till nearly 1 – A. cooked chocolate for the Co'.

On the 10th Alice and Carice went 'to Queen's Hall in aftn. to hear Grania', and on the 14th all three were in attendance to hear Kreisler play the Violin Concerto: 'Immense audience. Kreisler quite wonderful – & orch very good – A scene of almost unprecedented enthusiasm Kreisler recalled & they wanted E. all the time. At last he came & there were shouts & thunderous applause.' The following day he was 'rather tired after the tension of yesterday' and spent the day 'busy varnishing & writing important letters'.

At the beginning of June he spent a few days in Worcester where the artist Benjamin Leader was given the Freedom of the City. Elgar 'made a speech & wore his booful robes'. After a weekend at The Hut ('Motored there – Lovely drive enjoyed our souses') they went to Canterbury, where on the 19th Elgar conducted a performance of *The Apostles* with the Leeds Choral Union and the LSO. 'The most wonderful music poured out, most touching & overwhelming. Those who came & sat by A. wept ... the most perfect performance – Vast audience, beautiful surroundings & beyond the world music – Audience most visibly deeply impressed ... Frank [Schuster] said it was the greatest musical experience he had ever had.'

At the end of the month Elgar was 'very busy revising scores for Gramophone ... A. helping, till nearly moment of starting with revising, pasting passages &c, on scores – Lovely drive to Hayes lovely day. A. drove on & stopped by a nice hayfield & then on to Hayes Church, sweet old place & village. A. asked in & heard some of the playing & given tea'.

In July Elgar was in Worcester again to rehearse *Gerontius* for the Three Choirs Festival before the family left for their summer holiday in Scotland on the 19th. They visited Oban ('a dull little place') Mull, Iona, Inverness and Gairloch, where 'E. & C. fished all the morning. A. joined them in aftn. Really, dearly, A. found it rather monotonous!'

With August came the outbreak of war: 'Had a telegram saying Germany had declared war against us ... May God preserve us'. They returned to London by the 14th and Elgar volunteered immediately for the Special Constables, being summoned on the 15th to attend 'a short drill at the Drill Hall, Heath St. Hampstead'. Carice volunteered for work with the Red Cross, while 'Mother, full of indignation, embarrassed us by going into the local shops and asking how many recruits they had'.

ISSN 0143-1269

*Printed by
John Price Printers
Brook Street, Bilston
West Midlands, WV14 0NW*