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ELGAR'S TE DEUM & BENEDICTUS

John Winter

[Dr Winter is Senior Lecturer at Trinity College of Music, London. He is a general freelance musician, and holds a PhD from the University of East Anglia on contemporary church music.]

There is arguably no better way to understand a piece of music than to rehearse it thoroughly before performing it. When this rehearsal involves work with an amateur choir the learning process is even greater. This has recently been my experience with Elgar's *Te Deum and Benedictus*, and *Give unto the Lord*, working with a non-auditioned, all-ability choir, teaching virtually every note and explaining every subtlety of rubato. My appreciation of these works' structure is all the greater for this preparation.

Elgar's liturgical music rarely gets a good press. There is barely a reference, and that a derogatory one, in *New Grove*. At best it gets mentioned in passing; at worst it is derided under the label of Victorian triumphalism. Worst of all, apart from *Ave verum corpus*, it is rarely performed.

The *Te Deum and Benedictus* in F, Op 34, dates from 1897, and thus comes not only at the climax of Elgar's 'formative' period, but also at the height of his 'imperialist' style. Op 32 was the *Imperial March*, his first major commission for a London audience, to celebrate Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. Op 33 was *The Banner of St George*, and Op 35, *Caractacus*.

John Allison's book, *Edward Elgar : Sacred Music*,¹ is exceptional in giving due consideration to the lesser-known works and incomplete fragments, along with valuable background to this particular work. Elgar visited G R Sinclair, organist of Hereford Cathedral, on 5 June 1897 and played from the sketches. Percy Hull, assistant organist, recalled that Elgar "was as nervous as a kitten and breathed a huge sigh of relief when Sinclair said : 'It is very very modern, but I think it will do'". A contemporary writer maintained that "it may be argued that the music is not church music, that it is not English music, that it is not good music... But it could never be maintained that there was a 'Te Deum' of like mood and feeling. The introduction is calculated to startle good men and true whose standard is found in the work of English church musicians. The very phrasing of the words is new and alarming..." The critic of the *Morning Post* was to write : "For the most part the music indeed is more suggestive of a war-like song of triumph than an expression of Christian praise and prayer". The overall chromaticism seems to have been contentious; various writers have noted that during the 1890s Elgar had heard many Wagner operas and had visited Bayreuth, but the swagger and jauntiness are surely not Wagnerian - except possibly for *Tannhäuser*. A more likely influence might be Schumann's or Meyerbeer's orchestral works, or perhaps Richard Strauss' early tone poems, but not the Wagner of *Tristan* or *The Ring* which he had heard recently.²

It is not difficult to see why this work is now performed less than it deserves, though Allison is, I feel, somewhat ungenerous in asserting that "certainly it fails to reach the levels Elgar had even then set for himself". Choral Mattins has been superseded in so many churches by the Parish Eucharist, and even in a cathedral service it is rather too long (12½ minutes for the *Te Deum* and 7½ for the *Benedictus*). Nor is its triumphalism entirely suited to modern thinking, although its mood is not dissimilar to those other two contemporary forthright settings still often performed by cathedral choirs - Stanford in **BD** and Ireland

¹ Allison, John : *Edward Elgar - Sacred Music* (The Border Lines Series, 1994). See pp 62-65 for contemporary references to this work.

in F. It is, and was conceived as, a festival piece, written for the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford in 1897. The dedication is to Sinclair, soon to be commemorated in the *Enigma Variations*.

The twenty-bar introduction is quintessential Elgar - forthright and vigorous, based around the q ee rhythm (Ex.1), prominent leaps of a falling seventh in a melody which soon becomes modified both in its harmony and its intervals, and with frequent changes of tempi and dynamics (all of which may easily be overlooked in a performance that is put together hurriedly). A footnote in the vocal score gives authority to omit the first eighteen bars, but apart from the incongruity of starting on a dominant seventh over a dominant pedal, the performance would lose the exposition of the main themes.

Any composer setting the canticles of the Anglican service faces a similar problem to composing the Latin Mass - the irregular verbal phrases and the frequent changes of mood. In Elgar's hands the *Te Deum* falls into four main sections : "We praise Thee, O God.."; "The holy Church.."; "Day by day.."; and "Vouchsafe, O Lord..", though each is thematically interlinked.

The first section contrasts unison statements with harmonic responses and introduces a second main theme (Ex.2), idiomatic in its jauntiness, a motif which often recurs at the heart of the accompaniment.

The rhythm of Ex.1 is modified into the throbbing triplets so often found in Victorian ballads and late nineteenth-century Italian opera, though the effect is offset by the strong unison writing and the precise dotted rhythms heard against it. It is easy to mock some of the other features of late Victoriana - the large number of *sforzandi* and the ubiquitous "swells" at moments of fervour ("Holy, holy, holy") ; the dynamic marking asks the organist to match these "swells" in the bass part, and to add 16 and 32 foot sound to the pedals. This mysterious effect can to some extent remove any feeling of banality; perhaps a more satisfactory answer is also to "place" the changes of chords and enjoy each enharmonic effect.

Allegro maestoso
♩ = 88
f risoluto
molto cres.
fff

Example 1

² Bars 157-160 of the *Te Deum* do bear a striking similarity to Walther's Prize Song in *Die Meistersinger*. See Dennison, Peter : 'Elgar and Wagner', *Music & Letters* 66 (2), pp 93-109, and Allison, *op cit*, pp 65-66.

The section "The holy Church throughout all the world" moves into a faster tempo, a more diatonic style and a less varied rhythm. This passage is perhaps the hardest to unify and it can easily become perfunctory : it does however have the advantage of being rewarding to sing with its counterpoint, and each part's dynamics are carefully marked. The music moves towards that gently swaying style - later summed up in the famous phrase, "like something you hear down by the river" - which one associates

The musical score consists of two systems. The first system shows the vocal line with lyrics: "All the earth doth wor-ship Thee, the Fa-ther ev-er-". The piano accompaniment is in the lower register. The second system continues the vocal line with lyrics: "- last - ing. the Heavens, and all the Powers there - the Heavens, and all the Powers there - To Thee all An - gels cry a-loud, the Heavens, and all the Powers there -". The piano accompaniment continues with complex textures. Dynamics include *f* and *Ped. ad lib*. The score is written in a key with one flat and a 4/4 time signature.

Example 2

with the more tranquil moments of *Caractacus* and other subsequent works. This theme, though short, will return - unexpectedly and effectively - at the end of the canticle (Ex.3).

As I increased work on this section, so my respect for it increased. These short passages which at first seemed so fragmentary, began to fit together as a whole. Brief references to Examples 1 and 2 at "Thou sittest at the right hand of God" help to unify the composition but a feeling of drama can help to bring this music to life, trusting Elgar's dynamics and enjoying his dalliance with unusual chords and changes of key. A descending scale passage, heard in the accompaniment at letter M, might be overlooked, but it becomes increasingly important as the music progresses. This canticle has an accompaniment which is often more important than the vocal lines, and which, between letters O and P steers the music back on course with clear references to Examples 1 and 2.

Thus the way is paved for a joyous unison statement of the words "Day by day we magnify Thee". If there are moments when Elgar is playing to the gallery, as Allison suggests, it is here and the sequential repetition may become a little tedious. The section ends triumphantly, and the two bars before letter R always remind this writer, at least, of the close of the first movement of the Second Symphony.

It would seem natural for the setting to finish there : indeed, these last few verses of the canticle were not in the original text of the Te Deum. Liturgical correctness however demands their inclusion, and Elgar uses as a linking passage the descending scale pattern heard earlier to take the music into this last section. Making the best of what might have been a bad job, he takes both Examples 1 and 2, but treats them in a mood that is completely transformed from the opening; now we have peace and quiet confidence, and in the organ postlude he also - as mentioned earlier - ties up his thematic material with a reference to Ex.3. The setting finishes quietly, fitting in a liturgical framework in which the canticle is but one part.

The image shows a musical score for Example 3, consisting of vocal parts and piano accompaniment. The tempo is marked *Andante*. The score is in 4/4 time and the key signature has one sharp (F#). The vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, and Tenor) enter with the lyrics "When Thou took - est up -" and are marked with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The piano accompaniment features a descending scale pattern in the right hand, marked *dolce.* and *Ped.* (pedal). The score includes triplets and a fermata over the final notes.

Example 3

To all the elegant works Elgar composed in compound time may be added the *Benedictus*, although the vocal writing is in 4/4 against the 12/8 accompaniment. The opening melody recurs throughout the setting, and the beauty of the texture is enhanced by the occasional division of the alto and tenor parts. At letter F, as the mood becomes more animated, Elgar re-introduces Ex.1 from the *Te Deum*, and at letter I Ex.3 returns in F major. The Gloria begins with the same upward dominant sevenths heard before the vocal entry in the *Te Deum* and reprises the music heard there at the words "and we worship Thy name" with the triumphant ending that might be expected in the earlier canticle.

Each work is meticulous in detail - accents, dynamics, tempo changes, etc. If only performers would trust these markings! Elgar's liturgical music may be but a small part of his output, and may not reflect his true greatness as a composer, but it is far finer than much of the church music written by his contemporaries and does not deserve neglect. Perhaps today its cause might be better served by concert performances. There are rewards for audience and performers - and for the conductor!

ONE STORY, TWO VISIONS

Textual Differences between Elgar's and Newman's The Dream of Gerontius

Charles E McGuire

[Charles McGuire is active as a teacher, performer and scholar. In 1998, he completed his Ph.D. in musicology at Harvard University, where he has since taught musicology as a visiting lecturer. A member of the Elgar Society, he currently resides in Washington DC, where he continues to conduct and perform in area ensembles. He is working on a book on the British Sight-Singing movement.]

Hailed as “the finest oratorio by an Englishman,”¹ Edward Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius* signalled a departure from compositional tradition. In choosing to portray a fictional old man's final hours on earth and his soul's subsequent passage to heavenly judgment, Elgar cast away the usual subjects of an episode from the Bible or the exploits of an historical religious figure, such as Joan of Arc or Saint Cecilia. Furthermore, *Gerontius* stands alone among Elgar's four complete oratorios in springing from a finished text, a mystical and devotional poem by Cardinal John Henry Newman.²

Yet the importance of *Gerontius'* text transcends the uniqueness of its subject. Although several scholars have observed Elgar's success in setting Newman's text,³ a careful comparison of the original poem and the finished libretto reveals that Elgar radically altered the philosophical thrust of the poem, shifting the focus of the oratorio away from Newman's vision of the afterlife towards Gerontius as a suffering human figure.⁴ Thus, Elgar downplayed Newman's interpretation of Heaven in favour of foregrounding the poignancy of Gerontius' physical experience. Cardinal Newman's poem was published in 1865 in two instalments in the Catholic magazine *The Month*, gaining immediate popularity. Not only did the poem run through twenty-seven editions in

¹ Diana McVeagh : 'Edward Elgar' in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (ed Stanley Sadie; London, 1980)

² Elgar edited some of the Rev Edward Capel Cure's texts for *Lux Christi* during its composition (Robert Anderson : *Elgar* (New York, 1993) pp 207-208). Elgar compiled his own texts for *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*, continually refining them and even recasting the entire scenario while in the midst of composition. Christopher Grogan provides a description of this process in 'A Study of Elgar's Creative Process in *The Apostles* (Op 49), with Particular Reference to Sc II, "By the Wayside"' (Ph D dissertation, University of London, Royal Holloway & Bedford New College, 1989), esp vol 1, pp 19-48.

³ See, for instance, Elizabeth Jay's 'Newman's Mid-Victorian Dream' in *John Henry Newman : Reason, Rhetoric and Romanticism*, edited by David Nicholls and Fergus Kerr, OP (Carbondale and Edwardsville, 1991) p 229; and Percy Young: *Elgar, Newman and The Dream of Gerontius in the Tradition of English Catholicism* (Aldershot and Brookfield, 1995) p 97.

⁴ Within musicological literature, only a short article by John Stasny and Byron Nelson mentions the differences between Elgar's and Newman's texts, tersely stating that Elgar made alterations to avoid “the theological animus of the primarily Protestant audience in Birmingham”. However, this article only lists a few changes and does not discuss them in any detail. ^{4(cont)} See Stasny and Nelson's 'From Dream to Drama : The Dream of Gerontius by John Henry Newman and Edward Elgar' in *Renascence*, vol 43, no 1-2 (Fall 1990/Winter 1991) p 125.

⁵ Young, *op cit*, p 97.

England before Newman's death in 1890, but it found admirers on the Continent, where it was translated into French by 1869 and German by 1885.⁵ In the latter part of the 1880s, the poem gained romantic currency when General Charles Gordon read and annotated a copy of it before his death at Khartoum in January 1886.⁶ Two years later, when Elgar married Alice Roberts, Father Thomas Knight presented the couple with a copy of the poem which included General Gordon's annotations.⁷ It was therefore natural for Elgar to turn to the poem for inspiration when he decided not to compose an oratorio about the Apostles for the 1900 Birmingham Music Festival.

While Elgar's oratorio did not become immediately popular, it survived its disastrous English premiPre to find success at the 1901 Lower Rhine Festival in Düsseldorf, and subsequently gained acceptance across England during the next few years. By 1910, *Gerontius* had secured its place as part of the English festival repertory, and was frequently heard throughout the world, with regular performances in Germany and North America.⁸ August Jaeger, Elgar's friend and an agent of the publishing firm Novello, was instrumental in first introducing *Gerontius* to the public, writing an analysis for it that adopted Hans von Wolzogen's system of listing leitmotifs and their recurrences.⁹

Consequently, most discussions of *Gerontius* have limited themselves to two features of the composition's origin. First, many biographical studies have concentrated on the composition's initial failure to win public approval at Birmingham. Critiques of *Gerontius* have only recently addressed the wider issues of its context.¹⁰ Second, while the efficacy of Jaeger's thematic system is still debated, it continues to frame most of the analyses of *Gerontius*, as well as Elgar's later oratorios, *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*.¹¹

A similarly limited viewpoint has characterized studies of Newman's poem. Today, the poem is little known apart from its connection to Elgar's oratorio. Although its popularity persisted in England and America until the 1930s, the poem's hold on the public and scholarly imagination has sufficiently

⁶ Robert Anderson's foreword to *The Dream of Gerontius, Op 38* (London, 1992) p iii. A copy with Gordon's annotations was released in 1889, edited by William Axon, who believed the annotations were made the night before Gordon's death. See the introduction to Axon's *On General Gordon's Copy of Newman's 'Dream of Gerontius'* (Manchester, 1889).

⁷ Percy Young : John Henry Newman, Edward Elgar and *The Dream of Gerontius*' (Occasional Paper No 1, The University of Birmingham Institute for Advanced Research in the Humanities, 1991) p 14.

⁸ By 1906, according to the cuttings files at the Elgar Birthplace (vols 6-9, ref. nos 1327-30), *Gerontius* was heard at least once in New York, Chicago, Cincinnati, San Francisco, Montreal and Minneapolis.

⁹ August Jaeger : *The Dream of Gerontius : Book of Words with Analytical and Descriptive Notes* (London, 1901; reprint, 1974). Jaeger also wrote analyses of both *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*, published in 1903 and 1906 respectively. Wolzogen initially developed the system of naming leitmotifs as an analytic aid and guide to Wagner's later operas.

¹⁰ Even these studies deal predominantly with biographical issues, discussing the construction of *Gerontius* only briefly. See, for instance, Young 1995 and Young 1991, as well as Byron Adams' 'The Dark Saying of the Enigma : Homoeroticism and the Elgarian Paradox'. This paper was originally delivered at the 1995 meeting of the American Musicological Society in New York, and will be published shortly.

¹¹ To date, the most detailed critique concerning Jaeger's analyses of all three compositions occurs in Grogan 1989, esp Appendix ii, 'An assessment of the Elgar-Jaeger relationship during

diminished in more recent years that major Newman biographies typically allude to it only in passing, if at all.¹² Hence, Newman's careful efforts with "Gerontius" both to evoke a vivid vision of the afterworld as well as to convey the crucial elements of his theological beliefs are now generally overlooked. As a consequence, little attention has focused upon the differences between Newman's poem and Elgar's libretto.

To show the marked differences between Elgar's and Newman's versions of "Gerontius," this essay will first briefly examine the themes and general construction of Newman's poem. A review of Elgar's libretto will then analyse the ways the composer altered the subject of the poem, discussing the wider implications of several of Elgar's detailed text alterations. This inquiry reveals that while Elgar did not intend to represent Newman's "Gerontius" faithfully, his alterations left the libretto focused on the human character of Gerontius himself, rather than the overarching celestial framework of Newman's poem.

General characteristics of Newman's poem

"Gerontius" is a contemplative work. The poem concerns the feelings and impressions of a dying man

1903 and 1906, and its bearing on Jaeger's Analytical Notes on *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*', vol 2, pp 27-44, and his article "My Dear Analyst": Some Observations on Elgar's Correspondence with A J Jaeger regarding the Apostles Project' in *Music & Letters* vol 72, no 1 (February 1991), pp 48-60. Grogan takes the position that Elgar did not use themes in the leitmotiv-like fashion which Jaeger describes in his analyses. The opposite position is briefly expressed by Michael Foster in *Elgar's Gigantic Work: The Story of the Apostles Trilogy* (London, 1995) esp pp 46-47. For another view, see the present author's 'Epic Narration: The Oratorios of Edward Elgar' (Ph D thesis, Harvard University, 1998) esp pp 159-173, 202-209, and 255-273.

¹² For instance, in Ian Ker's *John Henry Newman: A Biography* (Oxford, 1988), "Gerontius" is referred to three times. The most detailed passage (pp 574-576) briefly mentions its concern with Purgatory, and concentrates on its lasting popularity due to Elgar's setting. Such brief discussions of "Gerontius" are largely due to the fact that most think Newman's prose works overshadow his poetry (see John K Ryan's article 'Maker and Thinker' in *American Essays for the Newman Centennial*, edited by Ryan and Edmond Darvil Bernard; Washington DC, 1947, p 73) and that the poems are "for the most part... attached to passing moods and particular events" (Roger Sharrock, 'Newman's Poetry' in *Newman after a Hundred Years*, ed Ian Ker and Alan G Hill (Oxford, 1990) p 43).

¹³ Sharrock, *op cit*, p 54.

¹⁴ Jay, *op cit*, pp 219-221.

¹⁵ See Sharrock, *op cit*, p 54 and Stasny and Nelson, *op cit*, p 121.

¹⁶ Gerontius' name is traditionally interpreted as a generic Greek word meaning "Old man". Jay, however, notes that since Newman was well-versed in the classics, he "would never have produced so hybrid a form. The source [of Gerontius' name] seems rather to have been the fourth-century Bishop Gerontius of Nicomedia whom the Church authorities attempted to depose on account of the scandal caused by his recounting the tales of his strange dreams" (Jay, *op cit*, pp 219-220).

¹⁷ Julius Gliebe: *Cardinal Newman's 'Dream of Gerontius' With Introduction and Commentary: For Use in High Schools, Academies and Colleges* (New York, 1916) p 14.

and his introduction to Heaven. Newman may have written "Gerontius" as a semi-autobiographical and self-comforting gesture, to allay fears of his own imminent demise.¹³ Elizabeth Jay regards the poem as a conscious attempt to use prevalent contemporary death-bed imagery as an allegory for conversion from Protestantism to Catholicism, responding to a burgeoning Victorian interest in eschatology.¹⁴ As a vision of the afterworld, "Gerontius" presents the four last things - death, judgment, Hell and Heaven - in a way that makes them seem timeless, natural and even comforting, while incorporating a personalized interpretation of the Office for the Dead as well as a wholly Catholic vision of Purgatory.¹⁵ Gerontius himself is an "Everyman," placed in an incredible situation but still easily identifiable by the reader.¹⁶

The poem is divided into seven sections, each with a central thematic idea, which Julius Gliebe termed paragraphs.¹⁷ The first paragraph occurs on earth, portraying Gerontius' last hours of mortal life. Accompanying Gerontius in this paragraph are Assistants (perhaps minor clerics or servants) and a Priest. In paragraph 2, Gerontius awakes as a Soul, borne to Heaven by an Angel (presumably his Guardian Angel). Paragraph 3 continues with the first dialogue between the Soul and the Angel, revealing that Gerontius is speeding to his Judgment. Paragraph 4 introduces demons which threaten the Soul, but are shown as ineffectual. Paragraph 5 presents five choirs of Angelicals that surround God. Each choir articulates one mystery of the Catholic faith. In paragraph 6, God judges the Soul, following a plea from the Angel of the Agony, the angel present during Christ's Agony in the Garden of Gethsemane, who functions as a general representative for all souls. After the Judgment, the Soul is "Consumed, yet quickened by the glance of God" and cries for release to Purgatory. The Angel places the Soul in Purgatory in the seventh paragraph, and then bids it farewell, though promising a quick return to bear it to Heaven. Thus, each paragraph contains a separate subject that comments on one of the four last things, with the addition of Purgatory.

Newman's 900-line poem is constructed of lyrical and descriptive passages, providing for an easy musical setting.¹⁸ The lyrical passages of "Gerontius" contain rhymed couplets or paired rhymed couplets and lines of six, seven or eight syllables. The poem's descriptive texts are lines of mostly ten syllables (or sometimes pairs of lines alternating ten and six syllables), using iambic pentameter and not necessarily having any stable rhyme scheme at all.¹⁹ Newman fashioned these texts to identify and distinguish characters, writing some texts for individuals and others for groups.

In Newman's hands, the first paragraph of the poem, which shows Gerontius' last hours on earth, offers

¹⁸ Young sees this as a manifestation of Newman's own musical abilities. See Young, 1991, p 8.

¹⁹ Portions of the ten-syllable "recitative" lines are arranged as rhymed couplets, such as Gerontius' first iteration in Paragraph 1, lines 1-28. Even here, though, the scheme is fractured slightly. Line 17 does not rhyme with line 19. A sense of cohesion is also added to these passages since some of the couplets overlap - the same ending rhyme used several times throughout the passage.

²⁰ For a brief analysis of the comparison of "Gerontius" to Dante's *Inferno*, see Jay, *op cit*, p 220.

²¹ John Henry Newman, *The Dream of Gerontius* (sixteenth edition; London, Burns & Oates, etc, 1865) lines 654 and 656.

²² Elgar certainly believed that Gerontius was a universal representation of humanity. In an off-quoted letter to Jaeger, written approximately 28 August 1900, Elgar stated that he believed Gerontius "to be a man like us, not a Priest or a Saint, but a sinner, a repentant one of course but still no end of a worldly man in his life, & now brought to book". Letter transcribed in Jerrold

a broad introduction to the remaining paragraphs. At 169 lines, this paragraph comprises almost a fifth of "Gerontius." The function of this paragraph is twofold. First, it presents Gerontius as an aged Everyman. His prayers show that he desires the expected release of death. But he also fears it: on two occasions in this paragraph, Gerontius specifically mentions his own visions of Hell (lines 17-27, 111-125). Only in retrospect (after ingesting paragraph 4) does the reader understand that Hell and its demons are wholly ineffectual. Consequently, the second function of this paragraph is to show that Gerontius cannot fully comprehend the afterworld. While Gerontius' prayers and those of his Assistants propel him towards Judgment, the realm of Heaven is so complex that his understanding requires the aid of an immortal, the Angel.²⁰

During paragraphs 2-5, the Angel explains aspects of Heaven to Gerontius' Soul as a patient master instructs a student. These four paragraphs make up the bulk of the poem. In the two longest paragraphs of the poem, the demons deliver their curses and false statements and the Angelicals sing their choruses. Through these choruses, the Angel explains the history of religion to the Soul: the battle of good triumphing over evil; the religious education of humanity (who, "taught by angel-visitations... learn'd to call upon His name")²¹; why Judgment is essential for all souls; and the necessity of Christ's sacrifice. Such is the focus of Newman's poem: ultimately to allay the fear of death, revealing that God's love, as represented by the Angels, embraces all in mercy. The narrative frame of Gerontius' Soul moving through this realm towards its Judgment (in the final two paragraphs of the poem) is ultimately not as important as the lessons taught throughout the journey.

Elgar's redaction of Newman's text

In contrast, Elgar constructed his libretto to avoid the lessons of paragraphs 2-5, centring instead on Gerontius' journey because it made a stronger characterization of the Everyman possible.²² Although Elgar followed Newman's divisions between descriptive and lyric text²³ the broad architecture of their visions differs. Elgar devoted the entire first part of his oratorio to the earthly first paragraph of Newman's poem, while compressing paragraphs 2-7 into the second part. Elgar cut 470 lines from the poem, mostly Angelic descriptions of Heaven, and further shifted the balance of the original poem by selectively excising lines that dealt largely with Heaven and Gerontius' fear of Hell. Hence, *Gerontius'* first part sets 139.5 lines; the second 290.5. In the poem, there are about four lines in the paragraphs describing Heaven for every line devoted to earth. Elgar's redaction reduced the ratio to about two lines for Heaven for every line about earth, cutting only 29.5 of the lines from the first paragraph, while deleting 440.5 lines from those paragraphs set for the second part. For Elgar to have kept constant proportions between Heaven and earth, he would have had to cut about 67 more lines from the first part.

Northrop Moore's *Elgar and His Publishers : Letters of a Creative Life* (Oxford and New York, 1987) vol 1, p 228. Underlined emphasis mine.

²³ Elgar sets most of the ten-syllable iambic pentameter lines in "Quasi Recit.", a common appellation throughout the last three oratorios. In *Gerontius*, Quasi Recit. sections are characterised by a continuously shifting rhythmic and orchestrational structure, supported at points by reminiscence themes. Elgar sets the lyrical sections as either arias or choruses, depending on how many characters state them. In the solo lyrical sections, the thematic structure shifts function and purpose : themes are periodic, repeated, sometimes curtailed and in differing orders, but continuously present. Elgar uses a variety of chordal means to portray the ensemble lyric sections, including imitative polyphony, homophony, and Anglican chant.

²⁴ Elgar made two excisions in this paragraph probably to avoid repetition. Both name saints and

Similarly, Elgar deleted lines in the first part which detailed Gerontius' fear of Hell²⁴:

Pray for me, O my friends; a visitant
Is knocking his dire summons at my door,
The like of whom, to scare me and to daunt,
Has never, never come to me before;
[Tis death,—O loving friends, your prayers! - 'tis he! ...
As though my very being had given way,
As though I was no more a substance now,
And could fall back on naught to be my stay,
(Help loving Lord! Thou sole Refuge, Thou,)
And turn no whiter, but must needs decay
And drop from out the universal frame
Into that shapeless, scopeless, blank abyss,
That utter nothingness, of which I came:
This is it that has come to pass in me;
O horror! this it is, my dearest, this;]
So pray for me, my friends, who have not strength to pray.²⁵

By removing these lines, Elgar centred the passage upon Gerontius' physical feelings ("as though my very being had given way"), de-emphasized the figure of Death, and removed completely a mention of Hell. While Death received a mention in the lines Elgar included from this passage ("a visitant/Is knocking his dire summons at my door"), Elgar eliminated the specific naming of the figure (line 16), as well as his powers (lines 17-19 and 21-24), since the audience does not hear Gerontius' twin fears of Death's negation and being installed in Hell. True, later in the part, Elgar included a passage that refers to negative images of Death - the demons heard in Part II. At the outset of the oratorio, however, Elgar's

biblical personages to whom Gerontius and his Assistants pray, including Susanna, Abraham, Isaiah and Lot, as well as Saints Peter, Paul, and Andrew (Newman's lines 33-35 and parts of 132-144). These litanies are easily removed, since Elgar left similar ones intact in other parts of the movement.

²⁵ Newman, *op cit*, lines 12-28. Square brackets - in this example and the remaining ones - indicate those lines Elgar omitted.

²⁶ The second excision, Newman's lines 111-118, is much the same. It mentions a specific fear of Hell.

²⁷ Newman, *op cit*, lines 616-627.

²⁸ By removing this particular section, Elgar also avoided a possible avenue of theological attack. The passage vividly describes an opulent Heaven, which may have been insulting to some members of Elgar's predominantly Protestant audience. See Stasny and Nelson, *op cit*, pp 121-125.

²⁹ For a more complete definition of *tableaux entendus* and their relation to the narrative structure of *Gerontius*, see McGuire, *op cit*, esp pp 177-187.

³⁰ The 145.5 excised lines include two lengthy passages (Newman's lines 178-185 and 190-223) of the Soul describing its feelings of confusion upon entering Heaven; a passage in which the Soul first notes the Angel's presence and the Angel describes the human condition (lines 260-319); and one where the Angel explains some of the mechanics of Heaven (337-364).

³¹ The line numbers are taken from Newman's poem.

Gerontius thinks less of his spiritual health and more of his physical.²⁶

Elgar's excisions from the second part further diminished the force of Newman's interpretation of Heaven, Purgatory and descriptions of the Soul's experience. For example, in one omitted section, the Angel outlines the construction of the Heavenly realm :

We now have pass'd the gate, and are within
The House of Judgment; [and whereas on earth
Temples and palaces are form'd of parts
Costly and rare, but are all material,
So in the world of spirits naught is found,
To mould withal and form into a whole,
But what is immaterial; and thus
The smallest portions of this edifice,
Cornice, or frieze, or balustrade, or stair,
The very pavement is made up of life -
Of holy, blessed, and immortal beings,
Who hymn their Maker's praise continually.]²⁷

Elgar retained the narrative section of the passage, which portrays the location of the Soul and Angel in Heaven ("within/The House of Judgment") as well as their motion. The deleted section illuminates Newman's interpretation of the inner workings of Heaven, presented through a binary difference between physical religion (rich, earthly temples) and the transcendent (Heaven). Newman's Heaven is constructed wholly of energy from life and music. Because of Elgar's omission, the audience concentrates more on the Soul and its questions during its passage, instead of noticing the beauty of Newman's carefully detailed Heaven itself.²⁸

Textual differences manifested within Elgar's musical structure

Such broad excisions abound in the compressed libretto of the second part, as Elgar omitted over 60% of the lines from these paragraphs. In each case, the omission focuses the narrative upon Gerontius' Soul, forgoing a discussion of the majesties of Heaven or an Angelic interpretation of history. *Gerontius'* musical structure further reflects Elgar's transformation of Newman's focus. In the new internal divisions Elgar laid on to paragraphs 2-7 of the poem, he rearranged certain texts and restructured the Soul's climactic Judgment.

²⁶ Elgar omits two of the Soul's lines and six and a half lines of the Angel's statement from the duet. The Angel's lines are problematic from a religious standpoint, as they provide a *deus ex machina* for the Soul's Judgment occurring at the present moment of the poem, rather than at Armageddon. Newman's reasoning, that Judgment occurs twice for all - first rehearsed "Upon his death" and then again on "That day of doom/ one and the same for the collected world" - would not sit well with most late nineteenth-century English Christians, who awaited a mass Judgment at the end of time.

³³ Newman, *op cit*, lines 593-595

³⁴ Another change Elgar made throughout this tableau is the naming of the Angelicals. In the vocal

First, Elgar condensed Newman's paragraphs 2-7 into four scenes of dialogue between the Angel and Soul, each of which culminates in a chorus or duet. Table 1, below, provides a list of these scenes. In the initial scene, the Angel introduces the Soul to some of the basic mysteries of Heaven. The remaining three scenes are *tableaux entendus*, or "heard pictures": in a series of dialogues with the Soul, the Angel explains differing aspects of the afterlife.²⁹ The choruses of Angelicals and Demons become the scenery which the Angel describes to the Soul during the journey to Judgment. Although this mechanism appears in Newman's poem, Elgar's realization conveys two additional ideas: first, the motion of the Angel and Soul as they pass in review of the Heavenly scenes, and second, a finer sense of climax at the end of each division.

TABLE 1: Scenes in Elgar's *The Dream of Gerontius*, Part II.

SCENE NO.	CUE NOS:	TYPE
	1 - 4	Instrumental introduction
1.	4 - 28	Soul and Angel first speak
	29 - 32	Transition
2.	32 - 55	Demons' tableau
3.	55 - 101	Angelicals' tableau
	101 - 102	Transition
4.	102 - 137	Judgment tableau

To accomplish this effect, Elgar condensed Newman's second and third paragraphs into the first scene of the second part (figs 4-28). In Newman's poem, paragraph 3 commenced with the Soul becoming conscious in Heaven, hearing the Angel for the first time. The Soul and the Angel do not speak until paragraph 3, when the Soul initially questions the Angel about Heaven's aspects. To compress these paragraphs into a single scene, Elgar omits 145.5 of Newman's 229 lines, setting only about a third of the original material.³⁰ In its place, Elgar adds a duet (figs 27-28) constructed from two passages Newman stated in a linear progression (Table 2), thereby producing a climactic moment. Elgar places the second half of the Soul's statement (lines 370-373) with the Angel's lines 385-389.³² This changes the meaning of the Soul's words. Originally, lines 370-373 explained why the Soul asked the Angel about its Judgment, fleshing out lines 365-366 ("Dear Angel, say, /Why have I now no fear at meeting Him?"). In

score libretto, Elgar refers to this body only as the Choir of Angelicals. In Newman's poem, there are five such choirs plus an additional chorus of Angels of the Sacred Stair - the last Elgar omitted entirely. See the vocal score of *The Dream of Gerontius* (London, 1900) p vii.

³⁵ Newman, *op cit*, lines 837-848

³⁶ Jaeger suggested the climax to Elgar in a letter written on 14-15 April 1900, before he had

Elgar's version, the Soul's lines assert its freedom from fear. Again, the change shifts focus away from mechanics of explanation to Gerontius' character.

Second, Elgar gave the *tableaux entendus* a sense of immediacy and motion by rearranging several entrances of the Angelicals' choruses. At the opening of Newman's fifth paragraph, the Angel introduced the First Choir of Angelicals with the words "Hark to those sounds/They come of tender beings angelical,/Least and most childlike of the sons of God."³³ Only after the Angel completed this introduction did Newman's Angelicals speak. In contrast, Elgar juxtaposes the entrances of the Angel and the Choir (figs 61-63; Example 1), a construction that underlines the movement of the Angel and Soul through Heaven. In Elgar's version, the Angel's narrative statement is split into two sections. Initially, the Choir begins singing before the Angel describes its sound, as if the Angel and Soul approach it from a distance. After an intervening couplet from the Choir, the Angel finishes its narration. This overlap casts the entrance of the Angelicals as an introduction to the Angel's narrative, a shift of focus that the textural changes in this section also heighten. The Angelicals state their first two lines in a four-part texture, which decreases to two parts on a sustained third in the fifth bar of the example, so that the Angel's one-bar description is easily heard. After the Angel's first description, Elgar sets the second couplet of the Angelicals' verse in a full six-voice texture for five bars (not seen in the example). This, too, ends with only two parts on a sustained pitch (an A; bars 471-2), whereupon the Angel completes its narrative statement, while the Angelicals reiterate the first line of their verse. When the Angel ends the narration (fig 63), the Angelicals sing the remaining verses of the chorus uninterrupted. The main achievement of this juxtaposition is a detailed sonic picture: the Angel and Soul approach the Choir of Angelicals as if from afar, react to it, and finally hear it in full as they pass it. Such shifting of text to express motion is present throughout the entire tableau.³⁴

In his final and most drastic complex of alterations, Elgar imported words from the first paragraph into the sixth, deleted the Angel's narration of the moment of Judgment, and shifted the moment of Judgment itself. Within the Judgment tableau, just as the Soul announces it will appear before its judge, the chorus of Assistants on earth is invoked ("Voices from Earth"), praying for the Lord's mercy (figs 114-115). The two lines the Assistants sing do not appear in Newman's poem, instead being drawn from lines 50-51 of the first paragraph. Earlier in both the libretto and the poem, the Soul referred to those voices, just before the Angel of the Agony began its plea (line 816 of Newman's poem; fig 103 in Elgar's score). Elgar's insertion of these lines makes the earlier reference explicit and provides the first moment of delay before the climax.

However, Newman did not return to the reference, as Elgar does. Instead, at the moment of Judgment, Newman's Soul stated a startled "Ah! ..." and then the poem turned immediately to the Angel's reaction, "Praise to His name" :

Praise to His name!

[The eager spirit has darted from my hold,
And, with the intemperate energy of love,

actually seen Elgar's first rendition of the scene. See the transcription in Moore, *op cit*, vol 1, p 174.

³⁷ Letter from Elgar to Jaeger, 17 April 1900 (in Moore, *op cit*, vol 1, p 175). Editorial emendations Moore's.

³⁸ Letter from Jaeger to Elgar, 15 June 1900 (in Moore, *op cit*, vol 1, p 198)

³⁹ Moore, *op cit*, vol 1, pp 201-209.

TABLE 2 : Newman's paragraphs 2-3
 compared to Elgar's mvt. II, scene 1 (excerpt).

LINE ³¹	CHAR	NEWMAN'S TEXT	ELGAR'S TEXT
364 365 370	Soul	<p style="text-align: right;">Dear Angel, say,</p> Why have I now no fear of meeting Him? Along my earthly life, the thought of death And judgment was to me most terrible. I had it aye before me, and I saw The Judge severe e'en in the Crucifix. Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled; And at this balance of my destiny, Now close upon me, I can forward look With a serenest joy.	<p style="text-align: right;">Dear Angel, say,</p> Why have I now no fear of meeting Him? Along my earthly life, the thought of death And judgment was to me most terrible.
373 375 380 385	Angel	<p style="text-align: right;">It is because</p> Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not fear, Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so For thee the bitterness of death is past. Also, because already in thy soul The judgment is begun. That day of doom, One and the same for the collected world That solemn consummation for all flesh, Is, in the case of each, anticipate Upon his death; and, as the last great day In the particular judgment is rehearsed, So now too, ere thou comest to the Throne, A presage falls upon thee, as a ray Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot. That calm and joy uprising in thy soul Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense, And heaven begun.	<p style="text-align: right;">It is because</p> Then thou didst fear, that now thou dost not fear, Thou hast forestalled the agony, and so For thee the bitterness of death is past. Also, because already in thy soul The judgment is begun.
385 386 387 388 389 370 371 372 373	Angel with Soul		A presage falls upon thee, as a ray Straight from the Judge, expressive of thy lot. That calm and joy uprising in thy soul Is first-fruit to thee of thy recompense, And heaven begun. Now that the hour is come, my fear is fled; And at this balance of my destiny, Now close upon me, I can forward look With a serenest joy.

Flies to the dear feet of Emmanuel;
 But, ere it reach them, the keen sanctity,
 Which with its effluence, like a glory, clothes
 And circles round the Crucified, has seized,
 And scorch'd, and shrivell'd it; and now it lies
 Passive and still before the awful Throne.]
 O happy, suffering soul! for it is safe,

Newman's Angel narrated the Soul's entire experience to the reader from the time that it moved away from the Angel's protection until God ("the keen sanctity"—the presence around Christ) caused it to shrivel and burn. This climax presumably occurred immediately before this speech: the Soul stated its amazed "Ah!" and the Angel narrated it either contemporaneously or immediately thereafter. Elgar, on the other hand, has his Angel state only selections of Newman's lines beginning with the same "Praise to His Name," and continuing with "O happy suffering soul! for it is safe,/Consumed, yet quicken'd, by the glance of God," excising eight lines.

From the correspondence between Elgar and Jaeger concerning this scene, it is obvious that both carefully considered its proper dramatic resolution. Jaeger asked Elgar to include a musical climax at the moment of the Soul's Judgment.³⁶ Elgar responded that such was impossible, since Newman did not include such a climax :

Please remember that none of the 'action' takes place in the presence of God: I would not have tried that neither did Newman[.] The Soul says 'I go before my God'-but we don't [—] we stand outside-I've thrown over all the 'machinery' for c[e]lestial music, harps, &c.³⁷

After he saw the short-score draft of the scene, Jaeger again asked Elgar to consider some sort of a culmination.³⁸ Elgar at first refused, but eventually gave in, composing an orchestral climax based on the Prelude's "Judgment" theme.³⁹

However, it is clear from Newman's poem, which includes both a climax and an explanation of it, that Elgar's initial refusal to provide one was poetic licence on his part. The lack of climax diffused the strict narrative of Newman's vision and ultimately worked to build a more character-driven dramatic moment. In Newman's poem, the Angel's account of the Soul's Judgement defined the Soul simply as another part

⁴⁰ Stasny and Nelson note the occurrence of this climax, but do not discuss the importance of Elgar's shifting it. See Stasny and Nelson, *op cit*, pp 125 and 132.

⁴¹ Elgar's first draft of the Judgment scene also contains some of these delaying elements. The original proofs are reproduced in Moore, *op cit*, pp 192-197. Instead of immediately moving to the Soul's statement of "Take me away" after the Angel finishes its abbreviated speech, Elgar postponed the Soul's reaction through the interpolation of a nineteen-bar Chorus of Souls taken from the later proclamations of Newman's "Souls in Purgatory", lines 871-874. Only after does the Soul react to its Judgment. In the final version of *Gerontius*, Elgar returned the chorus of "Souls in Purgatory" to Newman's original location.

Elgar, *Gerontius* : overlapping entrance of the Angel
and Angelicals - Part II, scene 3, fig 61.

Angel

SA semi-chorus

SA chorus

Praise to the Ho-li-est in the height, and_

praise_ praise to the

Hark to those sounds!_

in the depth be praise: In all His words most_

Ho - li - est, praise

of the structure of Heaven. Just as the Angel narrated Newman's vision of demons, angels and heavenly architecture to the Soul, the Angel's narration of the Judgement and its subsequent results inserts the Soul into that realm and detracts from the Soul's individual characterization. Consequently, by omitting the Angel's description, Elgar increases the emphasis on the Soul itself. Other details he changed in this scene underline Elgar's desire to forward this point. Elgar omits the Soul's startled "Ah," deleting a moment of surprise and instead, leaves the audience only with the tremulous "I go before my judge" which builds a sense of final expectation. Rather than moving directly to the Angel's narrative statements as Newman did, Elgar instead incorporates the chorus of "Voices from Earth," singing lines from the poem's first paragraph, as a method of prolonging the dramatic moment. The moment is further extended as Elgar places the entire orchestral climax - the musical moment of the Soul's Judgment - only after the Angel states the lines "O happy suffering." This transforms the Angel's statement from a narrative about Judgment to an enigmatic utterance, which makes the moment of judgment more mysterious and dramatic.⁴⁰ Immediately after the thunderous orchestral climax, the Soul sings its final, pleading statement, "Take me away." The result of Elgar's changes in this scene is that the Soul's plea is much

more poignant than if it had been mediated and explained by the Angel. The rearrangement of this section ultimately shows that Elgar was not afraid to change a number of basic elements of Newman's structure for the sake of his vision of the drama.⁴¹

The changes Elgar made to Newman's poem do not detract from *The Dream of Gerontius*. Rather, they present a different version of the events the poem described. By carefully excising and rearranging the poem's text, Elgar portrayed Gerontius' character much more directly and movingly than Newman did. Such a focus on the humanity of his characters is a hallmark of Elgar's oratorios, beginning with the Blind Man in *Lux Christi* and continuing through the presentations of Judas and Mary Magdalene in *The Apostles*. In Elgar's hands, therefore, the audience's vision shifted from contemplating Gerontius' celestial surroundings to his own death and Judgment. *The Dream of Gerontius* became the audience's dream about Gerontius.

ELGAR AND QUEEN MARY'S DOLLS' HOUSE

David Bury

As the Great War drew to a close, Elgar was sunk in depression. On 5 November 1918 he replied to a request from Binyon that he set an Ode about peace :

I do not feel drawn to write peace music somehow - if anything could draw me your poem would, but the whole atmosphere is too full of complexities for me to feel music to it : not the atmosphere of the poem but of the time I mean.¹

In April 1920 there came Alice's death - the slow movement of the Quartet her graveside requiem. Elgar's career had begun what Michael Kennedy calls its "long and slow diminuendo", likening Elgar's existence to a passage in *Antony and Cleopatra* : "The music, ho! - Let it alone; let's to billiards".² Literally to billiards at Severn House - except that Severn House itself was up for sale and by September 1921 he was preparing to leave. Earlier, in August, he had left Brinkwells for the last time; while Carice's engagement in March of the same year presaged increased loneliness. She married Samuel Blake in January 1922.

On 22 October 1921 Elgar wrote a remarkable and petulant letter to Troyte Griffith.³ Troyte, of course, was an architect and Elgar's letter was concerned in part with the greatest architect of the day, Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens.

I can't make Lutyens out : he seems to advertise more than ever. I had a circular asking me to contribute a microscopic MS to help furnish a Doll's House Castle, or something, wh: he designs to present to the Queen - Everybody is being asked to contribute a work of art (miniature) or piece of furniture for this senseless scheme - I refused tout court -

That Elgar was greatly affronted at the Dolls' House approach is confirmed by the fact that he was still losing no opportunity - indeed availing himself of totally inappropriate opportunity - to complain several months later. Siegfried Sassoon recalls in his diary (8 June 1922) making up a party at Schuster's Thames-side retreat, 'The Hut' at Bray, in early June 1922 (in fact Sunday 4th).⁴ Elgar was present and "delivered himself of a petulant tirade which culminated in a crescendo climax of rudeness aimed at Lady Maud [Warrender]; 'I started with nothing, and I've made a position for myself! We all know that the King and Queen are incapable of appreciating anything artistic; they've never asked for the full score of my Second Symphony to be added to the library at Windsor. But as the crown of my career I'm asked to contribute to a DOLLS' HOUSE for the QUEEN! I've been a monkey-on-stick for you people long enough. Now I'm getting off the stick. I wrote and said that I hoped they wouldn't have the impertinence to press the matter any further. I consider it an insult for an artist to be asked to mix himself up in such nonsense".

Elgar was backed up by Robert Nicholls (1893-1944) a minor poet on leave from his appointment as Professor of English Literature in the Imperial University, Tokyo, who had not been invited to contribute to the Dolls' House, and now chimed in with observations about "the seriousness of his art" and "the

¹ Kennedy, Michael : *Portrait of Elgar* (2nd. edn., OUP, 1982) p 277

² *Op cit*, p 288

³ Moore, Jerrold Northrop : *Edward Elgar : Letters of a Lifetime* (Oxford : Clarendon Press, 1990) p 357

⁴ Sassoon, Siegfried : *Diaries 1920-22*, ed. Rupert Hart-Davis (London : Faber & Faber, 1981) p 169

rotteness of an Age which concentrates its efforts on Dolls' Houses". But one guesses that most of the company were as astonished as Sassoon at Elgar's outburst.

Sassoon's account can clearly be only a paraphrase of what Elgar said, but, recalled within a couple of days of the incident, it can be taken as pretty accurate. Sassoon, though finding Elgar the man extremely irritating in this post-war manifestation, was a devotee of his music - especially *The Apostles* and the Violin Concerto, which latter he records by July 1923 he had heard 11 times.⁵ Conventional wisdom, too, might lead one to think Sassoon at that time less of an "establishment figure" than Elgar, having published while still a serving officer a famous protest against the War in July 1917, and followed this by throwing the ribbon of his Military Cross into the Mersey. Notwithstanding he proved perfectly willing when approached to contribute an item to the Doll's House.

One is left too to wonder at the reaction of the unfortunate Lady Maud Warrender. This handsome, aristocratic and musically-talented lady - she had sung the solo part in *The Music Makers* - was a close friend of Queen Alexandra the Queen Mother, as well as an intimate of Queen Mary. Her brother was Comptroller of the Queen's Household (1901-22) and subsequently her son was appointed Vice-Chamberlain to George V. She herself was much involved in the Dolls' House project. By now she was a longstanding friend and benefactor of Elgar. She had been along with Elgar in the party which in 1905 was entertained by Lord Charles Beresford to a Mediterranean cruise; was the dedicatee of Elgar's song *Pleading* composed in 1908; and Elgar was a frequent guest at her home near Rye. Perhaps surprisingly, the friendship was not permanently prejudiced by Elgar's outburst, and ironically she was subsequently to be found interceding with the King and Queen to afford patronage at a concert in 1933 at the Wigmore Hall to mark the composer's 76th birthday!⁶

The idea of Queen Mary's Dolls' House was conceived in the spring of 1921 by Princess Marie Louise (b.1872),⁷ granddaughter of Victoria and first cousin to George V, a woman of considerable artistic interests and connections. The Queen had a veritable mania for collecting miniature objects ("tiny craft"), and indeed was notorious for her open admiration of the possessions of other people who thus felt constrained to offer the coveted object as a gift to the delighted collector. One was well-advised to conceal valuables if the Queen was paying a visit - a stratagem widely practised in society circles. A magnificent Dolls' House, therefore, seemed an ideal gift to express the gratitude of the nation at the role of the King and Queen during the war years. At the same time it was soon realised that such a project would fit in admirably as an advertisement for Britain and British achievement at the planned British Empire Exhibition which was to take place at Wembley in the spring of 1924 and which was to proclaim Britain's re-emergence in the post-war world.

Among Princess Marie Louise's artistic friends was the great architect Sir Edwin Landseer Lutyens whose commissions encompassed projects ranging from Hampstead Garden Suburb to the Government Buildings at New Delhi. She waylaid him at the private viewing of the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition of 1921: "Sned, I want you to do me a favour. Will you design me a dolls' house for Queen Mary?"⁸ Lutyens ("Ned" to his intimates!) agreed and soon developed a positive enthusiasm for the project, which he conceived as enabling "future generations to see how a King and Queen of England

⁵Sassoon, Siegfried: *Diaries 1923-25*, ed. Rupert Hart-Davis (London: Faber & Faber, 1985) p 44

⁶De-la-Noy, Michael: *Elgar the Man* (London: Allen Lane, 1983) p 222

⁷Stewart-Wilson, Mary: *Queen Mary's Dolls' House* (London: The Bodley Head, 1988) p 10

⁸Princess Marie Louise: *My Memories of Six Reigns* (London: Evans Bothers, 1956) p 199

lived in the twentieth century and what authors, artists and craftsmen there were of note during their reign".⁹ He embarked eagerly on the three-year project. The Dolls' House was to be on the scale of 1":12", and to be a fantastically detailed and accurate working model. There were to be lifts, hot and cold running water, water closets, electric lights, clocks, etc etc all in working order. Virtually every item of furnishing was specially commissioned, and the notion was that the undertaking be financed by gifts and donations. Lutyens, notwithstanding, made a considerable personal financial commitment, guaranteeing £11,000 and actually spending, unknown to his wife, £6,300 which he did not recover until the House was successfully exhibited¹⁰ - this at a time when Elgar's real house/mansion in Hampstead was on the market for £7,000 and failing to find a buyer! Queen Mary, meanwhile, once appraised of the suggestion, shared the architect's enthusiasm and made regular visits to Lutyens' house in Mansfield Street where the entire drawing room had been given over to the project.¹¹



*The architect Sir Edwin Lutyens,
designer of the dolls' house*

⁹ *ibid.*

Of special interest was the library which measured 45 inches long, 21 inches wide, and 15½ inches high. Panelled in Italian walnut, it contained 350 leather-bound and specially written volumes, embossed with the letter "M". The Princess wrote personally to 171 authors soliciting contributions in their own hand. Conan Doyle contributed an original story of 500 words, while Kipling's item - several of his poems illustrated with special drawings - was so remarkable that the



Princess was offered a four-figure sum for it by an American collector.¹² Other contributors included Barrie, Buchan, Conrad, Galsworthy, Hardy and Housman. In addition 700 artists contributed water-colours which were to be stored in miniature cabinets in the library. Musicians were asked to provide extracts from a published work, photographed and reduced and personally signed. As Lutyens' daughter Mary has observed,¹³ in comparison with the demands made on authors, Elgar's task would not have been arduous. Indeed, among composers represented, eg Bax, Bliss, Holst, Ireland, Bridge, are some such as Delius and Ethel Smyth whom one might have imagined would have been more likely than Elgar - who had dedicated a Symphony to Edward VII's memory as well as *inter alia* composing a Coronation

¹⁰ Stewart-Wilson, *op cit*, p 15

¹¹ *ibid.*

¹² Princess Marie Louise, *op cit*, p 201

¹³ Links, Mary (née Lutyens) : letter to author, 13.1.93.

Ode - to demur at an approach to co-operate. Princess Marie Louise claimed to have written over 2,000 letters "with my own hand"¹⁴ regarding the project. If the approach to Elgar was one such, it seems inappropriate to dismiss this as "a circular".

With considerable press interest in the Dolls' House project, Lutyens soon found himself inundated with offers of contributions. This, rather than refusal, was the chief problem. By August 1921 "all sorts of undesirables" had offered things. "Oh, the rubbish that turns up for the Dolls' House", he complained.¹⁵ However, one notable absentee besides Elgar was Bernard Shaw. In her memoirs, *My Memories of Six Reigns*, Princess Marie Louise makes no mention of Elgar, but certainly gives her views on Shaw. "His letter was not even amusing and not worthy of one who claimed, as he did, to be a man of genius. I fail to see how he could have missed this great opportunity to have one of his works included in the Dolls' House as a record of an outstanding author in the reign of George V".¹⁶

Ultimately the completed work was packed for transfer to a special pavilion in the Palace of Arts, Wembley, in March 1924. The Queen sent personal letters of thanks to the heads of firms involved in its construction, calling it "the most perfect present anyone could receive".¹⁷ Lutyens received special thanks and a signed photograph. The Dolls' House was visited by 1,617,556 persons between April and November 1924. It was subsequently taken to Windsor to a room specially designed by Lutyens. In 1925 it was exhibited at the Ideal Home Exhibition at Olympia with receipts going again to the Queen's Charitable Fund. It has remained at Windsor ever since.

Ironically, Elgar was much involved in the actual Wembley celebrations. He was asked to write vocal pieces and a march for a 'Pageant of Empire' to open the Exhibition on St George's Day, 23 April 1924. He took a month to finish the march only to learn that rehearsal problems precluded its being played at the Opening Ceremony. He was asked instead to conduct his old *Imperial March* of 1897 together with *Land of Hope and Glory*. The new *Empire March*, long with the songs, were thus not premièred until July 1924. The Wembley occasion was not a happy one. The rehearsal moved Elgar to write in despondent tone to Alice Stuart Wortley (see Dr Jerrold Northrop Moore : *Edward Elgar - the Windflower Letters*, pp 289-90), while at the Opening Ceremony itself he was "a lonely figure in black".¹⁸

"Everything seems so hopelessly & irredeemably vulgar at Court",¹⁹ concluded Elgar. Though at precisely the same time he was busy offering his services as 'Master of the King's Musick' in succession to Sir Walter Parratt, whose death on 27 March had been followed the next day with a letter from Elgar to Lord Stamfordham broaching the subject : "I should feel it the greatest honour if I might be allowed to hold the position". After a not inconsiderable correspondence and discussion, during which Elgar feared the worst - "I believe the matter is to drop" - he was, of course, offered the post and duly accepted in a letter of 28 April pledging "my loyalty and devotion at all times".²⁰

It is difficult to explain Elgar's rejection of the Dolls' House invitation. His relations with Lutyens, though

¹⁴ Princess Marie Louise, *op cit*, p 202

¹⁵ Stewart-Wilson, *op cit*, p 15

¹⁶ Princess Marie Louise, *op cit*, p 201

¹⁷ Stewart-Wilson, *op cit*, p 16

¹⁸ Moore, Jerrold Northrop : *Edward Elgar : A Creative Life* (Oxford University Press, 1984) p 769

not intimate, were cordial enough. In July 1914 Edward and Alice had been among 150 distinguished guests, headed by the Prime Minister, Asquith, at a spectacular supper given at the Savoy by Harley Granville Barker and J M Barrie. A cinema camera recorded the event, though sadly the film seems not to have survived. Alice found herself placed next to Lutyens and recorded that "... he was nice and interesting to hear about Delhi and I always have a feeling of some affinity to the Cathedral in his Church in the Hampstead Garden City".²¹ And indeed, Christopher Hussey in his *The Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens* does point out the "close analogies with Bentley's Westminster Cathedral" of Lutyens' St Jude's, Hampstead.²²

Lutyens himself was no musician, claiming to recognise only two tunes - 'Pop Goes the King' and 'God Save the Weasel'²³ - though his daughter Elizabeth was to become a notable composer. He owned, however, to liking Purcell's 'Englishness', while his youngest daughter Mary recalls that "Elgar was the only modern composer whose work my father liked", and that he was frequently moved to tears by *Land of Hope and Glory*.²⁴ Elgar too had been persuaded to make an abridged version of 'For the Fallen' in connection with the dedication in November 1920 of Lutyens' Whitehall Cenotaph. This he did with ill grace - "the present proposals are vulgar and commonplace to the *last degree*"²⁵ - and in the event the music was not performed at the dedication.

Dr Percy Young has noted²⁶ that, at the time of the Dolls' House affair, Elgar was meeting all approaches with prompt refusal, instancing the rejection of overtures from Charles Macpherson, organist at St Paul's Cathedral, and Dr B S Siddall of the St Helens (Lancs) Choral Society. However, Princess Marie Louise might, one would have thought, have proved more compelling. Arthur Benson was invited by the Princess in July 1923 to edit "The Book of the Queen's Dolls' House" in collaboration with E V Lucas, then editor of *Punch*. Benson privately described the whole scheme as "ineradicably silly", neither did he form any great impression of either Lucas or Lutyens when they met in August 1923. But, observes Benson's biographer David Newsome, it was a "long time since he had received a royal commission and he did not refuse".²⁷ It is surprising that someone as generally careful as Elgar in the matter of relations with the establishment, and especially given his ongoing ambitions for a peerage, did not follow the same tactic.

Elgar left Severn House on 15 October 1921. He spent a few days with Frank Schuster at the Hut at Bray, while Carice supervised the flat in St James' Place to which he moved on the 20th. Carice spent that afternoon with him, and was also still busying herself with getting her father settled in on the next day. The day he wrote to Troyte, 22 October, was his first full day alone in the flat. He managed a cheerful enough letter to Alice Stuart Wortley : "... things not quite settled yet as we sent down too many things

¹⁹ Moore, Jerrold Northrop : *Edward Elgar : The Windflower Letters* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1989) p 290

²⁰ Moore, *Letters of a Lifetime*, p 381/385

²¹ Young, Percy M : *Elgar OM* (London & New York : White Lion Publishers, 1973) p 171

²² Hussey, Christopher : *The Life of Sir Edwin Lutyens* (Country Life Ltd, 1950) p 190

²³ Harries, Meirion and Susie : *A Pilgrim Soul : The Life and Work of Elizabeth Lutyens* (London : Michael Joseph, 1989) p 32

²⁴ Links, Mary (née Lutyens) : postcard to the author, 17.1.93.

²⁵ Moore, *Windflower Letters*, p 233

²⁶ Young, *op cit*, p 313

but you may be quite happy about me so far - the sitting room is in bright sunshine now & looks lovely".²⁸ The letter to Troyte was of course a different matter. Not only did it contain the petulant lines about the Dolls' House proposal, but also its opening was one of utter dejection: "I have at last realised that my dear wife & beloved companion has left me : until about two months ago I always felt - subconsciously - that she *must* return as of old - now I know & submit".

Can it be doubted that had Alice lived not only would she not have countenanced a reaction to the Dolls' House idea which must seem both discourteous and short-sighted, but also that Edward himself would have viewed the affair, and life, quite differently?

²⁷ Newsome, David : *On the Edge of Paradise : A C Benson: The Diarist* (London : John Murray, 1980) p 357

²⁸ Moore, *Windflower Letters*, p 263



*The Dolls' House being packed up in March 1924
in preparation for its removal to Wembley,
where it was to go on display in the Empire Exhibition*

ELGAR'S POLONIA, Op 76

Joseph A Herter

[Mr Herter was born in America of Polish descent and studied music at the University of Michigan, and later conducting with such as Robert Shaw, Seiji Ozawa and Kurt Masur. Since 1974 Mr Herter has been resident in Poland and regularly conducts orchestras throughout the country, and has become well-known for introducing major works by Western composers. He has been a guest conductor at the Warsaw Opera, and is the founder and conductor of several ensembles, including the mixed chorus Schola Cantorum, and the cathedral boys choir Cantores Minores.]

The Great War (1914-18) did not inspire many Polish composers to write music "for the cause." If one recalls the political situation and borders of a non-existent Poland of that time, the explanation for this is simple. At the outbreak of the First World War, Poland had not existed as a sovereign nation for over a century. It had been partitioned by three of its neighbours and placed under their jurisdiction; these were the Austro-Hungarian, Prussian and Russian Empires. A public performance of a Polish patriotic composition in the partitioned lands would have been illegal and, for all practical purposes, impossible to organize. Turning the divided Polish nation into a battlefield also created a moral dilemma for the Poles who were forced to fight in the armies of their imperial rulers : that of having to go into battle and kill fellow Poles. At the war's outset, 725,000 Poles in the Russian, 571,000 in the Austrian, and 250,000 in the Prussian partitions were drafted into those countries' armies.¹ Even though each of the powers promised the Poles some form of autonomy after the "victory" if they would fight for their side during the war,² writing music for *their* cause would have been promoting Polish fratricide as well. Moral support for the Polish cause through music would have to come from abroad.

A Pole who responded to the tragic situation into which Poland had been forced was the pianist and composer Zygmunt Stojowski (1870-1946). A student of Leo Delibes - and for shorter periods of time with Dubois, Massenet and Paderewski - Stojowski spent the last forty years of his life teaching and composing in New York. There in 1915, free from the retaliation of Poland's occupying powers, Stojowski took a political stance and wrote a cantata for solo voices, mixed chorus and orchestra, *Prayer for Poland (Modlitwa za Polsk)*, op 40. Stojowski's cantata, although long unperformed and forgotten, is one of the few works from the "war to end all wars" which was written on a spiritual base rather than on a totally patriotic one. The poem by Zygmunt Krasiński (1812-59) on which the cantata is based is addressed to the Blessed Virgin Mary. Using the appellation "Queen of Poland" - a title which for centuries the Vatican has allowed Poles to use in the recitation of the Litany of Loreto - the poet calls upon Mary to "End thou for bleeding Poland her deep anguish." In writing about music as a voice of war in his book on twentieth century music, the noted American musicologist Glenn Watkins states :

At various junctures throughout the twentieth century, man's search for spiritual values has surfaced in opera, symphony, and Mass; mystery play, ballet and cantata. Yet the period before the beginning of World War I to the conclusion of hostilities was not noticeable for a musical corpus with a pronounced spiritual base, and while the anxiety of a society on the eve of global conflict has frequently been seen as the root of the Expressionist movement, the number of musical statements that speak directly of the war of 1914-18 are few.³

Ignacy Paderewski (1860-1941) responded to the cause of Polish independence by writing his only choral work, *Hej, Orle bia»y (Hey, White Eagle)*, for male chorus and piano or military band in 1917. This was the official hymn of the Polish Army in America, for whose creation Paderewski was largely

¹ Drozdowski, Marian Marek : *Ignacy Jan Paderewski - A Political Biography* (1981) p 68

² Davies, Norman : *God's Playground - A History of Poland. Vol II* (1981) p 378

³ Watkins, Glenn : *Soundings* (1988) p 464

responsible. The Polish Army in America consisted of over 20,000 enlisted Polish immigrants living in the United States, but who were not American citizens. This army trained in Niagara-on-the-Lake, Ontario, and later joined the Polish Army in France, which brought their number to over 35,000.⁴ As the war came to an end, Feliks Nowowiejski (1877-1946) wrote an organ prelude entitled *Friede, schönstes Glück der Erde*, op 31, no 5 which was based on the Schubert *lied* of the same title. A former student of Bruch and Dvořák, and a well-known organist and composer throughout Europe, Nowowiejski was named an honorary member of The Organ Society of London in 1931.

It was with Edward Elgar's fantasia on Polish national airs, though, that the most outstanding, dramatic and nobly patriotic musical gesture for the Polish cause came into being during the First World War. Elgar, however, was not the first composer to have written a work entitled *Polonia*. The young Richard Wagner (1813-83), at one time sympathetic to Poland's fate, wrote an overture bearing the same title in 1836. In 1883, Franz Liszt (1811-86) also wrote a work entitled *Salve, Polonia*, an orchestral interlude from his uncompleted oratorio *The Legend of St Stanislaus*. All three compositions by Elgar, Wagner and Liszt make use of *The Dłubrowski Mazurka*, the hymn which was to become Poland's national anthem after it regained its independence. The title of Elgar's work, though, may not have come from the earlier works of Wagner and Liszt, but rather from compositions of the two Polish musicians most closely associated with the creation of Elgar's piece : Paderewski and Emil M»ynarski.



*Hej Orle Białe (Hey, White Eagle),
Paderewski's only choral work*

Paderewski, to whom Elgar's Polish fantasia is dedicated, wrote his *Symphony in B minor*, op. 24 and gave it the name *Polonia* as well. The symphony - Paderewski's only work in this genre - was inspired by the fortieth anniversary of the 1863-64 Polish Uprising and completed in 1909. The symphony was premièred in Boston on 12 January 1909, with the Boston Symphony Orchestra conducted by Max Fiedler. Paderewski uses the Polish National Anthem as well in this work. Unlike Elgar, however, who uses the hymn in its entirety, or Wagner and Liszt who write variations on the melody, Paderewski uses a motif from the hymn in the symphony's last movement *Vivace*. The motif is discreetly employed, one might even say - cleverly hidden - as a "hope leitmotif" for the rebirth of Poland. Even listeners who are familiar with the opening phrase of the Polish hymn and its text *Jeszcze Polska nie zginęła, kiedy my żyjemy* (Poland has not yet been lost so long as we still shall live) might easily let Paderewski's use of

⁴ Drozdowski, *op cit*, pp 99-103

⁵ Jasiński, Roman, in *Ruch Muzyczny*, no 7 (1960) pp 4-5

the motif pass without recognizing it.

Emil M»ynarski (1870-1935), who was responsible for asking Elgar to make his noble statement in support of the Polish cause in April 1915, completed his *Symphony in F major*, op 14 in 1910. The composer did not give the title *Polonia* to his only symphony; rather it was a nickname given to the piece by other Polish musicians. The nickname is still often listed as part of the official title in catalogues of the composer's works. According to Tadeusz Sygiety»ski (1896-1955), a composer and the founder of the internationally renowned Polish Song and Dance Ensemble *Mazowsze*, M»ynarski's symphony should bear this name because of its relationship in tragedy to Polish history as depicted in the cycle of paintings entitled *Polonia* by the nineteenth-century Polish artist Artur Grottger⁶. M»ynarski, unlike any of the other composers whose works bear the same title, does not use *Jeszcze Polska nie zgin»a* in his composition. Instead, he uses Polish dances - a mazurka in the third and a krakowiak in the fourth movements - and also employs the thirteenth-century hymn to



Ignacy Paderewski (1860-1941)

the Blessed Virgin Mary *Bogurodzica* (Mother of God) which is still well known and sung by Poles today. This hymn, which has the distinction of being the oldest recorded Polish melody and poetry in existence, was sung by Polish warriors as they went into battle against the Teutonic Knights. The first seven notes of the medieval *Bogurodzica* are the exact same seven pitches of the opening theme of the *Kyrie* in Ralph Vaughan Williams' *Mass in G minor* of 1922. The premiPre of M»ynarski's *Polonia* took place on February 6, 1911, in Glasgow with the Scottish Symphony Orchestra performing and the composer at the orchestra's helm.

⁶ Waldorf, Jerzy : *Diab»y I Anio»y* (1988) p 101

In addition to being a composer, M»ynarski was also a famous conductor and it is for his role in this profession that he is best remembered today. He was the first conductor of the Warsaw Philharmonic Orchestra (1901-05). In the first decade of the twentieth-century he guest conducted in Russia and in the British cities of London, Glasgow, Liverpool and Manchester. From 1910-15 he was the music director of the Scottish Symphony Orchestra in Glasgow. His association with Elgar also included collaborating with him and Thomas Beecham in presenting a three-day festival of British music in 1915.⁶ It would also be M»ynarski who would conduct the first Polish performance of *Polonia* at the Philharmonic Hall in Warsaw during the final days of the war on October 4, 1918.⁷ Following the war, M»ynarski's responsibilities included the directorship of both the Opera House (*Teatr Wielki*) and the Music Conservatory in Warsaw. After the war his guest conducting took him to the capitals of Europe and to major cities in America, where he joined the faculty of the Curtis School of Music in Philadelphia in 1929.

Elgar
 would
 not be
 the last
 famous

Bo - gu Ro - dzi - ca, Dzie - wi - ca

Ky - ri - e - lei - son

The opening phrases of the Polish medieval chant Bogurodzica and the Kyrie of Ralph Vaughan Williams' Mass in G minor. The latter is used by permission of Faber Music Ltd for the United Kingdom, Republic of Ireland, Canada, Australasia, South Africa, Jamaica, and Israel.

composer to write a work entitled *Polonia*.⁸ In fact, it was Elgar's composition which became a source of consolation and inspiration for one of Poland's greatest composers and conductors of the second half of the twentieth-century - Andrzej Panufnik (1914-1990). In search of political and artistic freedom, Panufnik escaped to the West and settled in England in 1954. As a conductor and Musical Director of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, he was responsible for a revival of Elgar's work during the 1957-58 season. Also showing Panufnik's affinity for *Polonia* is a 1997 BBC Radio Classics recording with Sir Andrzej conducting it in a 1978 performance with the BBC Northern Symphony Orchestra. As a composer, though, Panufnik gave credit to Elgar for his own 1959 orchestral work of the same title. In his autobiography Panufnik writes :

It was not easy to start those spirited dances at a time of great loneliness... For a while I could not start. But then I started to think about Elgar's sombre and noble *Polonia*, a work most evocatively echoing the heroic and tragic elements of Polish history. I decided to use the same title but to adopt a completely different approach, so that the two works together might provide a full spectrum of the Polish spirit and colour. Elgar made use of Polish patriotic songs but also took some of Chopin's melodies, ending powerfully with the Polish National Anthem. In contrast I based my new-born *Polonia* on folk melodies and the vigorous, full-blooded rhythms of peasant dances.⁹

⁷ Jasiński : *Na prze»omie epok - Muzyka w Warszawie (1910-1927)* (1979) p 282

⁸ Poles also use the Latin word for Poland, *Polonia*, in reference to its diaspora, ie. the Polish community living outside of Poland.

Elgar's compassion for the Poles' tragic suffering during the war served as an example for other English composers to make their own Polish musical statements in kind. Arnold Bax (1883-1953) saw a similar need to help the Poles during World War Two (1939-45). Bax's response was *Five Fantasies on Polish Christmas Carols* which were dedicated "To the Children of Poland" and scored for unison chorus and string orchestra. As Jan Sliwiński writes in the preface of the piano-vocal score of the Bax carols, the composer's arrangements were "...meant to turn the blood of war into the balm of love. British children were to have sung them in aid of their starving Polish brothers and sisters." Another British composer, Benjamin Britten (1913-1976), also moved by the plight which Polish children experienced during WW II, took up the same theme in his choral work *The Children's Crusade*, op 82. Scored for children's voices, percussion, two pianos and electronic organ, this ballad is a setting in English of Bertolt Brecht's *Kinderkreuzzug*. It begins, "In Poland, in 1939, there was the bloodiest fight." The world premiere of Britten's work took place in 1969 on the fiftieth anniversary of Save the Children Fund, a British charity which was founded by Eglantyne Jebb to save starving Austrian children who were victims of a blockade imposed after the First World War.



Emil Młynarski (1870-1935)

Polonia was expressly written for the purpose of being performed at benefit concerts in aid of the Polish Victims Relief Fund, the raising of money for which was the primary activity of the Polish Victims Relief Committee. The Committee, which eventually established chapters in France, Great Britain, Switzerland, and the United States, was founded in Vevey, Switzerland in January 1915 by a group of eminent Poles who had planned the Committee's formation with Paderewski at his Swiss villa in Riond-Bosson. Jointly heading the Committee were Paderewski and Henryk Sienkiewicz (1846-1916), the author of *Quo Vadis?* and, in 1905, the first Polish laureate of the Nobel Prize for Literature. While calling upon others to assist hundreds of thousands of Poles, who were in desperate need of food, clothing and shelter, Paderewski himself donated more than \$2 million from his own personal fortune to help his fellow countrymen.¹⁰

Paderewski sought the most influential people in each country to either organise, lead or join the four

⁹ Panufnik, Andrzej : *Composing Myself* (1987) pp 269-270

¹⁰ McGinty, Brian : *Paderewski* (1991) p 30

¹¹ Moore, Jerrold Northrop : Preface to the full score of *Polonia* in the *Elgar Complete Edition*

national chapters of the Committee. In the United States, it was former President William Howard Taft (1857-1930) who headed the American Committee. In France, Paderewski succeeded in obtaining the help of former French President Emile Loubet (1838-1929) to organise the Committee there. Great Britain was no exception. The British Committee consisted of a star-studded list of artists and high-ranking members of British society and government circles. Included with Elgar and his wife Alice were the famous English writers Thomas Hardy¹¹ and Rudyard Kipling. (Unfortunately, the Polish-born novelist Joseph Conrad refused to join Paderewski's efforts because of a disagreement about the way the French Committee had been organised). Other notable persons included the following : Arthur James Balfour; the Marquess of Crewe; the Duke and Duchess of Norfolk; the Duke and Duchess of Somerset; the Duchess of Bedford; the Marquis and Marchioness of Ripon; the Earl of Roseberry; former Prime Minister Lord Burnham; Prime Minister Asquith; future Prime Minister Lloyd George; Reginald McKenna; Winston Churchill; Austen Chamberlain; Lord Northcliffe; Lord Charles Beresford; and Viscount Edward Grey.¹² In the first several months of its existence, the British Committee's Polish Victims Relief Fund raised more than £50,000.¹³

The world premiere of Elgar's *Polonia* took place on 6 July 1915, with Sir Edward conducting the London Symphony Orchestra at Queen's Hall in London in a benefit concert for the Polish Victims Relief Fund. Other works in the concert included one movement from Męysnarski's "Polonia" *Symphony* and Paderewski's *Polish Fantasy on Original Themes for Piano and Orchestra*, op 19.¹⁴

The thematic material for Elgar's composition is drawn from both traditional Polish tunes and from compositions by Frederic Chopin and Paderewski. The former include *Đmia»o podnieŃmy sztandar nasz w górc* (Bravely Let Us Lift up Our Flag) also known as the 1905 *Warszawianka* by Józef P»awiŃski; *Z dymem pozarów* (With the Smoke of Fires) also known as *Chorale* by Józef Nikorowicz (1827-1890) and *The Dłbrowski Mazurka* which has been the Poles' national hymn since the regaining of Polish independence. The latter group includes the opening theme from Paderewski's *Polish Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra*, op 19 and a quotation from Chopin's *Nocturne no. 11 in G minor*, op 37 no 1.

In the introduction to the full score of *Polonia* Jerrold Northrop Moore states that it was Męysnarski who proposed the Polish national melodies to be used, but that it was Elgar who selected the quotations from Chopin and Paderewski. These national melodies will surely be unfamiliar to the non-Polish listener. *The 1905 Warszawianka* is the first song used in the introduction of the fantasia. It is the two-measure dotted-rhythm melody which is first heard in the fourth bar as played by the bassoons and bass clarinet. Later, it is not only used as a transitional motif between sections of the fantasia, but the motif is also developed in two separate sections of the composition which give a unifying force to the work. Although the text of the song itself dates from the nineteenth-century and was written by Wacław Đwi»cicki (1848-1900), it became popular when sung to a melody by Józef P»awiŃski and was used as an uprising song against the Russians in Warsaw in 1905. This song became popular with workers' movements throughout Europe. It was translated into over a dozen languages and accompanied the revolutionary communist movement in many European countries.¹⁵ The following hymn and the other Polish national hymns given below in English have been translated by the author.

Bravely let us lift up our flag,
Even though the storm of the unrestrained enemy rages,
Even though their unbearable force treads us down,

(1992), p xi

¹² Drozdowski, *op cit*, pp 73-74

¹³ Dul»ba, W»adysław and Soko»owska, Zofia : *Paderewski* (1976) p 125

Even if it is uncertain to whom tomorrow belongs.
Onward, Warsaw!
Onward to the bloody fight, which is holy and just!
March on, Warsaw, march on!

The second national tune *With the Smoke of Fires* or *Chorale* came into being following the Austrian

¹⁴ Moore, *op cit*, p xii

¹⁵ Panek, Wacław : *Polski Ępiewnik Narodowy* (1996) p 201

¹⁶ Walaux, Marguerite : *The National Music of Poland* (1916) p 13

¹⁷ Wacholc, Maria (ed) : *Ępiewnik polski* (1991) p 57

Army's bloody suppression of the Cracow Uprising of 1846. As a national song, it best conveys the patriotic agony which the Polish nation experienced during the 123-year-long period of partitions by the Russian, Prussian and Austro-Hungarian Empires.¹⁶ Sung at both patriotic manifestations and at church

Smia - lo pod-nies-my sztan-dar nasz wgo - re, choc bu - rza wro - gich
 zy - wio - low wy - je, choc nas dzis gne - bia si - ly po - nu - re,
 cho-ciaz nie - pe - wne ju - tro ni - czy - je. O, bo to sztan - dar
 ca - lej ludz-ko - sci, to ha - slo swie - te, piesn zmar-twych-wsta - nia,
 to try - umf pra - cy, spra - wie - dli-wo - sci, to zo - rza wszy - stkich
 lu - dow zbra - ta - nia! Na -przod, War - sza - wo, na wal - ke krwa - wa,
 swie - ta a pra - wa, marsz, marsz, War - sza - wo! Na -przod, War - sza - wo,
 na wal - ke krwa - wa, swie - ta a pra - wa, marsz, marsz, War - sza - wo!

The 1905 Warszawianka. Used by permission of Grupa Wydawnicza "S"owo".

services, the occupying powers soon forbade the public singing of this hymn. Punishment for performing the hymn was severest in the Prussian territories.

Elgar uses this melody twice in its entirety in his symphonic prelude. The first time is after Elgar's *nobilmente* original thematic material, which immediately follows the introduction, and the second time is just prior to the finale containing what is now known as the Polish National Anthem - *The Dłubrowski Mazurka*. Almost thirty years later, this hymn would be used once again to give the Poles courage when

Radio London signalled the partisans in the nation's capital to begin the Warsaw Uprising of August 1944.¹⁷ The *Chorale* written by Nikorowicz was sung to the tragic text of Kornel Ujejski (1823-1897).

Our voices ring out to You, O Lord,
 With the smoke of fires and the dust of fraternal blood.
 The complaint is rightful; it is our last moan.
 From these prayers our hair turns gray.

By now the complaints have stopped
 And the songs we know are none.
 Forever a crown of thorns has grown into our forehead
 As a monument to your anger.
 To You we outstretch our imploring hands.

Zdy - mem po - za - row, zku - rzem krwi bra - tniej, do Cie - bie, Pa - nie,
 bi - je ten glos, skar - ga to stra - szna, jak to o - sta - tni,
 od ta - kich mo - dlow bie - le - je wios. My juz bez ska - rgi
 nie zna - my spie - wu, wie - niec cie - rnio - wy wrosl wna - sza skron.

The last

Chorale. Used by permission of Grupa Wydawnicza "S"owo".

national tune used by Elgar is the Polish National Anthem which forms the basis of the fantasia's triumphant finale. The anthem's alternative title, *The Dłbrowski Mazurka*, refers to General Jan Henryk Dłbrowski, the leader of the Polish Legions who fought for Napoleon Bonaparte. The hymn dates from 1797 and was written in Reggio Emilia, Italy, by Józef Wybicki (1747-1822). The tune given to the hymn was a popular Polish folk melody. As it was sung by the legionnaires in their battles and journeys, the melody stayed with the Slavs in what is known as Yugoslavia and became the tune of their national hymn

as well. The Serbs, however, sing it at a much slower tempo than the Poles do. For those familiar with the Polish national hymn today, it might sound as though Elgar ornamented the melody. Actually, this is the way the melody existed prior to 1918. Immediately following the establishment of the Republic of Poland, the Ministry of Education was given the task of making the melody easier for school children to sing. The passing notes heard in the last phrase of Elgar's setting of the hymn are noticeably missing in the post-war version. Although competitions were held after the war to search for a new national hymn, *The Dabrowski Mazurka* became the official hymn on 26 February 1927. A translation of the hymn follows :

Poland has not yet been lost
 So long as we still shall live.
 That which foreign force has seized
 We shall regain by the sword.
 March, march Dabrowski!
 From Italy to Poland!
 Under your command
 Let us rejoin the nation.



The last phrase of the Polish National Anthem *Jeszcze Polska nie zginie*. The first example shows how it was sung prior to 1927, while the second example illustrates how it is sung today.

listening guide for *Polonia* follows. The form of the piece is a free design. The work is scored for full symphonic orchestra and includes the following instrumentation : 2 flutes (2nd doubling on piccolo), 2 oboes, cor anglais, 2 clarinets, bass clarinet, 2 bassoons, contrabassoon, 4 horns, 3 trumpets, 3 trombones, tuba, percussion (6 players), 2 harps, organ and strings.

Inasmuch as anniversaries present an opportunity to remember and learn from the past, let this eightieth

Section	Bar nos.	Key	Comments
Introduction	1-20	A minor, C minor, A minor	<i>Allegro molto</i> : Original martial-like music by Elgar coupled with a two-bar motif based on bars 1 and 6 of <i>The 1905 Warszawianka</i> . Motif first appears at bar 4 when played by the bassoons and bass clarinet.
A	21-37	A minor	<i>Nobilmente</i> : A broad, heroic-sounding original melody by Elgar played by the full orchestra. The melody is chromatically altered during the second playing.
Transition	38-44	modulates	The rhythm of the <i>Warszawianka</i> is played by the percussion and violas while winds and remaining strings play a motif from Elgar's <i>nobilmente</i> .

B	45-92	E major	<i>Poco meno mosso</i> : The melody <i>Z dymem pozarów (Chorale)</i> is intoned by the cor anglais, which is later joined by the winds and strings, and finally with full orchestra joining on the last phrase. At a <i>fortissimo</i> dynamic level the lower brass play the penultimate four-bar phrase of the <i>Chorale</i> to a descending scale accompaniment by the rest of the orchestra. The music becomes softer and slower until <i>piu lento</i> at bar 85 where the violoncello is given the melody - slightly varied - as a solo.
Transition	93-100	E minor	<i>Piu mosso, poco a poco</i> : The <i>Warszawianka</i> motif is now extended into a four-bar phrase.
C	101-140	E minor	<i>Allegro molto</i> : The motif from <i>Warszawianka</i> is developed into an entire section using additional melodic material from other bars of the song as well.
A1	141-150	E minor	Elgar's <i>nobilmente</i> theme returns.
Transition	151-162	Modulates to G minor	<i>Poco piu tranquillo</i> : Change in mood, dynamics and colour. Tremolo strings lead to the modulation, after which the strings are muted.
D	163-210	G minor	In this section Elgar pays homage to Paderewski and Chopin. It begins with a quotation of the opening theme from Paderewski's <i>Fantasia</i> which in <i>Polonia</i> has been transposed a semitone lower from its original key. Played first by the violins, the phrase is echoed by the clarinet. This echo technique is then repeated between the clarinet and flute. At bar 186 the Chopin <i>Nocturne</i> is quoted by the solo violin. Expressive flexibility of tempo with markings of <i>allargando</i> , <i>accelerando</i> and <i>a tempo</i> are heard during Elgar's use of the Chopin.
Transition	211-229	Modulates	The <i>Warszawianka</i> motif and fragmented versions of the Chopin and Paderewski themes are heard simultaneously until the martial music of the <i>Warszawianka</i> completely dominates at bar 221, <i>Piu mosso, poco a poco</i> .
C1	230-295	E minor	Once more the music of the <i>Warszawianka</i> is developed into a section of its own. Prominent is a motif based on bars 17 and 18 of the song where the text, <i>Naprzód, Warszawo! (Onward, Warsaw!)</i> , appears. Dazzling chromatic runs accompany and, following the dramatic <i>luftpause</i> between bars 261 and 262, ascending chromatic scales are played <i>con fuoco</i> .
B1	296-311	A major	The <i>Chorale</i> returns accompanied by rising arpeggios in the harps and violins which add a sense of urgency in the pleading nature of this tragic song.
Transition	312-329	Modulates	The <i>Warszawianka</i> motif, the first four bars of the Polish national anthem and the first two bars of the penultimate phrase of <i>Chorale</i> are heard dovetailing each other, while at other times they are played simultaneously. The entire transition is played <i>pianissimo</i> .
Finale	330-379	F major	<i>Moderato maestoso</i> : A change from quadruple to triple time. The Polish national hymn dominates this section. The anthem is heard twice in its entirety. These complete settings are separated by short development of the mazurka at bar 349 <i>animando</i> . The final playing of the anthem at bar 360 <i>Grandioso</i> uses all the resources of the orchestra, including full organ, creating a glorious climax to the fantasia on Polish airs.
Coda	380-end	F major	<i>Allargando al fine</i> : Based on the dotted rhythm of the first bar of the mazurka.

anniversary of the 1918 Armistice not only make us recall the horror and tragedy of that Great War, but let it also make us cherish Elgar's musical response to the plight of a people whose once and future nation was often forgotten and who suffered so horribly in the shadows of the principal players of that terrible world conflict. In October 1999, as the musical world celebrates another anniversary - the sesquicentennial of Frederic Chopin's death - it will again have the opportunity to reassess another Elgar composition recalling how this English musical giant saluted Poland's most famous composer by orchestrating the *Funeral March* from his *Sonata in B-flat minor*.

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OBITUARY : THE LORD MENUHIN (1916 - 1999)

Close to a century and a half after Elgar's birth and sixty-five years after his death, the Society has had until now only two Presidents. Fortunately for us, both were friends of the composer. Sir Adrian Boult had known Elgar almost from the turn of the twentieth century. Lord Menuhin knew Elgar only in his last years, when Menuhin himself was sixteen and seventeen.

Eighteen months of friendship in teenage years does not always produce a strong result. In this case it did. The memorialist need not try to paraphrase Menuhin's own tributes to Elgar : they were unflinchingly generous, and many are easily available to members in the *ipsissima verba*. The influence they celebrate stands witness to wisdom beyond years.

What made Elgar's influence on Yehudi Menuhin so continually remarkable was the character it gave to the younger man's musical performance. Elgar's conducting, as we hear it in his recordings, reveals a horizontality, a long-linedness, which has virtually ceased to exist today - except in performances and recordings of Menuhin. There were other teachers, Enesco notable among them, who moulded aspects of Menuhin's playing style. But his ability to think in the longest melodic terms - the largest paragraphs, the farthest balances - came from Elgar, I think, more than any other.

Our performance practice now has been shaped ineluctably by the contrapuntal verticality of the various revivals of early music, most notably the baroque. No other player or conductor could entirely escape its influence at will - not even the late Sir Georg Solti, for all his loving study of Elgar's own recordings.

Menuhin himself was fully alive to the stylistics of counterpoint, as his many recordings of baroque music clearly show. The late Robert Donington confided to me how, for the record to accompany his book-length study of Baroque String Playing, he could find no player so well equipped as Menuhin. But Donington's reason was the reverse of verticality. No other player before the public, he said, could approach the long lines of Menuhin's playing.

This long-linedness, Donington felt, meant more than all the 'authenticities' then beginning to appear : for it connected Menuhin to the greatest violin traditions, going back through Ysaÿe and Joachim to Vivaldi and Corelli. Those last, through their music, were the friends of Elgar's youth. Through the musical life of provincial, backwater Worcester, he had subscribed their expressions into the matrix of his own music. And he passed them to the youngest of all his close friends, our late President, for his playing and conducting.

Lord Menuhin recorded all but one of Elgar's major orchestral works. (The omission was *Falstaff*, and I tried and tried over the past five years and more to interest every recording man or woman I met in the project : Menuhin said he was willing). This set of recordings, with the Symphonies at their centre, will always have an honoured place on my shelves : so similar to the composer's in spirit, but in modern sound.

My own memories of Menuhin go back forty years. May I close with one? Discussing a then-recent recording of the Violin Concerto, he said to me : "Yes, it has every quality but the one at the centre of Elgar's music, and that is innocence". It is given to few to sum up in a single word the essence of a composer so complex as Elgar. Menuhin's word has remained with me from that day to this. So it is, with the memories and recordings, a permanent possession.

Jerrold Northrop Moore

ELGAR AND THE BOY VIOLINIST

A batch of letters

[This article originally appeared in *The Daily Telegraph* on 20 October 1934. It is reproduced here by courtesy of that newspaper, and quotations from Elgar's letters appear by kind permission of the Sir Edward Elgar Will Trust.]

The boy violinist, Yehudi Menuhin, made a gramophone record of Sir Edward Elgar's concerto in the summer of 1932, under the composer's direction, and in the autumn of that year the youthful virtuoso - he was then 15 - and the veteran composer collaborated in a memorable performance of the great work at the Albert Hall.

Then in the summer of last year, only a little while before the illness declared itself that was to end his illustrious career, Sir Edward went to Paris at the invitation of the Menuhins, to take part in another performance of the Concerto. During this time, to the admiration which the great composer had from the first felt for the astonishing lad was added a tender affection, half paternal, half that of a brother-in-art.

Readers will peruse not without emotion the letters from the great man to the youth which we give below. "Your friendship... has given me a new zest in life". Such a tribute from an illustrious veteran to a boy artist recalls no parallel but the relations between the aged Goethe and the young Mendelssohn, and, even so, those were not colleagues in the same art.

The numerous intimate touches in the letters are charming. Again and again Elgar mentions his dogs. The sixth letter in the series, in which the great man replies with such affecting diffidence and hinted disillusionment to the proposal of a performance of his concerto in Paris, is perhaps the most revealing of them all.

* * *

The first letter was written before the two had met. It is dated July 8, 1932, from Brooks's Club.
My dear young Maestro :

I send a short note to welcome you to England again, and to tell you how much I am looking forward to the pleasure of making your acquaintance. I also add that I am delighted to hear that you will use your wonderful genius to record the Violin Concerto. This is a very great gratification to your devoted and obliged admirer and friend.

At the end of the month Elgar (not "your affectionate friend") writes from Worcester :

It was the greatest pleasure to know you personally - of course your marvellous art has been known to me all the time. My special warm-hearted gratitude goes to you for your playing of the Concerto, which was wonderful.

A week later (Aug 8) he writes from Worcester to agree to conduct the Albert Hall concert.

My very dear friend and artist :

Your letter gave me the greatest pleasure, and I hasten to tell you that I gladly accepted the invitation of Mr [Harold] Holt to "accompany" you at the Albert Hall on November 20th. Nothing in late years has given me so much real artistic joy as your playing of the Concerto, and once more I thank you most sincerely for your playing and the good things you say about the work.

The records of the concerto are out, and Elgar writes on Sept 20 :

This is only to bring you my love and good wishes. The records you made of the Concerto are wonderful and a continual joy to us here. I need not tell you how greatly I am looking forward to the pleasure of conducting the orchestra for you. Some Etudes which I wrote about 55 (!) years ago may reach you. I think they may amuse you.

After the Albert Hall concert Elgar writes from the Langham Hotel :

My dearest Yehudi and good friend :

I am just being hurried away and steal one moment (I don't care if I miss the train!) to send you my warmest thanks for the complete artistry you showed us to-day. I shall write to your dear father (who saved my life twice in one day with the Ovaltine, bless him!) directly I get home. Again all thanks and au revoir in Birmingham.

Your devoted and eternally grateful friend

The following is the promised letter, to the lad's father, Moshe Menuhin. The date is Worcester, Nov 23, 1932.

I sent a short note to the dear boy at the Grosvenor Hotel immediately after the concert. I will not repeat to you here what a wonderful event the concert was : you will be tired of hearing this sort of thing; but I must tell you that I was overcome by the "majesty" of Yehudi's playing. His tender and affectionate candour to me (this I prize perhaps more than anything) and your great consideration and kindness are very happy memories.

As to Paris in May : I find now that I am free on the date you name, 31st May, but I must be quite candid and ask you to consider if it will not be a risk for Yehudi's immense fame and position to be associated with me. Please understand that I deeply feel the honour and pleasure of accompanying Yehudi, but, while the musicians of all countries (I am happy to say) are on friendly and fraternal terms with me, the press, and, with it, the public do not believe in English musicians, and I fear my appearance in Paris might do more harm to you than good.

The attitude of the Press, I feel sure, would be that dear Yehudi was making a mistake in appearing with a musician of very inferior calibre (me). I am much too philosophical to feel any hurt at the well-meant slighting of my abilities, but I cannot bear to think of Yehudi being held responsible for anything not of the first rank. Our good friend Fred Gaisberg (H.M.V.) would be helpful in advising you if you think necessary, as he knows the "tone" of those concerned.

Then follow two notes addressed to Yehudi and to his father, written at the Queen's Hotel, Birmingham. The former contains "loving thanks to my great artist and friend". "I drove over this morning", says Elgar, "just to find out when you are coming, and leave this note of affection to greet you... I am longing to see and hear you again". And there is an Elgarian postscript : "Marco is, of course, with me and sends his love".

To Mr Menuhin Elgar says :

I drove over this morning and hope we may meet. Of course Yehudi will be resting, but I can come over

any time - it took me forty minutes from Worcester... In any case I shall be coming over early for the concert.

A letter to Mr Menuhin, of Dec 27, contains an allusion to Toscanini.

This is a hurried note to thank you for your very kind letter from Milano. I am delighted to hear of my dearest boy's further success. Bless him! I note all you say about that truly great man and artist, Arturo Toscanini, and will send the records, &c., as soon as the "fever" of the holiday time is over in the commercial world. The holiday does not touch me.

The next is a New Year letter to Yehudi, Jan 1, 1933.

I hope this little letter may reach you before you sail to U.S.A. I want it to bring to you my best wishes for the New Year, and my thanks to you for all your sympathetic playing and friendship - this last I treasure very deeply.

At my age old friends pass away and leave the world rather empty - this is inevitable and has to be faced. Your friendship in any case must be - is - a remarkable thing, and it has given me a new zest in life. To hear you play the Concerto (now over twenty years' old) gives me the deepest artistic satisfaction; I think you know this, as we seemed en rapport when you were playing at the vast Albert Hall. Anyway, I have never felt such a reading as you gave it, with such a thrill of expression.

Spring has come to Worcester - the last spring Elgar was to see. He writes to Yehudi in America on March 12.

Nothing has given me greater pleasure than reading of your triumphs in America...

Here things have been somewhat dull and colourless, and a fortnight of snow and frost did not cheer the outlook; Marco did not like it at all, and the weather required a lot of explaining to the dog mind. However, flowers are beginning to come out, and we have plenty of sunshine and a feeling of spring once more. The English spring is different from any other; it lasts long - in America it comes with a burst, and in Germany too - at least Sterndale Bennett, who was a friend of Schumann and Mendelssohn, said the reason the Germans write so much about the Frühling is that they see so little of it.

I look forward to hearing of your safe return, and wish I could share a good rough sea with you - this I love. My own great-uncle was one of that superhuman breed - a Dover pilot - and I have the sea very much in my veins.

The next batch of letters - the last - was written after the Paris concert. The first is to Madame Menuhin, June 4 :

I take the earliest opportunity to write to thank you and all your charming family for your great kindness to me in Paris. I was sorry to have to rush away, but I brought with me the happiest memories of you all, including dear

's marvellous and soul-satisfying playing.

To Mr Menuhin, from Worcester, June 6 :

I sent a hurried line to Madame M. - all I could find time for in the busy turmoil I was hurled into here.

First, let me say what a pleasure it was to see you in such good health, and in such courageous spirits! It is the greatest satisfaction to know that the very trying time you went through has so thoroughly justified your bold determination to "go through with it".

All thanks to you for making my time in Paris a pleasant one. I can say nothing more about Yehudi's playing beyond what I have written in my note to him today - it is marvellous.



This letter to Yehudi was written on the

same day :

As I said to your sisters, I have been overwhelmed with "business" things since my return, or I should have written earlier to thank you for the Concerto.

You have made it your own, and your playing last week was, in some way, grander than last year, although last year I did not think it was possible to improve on your reading. A week ago to-day we were in the midst of it, and it remains an enduring impression for which I thank you most sincerely. I hope the photographs are not too awful : the moving ones, of course, I cannot see, but I should like to have any of the still ones as a memento.

It is really hot here, and my dear Marco and Mina - your friends - are gasping; they are quite well, however, and send their love to you... Mr Kussevitzky tells me that you are to visit Boston, and will play the concerto with him. He has asked me to go also, but for my second symphony. I wrote a hurried line to Mr Enesco to thank him for all his kindness. He is a fine musician.

It was the last letter. It ends, "Goodbye, my dear boy. - With love, I am your affectionate friend". Reading these letters, we may wonder whether any other young artist has faced life enriched with quite such a benediction as is represented by the admiration and affection of a man like Elgar, thus movingly expressed at the sunset hour of his long and glorious day.

The text of a previously unpublished letter from the young Yehudi, in reply to the note from Elgar after the Albert Hall concert on 20 November 1932, is shown below. The letter is in the possession of Raymond Monk, who showed it to Lord Menuhin in October 1996 at his 80th Birthday Concert in Symphony Hall, Birmingham where he conducted Leland Chen in Elgar's Violin Concerto. Menuhin was "deeply moved", Raymond says. The text appears by kind permission of Raymond Monk, the letter itself being too faint for clear reproduction.

Grand Hotel, Tynemouth.
Nov 24, 1932

Dear friend Sir Edward Elgar!

Your kind letter gave me a great deal of pleasure and if you only had one tenth of the joy I had playing with you your glorious concerto, then I feel satisfied.

I am looking forward to live through the same joy again on May 31st 1933.

Please keep well and happy, not only for your own sake but for many others as well.

Sincerely,
Your Yehudi Menuhin

PS. My Father and I can hardly wait until we see you again in Birmingham!

VIDEO REVIEW

The Dream of Gerontius, Op 38.

Philip Langridge (tenor), Catherine Wyn Rogers (mezzo-soprano), Alistair Miles (bass), BBC Symphony Chorus and Orchestra conducted by Andrew Davis
110 mins. Warner Music Vision 3984-22351-3

Considering how little classical music is televised, it is interesting to note that *The Dream of Gerontius* has been shown three times in the 1990s, on each occasion conducted by Andrew Davis. In 1991 it was featured at the First Night of the Proms; and earlier that year it appeared in the BBC2 series 'There is Music in the Air', in a performance recorded at the Three Choirs in 1984. The most recent version took place on 26 November 1997, to mark the tercentenary of St Paul's Cathedral in London; the East Aisle of Wren's masterpiece was opened for worship in 1697. The performance also marked the 75th anniversary of the founding of the BBC, and so the audience - glimpsed briefly - contained eminent people, such as the Director-General, and a former Prime Minister (James Callaghan).

James Naughtie presented a ten-minute introduction to the work, giving the background. Places featured included Brompton Oratory, Birchwood, and various views of the Worcestershire countryside. Jerrold Northrop Moore at the Birthplace spoke about Elgar's creative processes; and Andrew Davis explained what *Gerontius* meant to him. "It's never left me; the piece is always somewhere in my head - in my soul, I suppose", he said.

The concert was broadcast live, and no doubt many Society members will already be familiar with the performance from their own recording of it. The programme made imaginative but restrained visual use of the Cathedral, its architecture, frescoes, windows, furnishings, and so on. My only quibble is a theological one regarding the focus on a cross whenever the 'Judgement' theme is played; I thought the Cross was the antidote to judgment! The main problem for the performers (and the sound engineers) was the vast size of the building. Although the point has often been made that Elgar's choral works were clearly written by one who had known a cathedral acoustic from his earliest years, St Paul's is a different proposition from the Three Choirs' buildings. As one who has heard choral works in St Paul's, I can only say it helps to sit near the front! No doubt most of the audience heard a good deal less than the viewer. In this recording the only real problems occur in the double chorus in Part II, where some of the vocal lines are very difficult to pick out.

The performance is finely judged by Davis, and the choir and orchestra give superb support. There is plenty of passion in the Demons, and some beautiful singing elsewhere, at the end of Part I especially.

Philip Langridge is an intelligent singer with an attractive voice, yet somehow he doesn't quite live the part in the way one feels he should. It was said that he was suffering from a cold, which would explain the fractured phrasing - especially noticeable in 'Sanctus fortis' - and the slight holding back one senses on occasions. Yet he convincingly manages to portray the 'world-weariness' the role demands in Part I, a reminder that recently he has also been a notable Aschenbach in *Death in Venice*. Catherine Wyn Rogers has had her critics for a lack of characterisation, but she is in fine form here with some rich warm singing. 'A presage falls upon thee' is particularly successful. Alistair Miles has a deeper voice than I prefer for the Priest, but he sings well and is not lacking in tenderness when called for. All in all, a convincing and enjoyable performance, worthy of commemorating such an occasion.

The accompanying booklet contains the complete text, and notes on the work by Diana McVeagh.

The Editor

BOOK REVIEWS

Edward Elgar - A Creative Life, by Jerrold Northrop Moore.

Clarendon, 1999. 823 pp, paperback. £25.

No words of mine would be adequate to describe this book or the impact that it has had in the fifteen years since it first appeared. Though Elgar had already been well served by his biographers, this was something different; the fruit of some thirty years of meticulous study and research, and unearthing so many new facts and views about a composer that we all thought we knew. As Dr Percy Young stated in the original JOURNAL review : "[It] is not an end, but a new beginning, with an unending stream of challenges to its readers, among whom I count myself privileged to be one". Those of us who were members of the London Branch in its early days also count ourselves privileged, as many of Dr Moore's ideas were aired in lectures, comments and conversations at that time.

Out of print for many years, the stature of the book is such that second-hand copies have always been sought, and were never available for very long. It hardly needs saying that anyone with more than a passing interest in Elgar should own a copy. A detailed description is unnecessary; suffice it to say that it is neither biography nor analysis, but the two strands of "life" and "works" - separated into two volumes by Basil Maine - are here presented as an indissoluble unity, as its title makes clear. A handful of minor errors from the original edition have been corrected, and at the request of the publishers Dr Moore has added a short note to the Preface concerning his views on the 'elaboration' of the Third Symphony; but essentially this is the book as it first appeared, a towering, unique achievement.

The Editor

Albert Sammons - violinist. The Life of our Albert, by Eric Wetherell.

Thames Publishing, 1999. £12-50

"Of all the people who play my concerto, Sammons gets to the heart of it" - so said Elgar, and anyone who has heard the Sammons recording, or had the good fortune (as I did) to hear him play it live, would agree. His tone was remarkable, his ability astonishing, and among international violinists he was held in the highest esteem. The finest violinist that Britain has ever produced - but we have had to wait forty-two years, since his death in 1957, for a biography.

Eric Wetherell has given us an affectionate tribute, but does not let his admiration cloud his judgment.

Sammons was almost entirely self-taught, and his early years seemed unpromising. But good luck, and a capacity for sheer determination and hard work, ensured a remarkable career. Yet he was essentially a modest man - he was too home-loving to want to travel the international circuit, hence his reputation among the public was almost entirely confined to this country. Other violinists visiting Britain for concerts knew better though. To them Sammons was among the elite - Heifetz, when preparing his recording of the Elgar concerto said to Sammons after a meeting to discuss the work, "You know, Albert, I'm only doing this because you have refused".

Sammons played an important role in chamber music too. He founded the London String Quartet which considerably raised the standard of quartet playing in this country, and his duets with the Australian pianist William Murdoch were well-attended throughout the British Isles. Reading this new book is like consulting a directory of famous names in music, for Sammons seemed to know them all. His career commenced before the First World War, and continued until cruelly cut short by the onset of Parkinson's disease in the late 1940s. He had many pupils, including Alan Loveday and Hugh Bean, and all speak of his kindness and encouragement. He had a number of the standard concertos in his repertoire, and equally gave the first performance of several works by modern composers. But he is particularly remembered for his Elgar (which he claimed to have performed over 100 times, many times with the composer conducting), and the Delius Concerto, which he also loved.

The 1929 recording of the Elgar concerto, under Sir Henry Wood's baton, is justly famous, but it is surprising to learn from this book that Sammons was dissatisfied with the recording. He felt that Wood took it too fast, losing some of the work's finer points. However, we think of it today as being a document of a fine artist, and although the 16-year-old Menuhin, with the composer conducting, is a remarkable recording, personally I find myself returning again and again to the Sammons, not least for that famous "sweet tone" which no-one else seems to be able to capture. There are several Elgar stories in the book - one on the subject to which I have just referred. "... travelling once to Malvern with Elgar for a performance, press criticism of the young Menuhin's recording (that he had played it in a style more appropriate to the Max Bruch) came up in conversation. Elgar, Sammons said, commented : "What nonsense. It's a bloody romantic theme and I bloody well know because I bloody well wrote it".

We learn that Sammons also once told a reporter that the smallest audience he ever played to by invitation was two - but they were Kreisler and Sir Edward Elgar.

A fascinating volume, with some illustrations and a discography, only available in paperback, but very reasonably priced. I thoroughly recommend it to anyone who cares for music and musicians.

Ronald Taylor

Elgar and the Three Choirs Festival, by Donald Hunt.

Osborne Books, 1999. 149 pp, paperback. £9-95.

Elgar attended his first Three Choirs Festival at Worcester in 1866 when he was nine years old, and was much taken with the sound of a "big band" - a seminal moment in the composer's life. Sixty-seven years later he conducted *The Kingdom* at Hereford, his last public engagement. From 1896 onwards he never missed a Three Choirs meeting, and for the last thirty years of his life he was undoubtedly the central figure of each year's gathering, usually conducting several of his own works. The Festival thus played a key role in Elgar's life, and it is to Dr Hunt's credit that he has compressed it into 150 pages. Yet as the author points out, Elgar always had an ambivalent attitude towards it. His first two Festival works - *Frissart* and *The Light of Life* - were commissions, but after becoming famous, he never gave the

Festival the premiPre of a major work, despite attempts by friends such as Atkins and Brewer to get him to write one. He loved to surround himself with fellow-musicians, and the annual Elgar house parties were full of fun and high spirits. But he seems to have avoided the local squirearchy, who tried to cultivate him when he was a "somebody", but who had looked down their noses at him when he was a jobbing musician sitting among the violins. Perhaps another reason for Elgar's apparent reluctance to write for the Three Choirs was the "poor standard of the performers" to which Dr Hunt refers (p 126). (After attending a Sheffield Festival rehearsal in July 1899 where he enthused about the singers, Elgar came back to the Three Choirs chorus, a "weary crew" which made him "cross and pizenous", as he told F G Edwards.) Nevertheless, the Three Choirs was a wonderful opportunity for a young man to experience great musical masterpieces at first hand, and the visit of Dvořák to conduct at Worcester in 1884 was another major milestone in Elgar's musical pilgrimage.

As already stated, Dr Hunt's book is a model summary of Elgar and the Three Choirs. Most of the material has already appeared elsewhere in the literature, and naturally enough one of the most-quoted sources is *The Elgar-Atkins Friendship* by Wulstan Atkins, who contributes the Foreword to the book. I would love to have seen more of the anecdotes which abound and which give a human touch to these events, even if it meant another fifty pages or so, and a higher price! Another slight disappointment concerns the illustrations; all the photographs have appeared before, yet surely here was a chance to include "new" ones, such as the group outside Castle House before the 1905 performance of *The Apostles*, which included Canon Gorton, Rosa Burley, and Julia Worthington, all of whom rarely feature in illustrations in the literature (there is a print of this photo at the Birthplace).

On occasion one might take issue with the author. If Elgar was "overlooked" by the Festival authorities in 1893, it was surely because he had written little since *Froissart*, the 1890 commission. Although *The Black Knight* and the *Serenade for Strings* were completed in 1892, they would almost certainly not have come to the attention of the Festival Committee before works needed to be commissioned for the 1893 Festival, ie, towards the end of 1892. And was the Blind Man in *The Light of Life* really "a figure of hope" (p 41)? Surely as Dr Hunt writes a few lines earlier, he faced "loneliness and rejection by his own people" by associating himself with Jesus?

Neither is the book free from error. "Goossens" loses an 's' each time he is mentioned, while "impresario" (p 154) gains one. Brewer's *Emmaus* has only two soloists, not four. Elgar's knowledge of Wolfrum's *Ein Weihnachtsmysterium* did not begin at Hereford in 1903, for Elgar had himself conducted the British premiPre at Worcester in 1901. Alice did not accompany Edward on the 1905 Mediterranean cruise. Buckley's book on Elgar dates from 1905 not 1912. *Go song of mine* was written at Careggi, not Venice. On p 70 the Master of the King's Musick is described as "an honour which surprisingly did not come his way until 1924". There is no surprise about this, as the position is awarded for life and Sir Walter Parratt did not die until that year!

This very readable book fills a real gap in the bibliography and will no doubt be readily snapped up at this and future Three Choirs meetings.

The Editor

RECORD REVIEWS

Choral Songs of Sir Edward Elgar

London Symphony Chorus conducted by Vernon Handley
Hyperion CDA 67019

The list of recordings initiated and sponsored by the Elgar Society is impressive. Among them is a

collection of Elgar's greatest choral songs, by the BBC Chorus conducted by Sir Adrian Boult. This, on LP and now unavailable, was published in 1982, but first broadcast on 9 July 1967, on the Third Programme. The instigator and producer was Michael Pope, our past chairman.

Now comes an almost complete collection (twenty-three songs) conducted by Vernon Handley, our vice-president, with the London Symphony Chorus. The particular point about this recording is that the size of the choir is nearer to what Elgar had in mind than those on recent comparable compact discs. Geoffrey Hodgkins, in very informative liner notes, reminds us that though authenticity in performance usually leads to a reduction in the size of forces, Elgar wrote for large choirs. Hodgkins makes interesting counterpoint between Elgar's own career and the growth of the competition festival movement. From 1884 to the outbreak of war both Elgar's music and the competition festivals increasingly flourished. During the 1920s, as Hodgkins says, entertainments such as the cinema and the gramophone "sapped the strength of the choral societies". That Elgar's part-songs disappeared from the repertory was as much to do with the disappearance of choral societies as to the decline in his reputation.

In Elgar's day choirs were big. At Morecambe, where he adjudicated from 1903, they were on average about 50 voices. In 1907 he conducted more than 200 male voices in *Yea, cast me from heights*, and in 1912 he conducted *Go song of mine* with 320 voices of the Leeds Choral Society. It was an era when Granville Bantock could write the substantial choral symphonies *Vanity of Vanities* and *Atalanta in Calydon*; for one performance he had 400 singers. It is not quite true that a *capella* works of this period can be "effectively performed only by a big body of voices", but that is the context in which they were composed.

From his Op 53 onwards, 1907-8, Elgar's choral songs are elaborate and expansive. They spread out richly into eight parts, harmonically they are daring. He "scored" his chorus like an orchestra, here dropping in note-clusters, there setting accompaniments to melodies, splitting the poem's lines across voice-parts. His songs were to "be listened to and not read", he declared; "if you *hear* any one of them, the words flow on correctly".

In my own record collection, as well as the Boult, I have Halsey (LP, 10 songs, 1969), Temple (LP, 13 songs, 1981), Donald Hunt (CD, 35 songs, 1987), the Finzi Singers under Spicer (CD 22 songs, 1994). Songs recorded on the new disc, not so often performed (though all are in Hunt's collection) are *The Reveille*, *The Wanderer*, *Zut! Zut! Zut!*, *The Herald*, and the real gem, the magical *The Prince of Sleep* to de la Mare's words in 1925 (Howells composed his *King David* in 1919).

All this is by way of avoiding what must now be said, that the new disc is disappointing. It is hard to be sure whether this is because of the recording or the performance: I suspect both. Certainly the sound is bathroomy, fuzzy, and lacking immediacy. The words are hard to hear; final consonants disappear completely. In soft singing Walford Davies recommended "vowels pianissimo, consonants fortissimo". More seriously, I miss the emotional colouring that Plunket Greene taught. Words like "gleaming", "colder", "lash" and "leap" pass unremarked, with dynamic but without tonal change. Occasionally Handley lacks repose, not that the tempo is too fast, but the paragraphing is too rushed. For sheer depth and intensity of emotion I go back to Boult. Has anyone made *Owls* more atmospheric? Or given such fulfilment to the final line "sunshine after rain" in *The Shower*? Conveyed such inwardness in *Deep in my Soul* (and those basses at the end!)? For vitality and phrasing springing out of the words' meaning I listen to Spicer and the Finzi Singers, even if they are a trifle precious. I still await my ideal performance of *There is sweet music*, something still more sensuous, more drugged with beauty.

Diana McVeagh

Symphony no 1 in A flat, Op 55. Pomp & Circumstance March, Op 39 no 5. Symphony no 2 in E flat, Op 63.

Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Bernard Haitink

These recordings have been around for many years and have been much mulled over. A couple of critical comments are quoted on the back of the 2-CD pack. I can agree with neither. I do not consider that in Symphony no 1 “the result is intensely refreshing and revealing”. Was it ever? Nor do I think that no 2 “without exception, is the most beautiful performance... that I know on record”. Perhaps Haitink’s strengths and weaknesses in *Pomp & Circumstance no 5* are indicative of those in the symphonies. The crisp sprightliness of the 6/8 section is wholly admirable, sparkling with vitality. The trio tune, earnest if ever one was needed that Symphony no 3 would be all Elgar hoped for it and Payne has made it, is driven just too hard, as if the steady tread of the bass line had dictated the phrasing of the tune, rather than the wonderful subtleties of the tune evoking an equivalent response below. Even bass trombone and tuba might have a go at basso continuo playing. The sound, though, conjured from the 1988 playing of the Philharmonia is beyond praise.

Jaeger initially had difficulty with the first movement of Symphony no 1, its overall shape and coherence, and Colin Davis’s recent performance in New York illustrated Jaeger’s point. Haitink solves many of the problems by the clear texture he elicits from the Philharmonia. By allowing the different contrapuntal threads their say, the dovetailing and interaction of the various themes is subtly illustrated, and the movement achieves the coherence Elgar so effortlessly gave it in his recording. If the ‘motto’ starts just too slowly, the deliberate pace gives magisterial weight to the ensuing tutti. Less happy is again the ‘Brahmsian’ tune of the finale, which is needlessly hurried and suffers from an inattentive bass line. The ‘Scherzo’ is fleet and fantastic, with barking brass superbly disciplined, and the ‘river’ music just managing not to sound rushed and restless. The Adagio is rightly the spiritual core of the performance, and here Haitink’s judgment is impeccable. The fantasy is given full play, and the generous warmth finds its proper resolution in those magical closing bars.

Heard immediately after Symphony no 1, the Second seems simplicity itself. The first audience probably regretted the dying fall that substituted for the triumphal conclusion to no 1 and applauded only piggishly. I miss rather the formal complexity and many challenges of Op 55. Haitink recorded the symphonies in chronological order (1983 and 1984), with the result that much of the E flat sounds complacent. This applies to the start. It is not so much a matter of tempo as of just articulation of the many thematic fragments that weld the first paragraph. Elgar rather hustled this movement, but there is undoubtedly a ‘third way’. Such doubts are quickly dispelled by the Larghetto, which is both funereal and consoling, rising to passionate heights and ending with a return to the desolation of grief, with every detail of Elgar’s scoring scrupulously observed. The nightmare vision at the centre of the Rondo needs an extra turn or two of the screw to make the torture fully effective, while the finale tune that Rosa Burley rather despised wants more subtle phrasing. The Philharmonia Orchestra is on top form in both symphonies; some day they will improve on these performances, fine as they are.

Robert Anderson

Introduction and Allegro, Op 47. With : Handel’s Concerto Grosso, Op 6, no 7; Schoenberg’s Concerto for String Quartet and Orchestra after the Handel Concerto Grosso; Spohr’s Concerto in A minor for String Quartet and Orchestra, Op 131.

*Lark Quartet and San Francisco Ballet Orchestra conducted by Jean Louis LeRoux
Arabesque Z 6723*

It is seldom one goes to the ESJ for some delectable Spohr. Tovey diverted him from the mainstream of Classical music with complaints about his “irritating mannerisms” and “cloying chromatic harmonies”. England had no doubts about him in earlier days, and this last of his concertos (1845) dates from the time London flted him royally and was ready to place him on the pedestal Mendelssohn would soon vacate. As a superb violinist and accomplished quartet composer, Spohr exploits his solo team with dash and bravura. The quartet intertwines with the orchestra from the outset, and Spohr has an inexhaustible range of subtle textures, with soloists flying to dizzy heights, and the orchestra’s obvious enchantment giving

place only rarely to a more solemn tutti. The first movement purrs to a happy close, making the Bach-like tread and searing suspensions of the Adagio the more telling. The riotous Rondo poses the Lark Quartet many a searching test: they are passed with never a quaver or feather out of place. LeRoux directs with the infectious enjoyment the work deserves.

The strings of the Ballet Orchestra show no sense of 'period' style in the Handel; but he's robust enough for many sorts of treatment. Somewhere in the far distance a harpsichord produces an occasional chord, though it is the full weight of the orchestra in this sturdy, extravert performance that hints not only at the Elgar soon to come but at the affinities between the two masters equally favoured by British monarchs. Schoenberg's view of Handel, however, is rather different from that of the early Georges. His version of the final Hornpipe is designed rather for landlubbers or even clodhoppers rather than the fleet footwork of the quarterdeck. Supersonic scramblings on the violin, woodpecker excursions on the xylophone, and the tinklings of yet more exotic percussion give the work a post-Freudian hallucinatory quality the contemporary world may well deserve but need not like. Schoenberg's Allegretto grazioso is so far "after" poor Handel that the original is undetectable. As an attempt to increase Handel's relevance for the twentieth century, the work is a failure; as a 1933 salute to the advent of Hitler it may be appropriate enough.

What of the Introduction and Allegro? The superb rhetoric of the opening, given with maximum conviction and sonority, makes a marvellous start; and the quartet confirms throughout the high opinion derived from their Spohr. The concert hall always provides effective contrast between quartet and tutti strings. Elgar was so concerned, indeed, for the separation of the two sound bodies that he told his engraver the orchestra would be too far from the quartet to turn its pages. Here the engineers have approximated the sonorities so that the antiphonal contrasts are lessened. This is evident at the first appearance of the 'Welsh' tune, where the solo viola is given concerto-like prominence rather than an over-the-hills mystery and remoteness. Elgar's 'nobilitate' may be endlessly debated, but it does not imply the portentous decrease in tempo it gets here and that robs the subsequent *con fuoco* of its fiery urgency. That said, the cut and thrust of the fugue comes across with such clarity and the final peroration has such intensity that intervening quibbles may be forgotten. The programming of the disc is enthralling, but it is for the Spohr that I am most grateful to these skilled players.

Robert Anderson

Cello Concerto Op. 85. With Lutoslawski : Cello Concerto.

*Pieter Wispelwey (cello), Netherlands Radio Orchestra
conducted by Jan van Steen
Channel Classics CCS 12998*

The present R.E.D. Classical 1999 (formerly Gramophone) catalogue lists 30 or so recordings of Elgar's Cello Concerto. So, one may well ask what is so special about this new entry into an already crowded field? Well, there are a number of good reasons: it is a recording made by non-British artists, it is distinguished by adventurous booklet notes (including a lengthy essay by Wispelwey on how he prepared for the recording) and unusual programming - whereas the majority of recordings opt for safe couplings with standard popular repertory works or inclusion within easier 'concert' programmes, Channel dare to couple this performance with Lutoslawski's Cello Concerto to form an intriguing and dramatic contrast.

I can think of only one other such adventurous coupling - the Revelation recording (RV 10100) with Britten's astringent Cello Symphony. Wispelwey tells us that he listened closely to many recordings of the Concerto before he entered the recording studio; and he notes the differences between the Elgar/Beatrice Harrison and the Du Pré/Barbirolli readings. Of the Elgar/Harrison recording he comments: "Perhaps not the perfect chemistry between conductor and soloist, but how refreshing are Elgar's choices of tempo, how flowing the Moderato (and moving and magisterial and elegant), how playful and lively the fast movements and how natural the Adagio!" Wispelwey appears to have deeply studied and

thought about his interpretation of the Concerto. He makes interesting detailed comments about several passages. For instance : "It is remarkable that, although the concerto's idiom is unambiguously late-romantic, there is such control. This is expressed, for example, in a term such as 'nobilmente', applied to the opening measures of the cello in the 1st and 4th movements.

"All the more overwhelming is the moment in the last movement where Elgar loses his gentleman's self-control and lets himself go in Wagnerian outbursts, leaving the cellist in harrowing isolation. Before he finds comfort in a quotation from the 3rd movement, there are four measures leading to this moment which sound like Brünnhilde's gradual surrender to sleep at the end of *Die Walküre*, underlining the valedictory atmosphere of the whole episode, and perhaps of the whole concerto."

Wispelwey, playing on a nineteenth-century French (anonymous) instrument, begins a little tentatively and carefully; this is a studied rather than a spontaneous reading but with no lack of warmth. Surprisingly, the tempo is slightly faster than that of the Du Pré/Barbirolli partnership. Jan van Steen provides a most sympathetic accompaniment and the rapport and integration between soloist and orchestra throughout is excellent. Wispelwey's playing is always clean and articulate, impressively so in the faster moving sections of the Lento-Allegro molto. The Adagio (4:31) is again faster than Du Pré (5:15); it is as though the sadness is being recollected at a greater distance; suffering recalled in greater maturity, but it is no less affecting. I was reminded of Wispelwey's comments about Wagner quoted, while listening to the fourth movement (Du Pré:12:15, Wispelwey:11:09), the orchestral response is harder and tinged with bitterness while Wispelwey's mourning has more of a defiant edge.

The contrast between the Elgar and the Lutoslawski is stark indeed. This is uncompromisingly modern and music to appeal to the head rather than the heart. (Would Elgar have commented : 'all mechanical, no romance', I wonder?). Again Wispelwey gives an excellent commentary about the work persuading us that it has drama, intensity and humour. The effects for the cello impress and the orchestral textures are colourful and often arresting. The concerto begins with an extended cadenza, a showpiece for off-colour glissandi and other typical Lutoslawski devices. The cello's meanderings are interrupted by a series of trumpet calls which are reminiscent of a cacophony of impatient car horns. These horns dominate this one-movement work which continues through a thicket of weird string pizzicatos and isolated, seemingly uncoordinated percussion strokes... It is only well into the work when the cello muses melancholically over quietly, agitated strings that we approach anything like Elgar's sound world; but this atmosphere is soon dispelled by the orchestra's eerie unease. Despite my usual resistance to this type of music, this work grew on me after several hearings.

Ian Lace

'Elgar : Re-discovered works for Violin'.

Marat Bisengaliev (violin), Benjamin Frith (piano)
Black Box BBM 1016

An enterprising disc from the new Black Box label featuring a former pupil of the famous Tchaikovsky Conservatoire in Moscow, Marat Bisengaliev. The American journal *Fanfare* described him as "a latter day Ysaye", and he is certainly a real virtuoso. Discs of Elgar's violin music are not that thick on the ground, and this one has the added advantage of including a world premiPre recording of an *Etude-Caprice* dating from 1878, which forty years later Elgar gave to Billy Reed. In 1940 Reed transcribed it and added an *ad lib* piano part. (The MS is now in the Library of the Royal College of Music). From its opening bars it is clear that, like the later *Etudes*, it is an exercise; there is not much of a tune, and in fact it sounds stylistically at odds with the rest of the music which Elgar was composing at that time. The central section is more lyrical, and Reed's accompaniment is discreet and appropriate, as one might expect.

That one work apart, the title of the disc could be construed as slightly presumptuous. For many of us, these works have never been lost, ever since John Georgiadis' ground-breaking Pearl disc of the mid

'70s (SHE 523). Since then, Nigel Kennedy and Lydia Mordkovitch (both Chandos - CHAN 8380 and 9624 respectively) have recorded some of these shorter violin pieces to accompany the Sonata. Then in 1992 the Society sponsored a recording of Chris Nicholls and Isabelle Flory (Whitetower ENS 177: cassette only), including the first recording - by the former - of the *Etudes Caracteristiques*, and the first modern recording of Szigeti's arrangements of the late piano pieces, *Adieu* and *Serenade*. The following year came a double-CD set from Pickwick (DPCD 1039) of the "complete" music for violin and piano, played by William Bouton. Thus, apart from the *Etude-Caprice* already mentioned, all of the works have been recorded before, although the previous version of *In Hammersbach* from the *Bavarian Dances* dates from the 78 era, and the *Etudes Caracteristiques* and the Szigeti arrangements are new to CD.

What is always fascinating about such a disc is to hear how a virtuoso from outside the British tradition treats these works; it is often healthy to come to them without any "baggage", and Bisengaliev certainly has his own ideas as to how he wants to play them. In nearly all cases it works very well, the only exceptions being the best-known works, *Salut d'Amour* and *Chanson de Matin*, where a more innocent, artless approach is required. Yet *Chanson de Nuit* is superb, the violin's rich, full tone making the most of this wonderful miniature. There is plenty of passion in the *Romance*; and the *Gavotte* is a real *tour de force*, Bisengaliev making effective use of the occasional *glissando*. This last sounds like a companion piece for *La Capricieuse*, which is also brilliantly played. My notes read "rubato in spades!", and although the soloist takes liberties with the score in some places, this performance is a sheer delight. The Op 4 and Op 13 pieces are fine, especially *Bizarrerie* - Bisengaliev really gives it character, and brings it alive - but it was a shame not to have its companion piece (*Mot d'Amour*), and *Pastourelle* from the earlier group. Those unfamiliar with the *Etudes* should remember that they are primarily exercises - and fearfully difficult at that! - but I was critical of Nicholls in my review (JOURNAL September 1992) for not making them sound like effective pieces. Bisengaliev is technically much more secure than Nicholls, and within the limitations of their composition, he gives them much more life and style. (Incidentally, it is a great pity that the Exercise for the Third Finger of 1878 was not also recorded.) The other works on the disc are *May Song*, *Carissima*, and the Mazurka from the Three Characteristic Pieces, this last very exciting with some delicious *rubato* at the *Più Mosso*. Throughout, Benjamin Frith is an ideal partner and contributes significantly to the success of the disc.

I suspect many will want this for the *Etude-Caprice* and the *Etudes Caracteristiques*, but overall this is a very attractive recording of some lovely music, much of which should be known more widely. There is a special offer on this disc to Society members; it can be obtained direct from Black Box Music, PO Box 28, Orpington, Kent BR5 1TQ for £10-50, which includes postage and packing (cheques made payable to Black Box Music Ltd).

The Editor

Introduction & Allegro for Strings, Op 47. With works by Haydn, Mozart, Purcell, and Rosse
The John Barbirolli Chamber Orchestra conducted by John Barbirolli
The Barbirolli Society SJB 1899

John Barbirolli made the first ever recording of the Introduction and Allegro for Strings in 1927 for the National Gramophonic Society, and this second recording for HMV on 28 January 1929 with his own string orchestra which he formed in 1924. As a cellist he fully understood Elgar's magnificent string writing and went on to record the piece four more times between 1947 and 1963! This is an urgent, youthful reading and his players are particularly able to show off their artistry in the staccato semiquaver second subject of the Allegro (fig 10) and in the central fugato section; and Barbirolli is alert to every nuance and marking in the score - the 'Welsh tune' at the close of the exposition is beautifully played. Barbirolli gives full rein to the sweeping, sonorous nobilmente passages and after listening to his triumphant conclusion it is no wonder that Elgar commented, on hearing JB's recording, that he had "no idea it was such a big piece". The work was issued by the Barbirolli Society on LP some years ago and this is its first issue on

CD. It is hard to believe that the recording is seventy years old, so fresh is the sound.

The virtues of Barbirolli's orchestra are equally apparent in the other works on this disc, also recorded in 1928-29, especially the Haydn symphony - it is sometimes forgotten that JB was a superb interpreter of Haydn - and there is much to enjoy on this highly recommended disc. It is available to Elgar Society members at £6-00 including postage (non-UK add postage) from Paul Brooks, 11 Cranbrook Drive, Kennington, Oxford OX1 5RR.

Kevin Mitchell

Cello Concerto, Op 85. Introduction & Allegro, Op 47. Elegy, Op 58. Serenade for Strings, Op 20. Salut d'Amour, Op 12. Pomp & Circumstance March, Op 39 no 1.

Maria Kliegel (cello), Capella Istropolitana, CSR Symphony and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras conducted by Michael Halász and Adrian Leaper
Naxos 8.554409

This disc contains Elgar works which have already appeared on Naxos and were welcomed by JOURNAL reviewers when they first appeared. Maria Kliegel is a fine cellist and gives a very enjoyable account of the Concerto, although the first movement is a little plodding, and like JGK, I found the orchestral interjections in the Scherzo annoyingly pedestrian (Elgar has marked them *a tempo*). But it improves as it goes along. The string works are beautifully played, especially the Serenade and the Elegy, but the fugue in the Introduction & Allegro is slow, though very rhythmic and well articulated. Terrific value at around a fiver.

The Editor

LETTERS

From : Professor Ralph H Thomas

I was interested to read the comments of your reviewer on the dearth of radio broadcasting of classical music in the USA ('America Welcomes Elgar/Payne no 3', Elgar Society NEWS, March 1999). It was a rather bleak assessment fortunately not altogether supported by the facts.

Although I have visited most of the fifty states for extended periods, America is a vast continent and I would not presume to speak for the entire US. However, as a resident of the San Francisco Bay Area I can speak with some authority about Northern California. Here, broadcast music is not entirely dependent upon National Public Radio. We enjoy in addition the services of two (until recently three) excellent radio stations which broadcast classical music 24 hours per day with a minimum of commercial messages. It is a pleasure to report that both British music in general and Elgar's music in particular are well served.

Fortunately we have progressed far beyond those times when the latest culture arrived with the Wells Fargo Stage Coach!

From : Arthur D Walker

I am working on a major book dealing with the printing of Elgar's works. There has been no research to identify the variant issues of his works. For example, in The Dream of Gerontius, ECE vol 6, Part 1, bar 651, the word "Go" is missing, but appears in other printings of the full score. One issue has "To page 55" printed down the left-hand side of the page; this is in a plate-printed copy of mine, also appears in the source used by Kalmus for their full score, and is in the copy used for printing. There are also other variants not in other issues. In the miniature score printed in the 1930s and again reprinted in 1947, handwritten corrections can be seen from the source used. The English vocal score has more than one printing, the 1905 printing being the copy used for the 1982 reprint (not corrected), a reprint of about 1910 has some changes to the text (these appear in the 1935 reprint).

The Variations exist in three versions; the unpublished original version, of which only the final bars of the original ending have been published. (This is the work as first performed). For the first publication Elgar revised it at certain points and then added the new ending for publication in 1899. Further revisions were made before its reprint which was published in April 1904. (This last is the normal performing version : ECE vol 27 is the 1899 version).

The title of my book will be Sir Edward Elgar : a bibliographical study of the printed scores. It is for this work which I am doing that I am asking for any unwanted copies, in any condition, of Elgar's music. My own collection consists of almost 500 copies of his music, many being first editions, including a full score which once belonged to Elgar's friend Nicholas Kilburn.

From : Raymond Monk

Julian Rushton and Patrick Turner with their noble additions to the Elgar bibliography have celebrated the Enigma centenary in fine style. Both books (reviewed by Robert Anderson in the March JOURNAL) are a

joy to read and I for one will be returning to them again and again. However, those who would embark on Enigma puzzle-solving in the next century may like to read Elgar's standard reply to those 'solutions' which appeared during his lifetime :

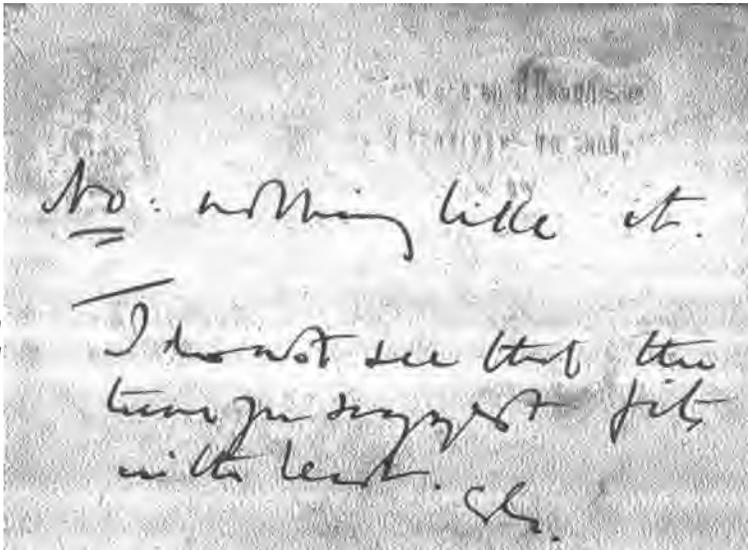
"Severn House, Hampstead, NW.

No : nothing like it.

I do not see that the tune you suggest fits in the least.

E.E."

And I am inclined to the view that all subsequent attempts would have met with this same response!



From
: Dag
T

Andersson

Please allow me to comment on the report (NEWS, November 1998) about the performance of the Enigma Variations in Bodø, Norway. You refer to the conductor Andrew Constantine asking whether his performance with the Trondheim Symphony Orchestra is the northernmost performance of Enigma ever. In the Enigma centenary year I can inform you that it certainly is not. In Tromsø, 500 km north of Bodø, our local symphony orchestra (we did not even have to "import" an orchestra!) gave us a marvellous performance of the work on 24 November 1996. And we are not at all without strong connections to the British Elgar tradition : the leading cellist in the orchestra, who is English and teaches at the Academy of Music in Tromsø, was a member of the Hallé Orchestra under Sir John Barbirolli and took part in Sir John's famous recording of The Dream of Gerontius.

From : Rod Warrington

At the risk of starting a running correspondence, could I nominate my most prized example of inappropriate Elgar? Today (17 April) on the BBC sports programme Grandstand, they showed clips of what were, apparently, outstanding rugby league tries as the basis of a 'nominate the best' type competition. And the background music? Wagner perhaps, Valkyries in full pursuit of an odd shaped ball? No. That oh so oft repeated theme from Chariots of Fire - good sporting connection? No. They chose Nimrod - yes, Nimrod. Now, maybe, just maybe, Jaeger followed the game. Somehow, I doubt it. Even had he, it's even more unlikely that a sporting producer a century or so later would know about it. Poor old Nimrod. I thought its use in the otherwise excellent film Elizabeth was bad enough. Today's example will take some beating. Any offers?

From : John Groves

May I be allowed to offer some more information about Robert Easton, who sings the part of Judas in the Apostles' extract on 'Elgar's Interpreters on Record Vol 1'?

~~Robert was born in Sunderland in 1898 (not 1874 as stated in the booklet). He fought in the First World War but was badly injured and lost his right leg above the knee. Whilst he was recovering in hospital he was offered the chance of training to be an accountant or of having singing tuition and he chose the latter! One of his first professional engagements was Stanford's Songs of the Sea at the Royal Albert Hall, which he said with hindsight he was far too inexperienced to do at the time, and felt he had sung very badly. He came to the notice of Sir Thomas Beecham and frequently sang under him in both opera at Covent Garden and oratorio in the 1930s. He had a very deep, resonant voice, and none of his 78 recordings do him justice.~~

After the Second World War he did a lot of work for the BBC both on radio and later on television, and these recordings sound something like the singer I remember in the 1970s and '80s when I was one of his (very few) singing pupils. He was a truly inspirational teacher and was both singing in public and teaching right up until he died in 1984 (not 1933!). In later years his singing engagements were mostly for charity, and I remember taking him to many hospitals and churches in the middle of nowhere, where the voice still sounded very warm and full (not cold, unfocused and with a wide vibrato as on the 78s!). He lived in Haslemere in Surrey when I knew him, climbing a ladder with his wooden leg to cut a 10-foot hedge, and removing his leg to scramble under the car to effect a repair. He could walk twice as fast as anyone I ever met, was a great table tennis player, and was very embarrassing to be on the underground with as he would flirt (in the nicest possible way!) with any attractive young lady.

In his article 'The Nightmare of Gerontius' (JOURNAL July 1997) Carl Newton states that Robert Easton was considered for the bass soloist in Sargent's first recording of Gerontius. This I think would have been most unlikely as Robert was a Columbia artist and none of his recordings ever appeared on HMV, and as far as I know he never sang in any performance of Gerontius, so he would not have known it, and probably would not have wanted to learn it at very short notice. Also, Robert Easton did not take part in a recording of Belshazzar's Feast as stated (surely the author must mean Dennis Noble?). Apart from 'By the Wayside' Robert made no other recordings of Elgar's music.

From : Barry Collett

I much enjoyed the fascinating and scholarly article by Andrew Neill on Elgar and the Great War (JOURNAL March 1999). It was obviously not part of his brief to write about the actual musical content of the pieces written at this time, but I was somewhat taken aback by the statement "... with the exception of The Starlight Express only a little music of lasting value came out of the four years of conflict ...". I feel that for too long many of these pieces have been undervalued. The Spirit of England must surely be amongst Elgar's noblest choral works; and having conducted in concert and on record Carillon, Le Drapeau Belge, Une Voix dans le Desert, Polonia, and The Fringes of the Fleet, I can testify to the immense power that these works can still exert over an audience. Fringes of the Fleet has never failed to bring the house down (why has it never been done at the Proms, for example?) and Une Voix dans le Desert, in particular, carries an emotive charge that can be overwhelming.

~~*Andrew Neill's article puts these works into their context admirably, but the music is far too good to be relegated to the second division!*~~

100 YEARS AGO...

As Elgar's fame grew, so did the number of visits to London. From 17 - 24 April 1899 he and Alice stayed with the singer Andrew Black and his wife at their home in Bramham Gardens in South Kensington. The big event of this visit was the London premiPre of *Caractacus*, a "great success" according to Alice. Then Edward was back in the capital on 6 - 15 May - this time staying with Basil Nevinson - for the London Festival, during which Henry Wood conducted the 'Meditation' from *The Light of Life*. (Alice was only there for the last two days, partly because Carice was unwell.) During these visits Elgar was making or cementing important relationships within the musical fraternity - with Percy Pitt, the composer and Queen's Hall organist; with the critic Alfred Kalisch; Frederic Cowen; and with the French composer and conductor Camille Chevillard. The Elgars also attended the wedding of Edward Lloyd's daughter on 19 April. However, the most important new acquaintance was undoubtedly a wealthy patron of the arts, Frank Schuster, whose "at home" Elgar attended on 11 May.

Other London business during these visits concerned the forthcoming premiPre of the *Variations*, which received its successful first performance at the St James Hall on 19 June. Elgar performances were now springing up everywhere, and in July he and Alice went to New Brighton, where Granville Bantock conducted the *Variations*, and where another significant relationship was formed - with Alfred Rodewald, a wealthy Liverpool businessman, and patron of the arts, including Bantock's New Brighton concerts. Elgar also visited Sheffield for a choral rehearsal of *King Olaf*, to be given at the Festival there in the autumn. Most of the rest of July and August were given over to the orchestration of *Sea Pictures*, much of it done at Birchwood, to where the Elgars moved on 25 July. The soloist was to be Clara Butt and Elgar travelled to London again to hear her go through the songs on 11 August. The following day, however, Elgar had a "stormy interview" with Henry Clayton at Novello. The financial arrangements for the publication of the *Variations* had caused bad blood. Elgar thought he had been ill-treated, and was further "disgusted" that Richter's agent Vert had been charged by Novello for hiring parts for an extra rehearsal, called to ensure a successful performance. As a result of another visit to the publishers on 21 August Elgar "broke with Messrs. Novello for a time", as Alice put it. The following day's diary entry reads "E. to Boosey", and they accepted the publication of *Sea Pictures* (and most of Elgar's next few works).

The Elgars arrived home from Birchwood on 2 September, and the following week saw Elgar in London again for rehearsals for the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester. Two of his works were to be given, *The Light of Life* and the *Variations*. Unusually for Elgar both pieces had been revised since their first performance; in fact, the *Variations* was heard for the first time with the longer ending to 'E.D.U' which Jaeger had pressed for. They were given on 13 September, the oratorio in the afternoon, and the *Variations* during the evening concert. The following morning the Elgars went to Worcester again to hear Horatio Parker's oratorio *Hora Novissima*. Alice was driven to the station, but "E walked with Father Bellasis". Fr Bellasis was a priest at the Birmingham Oratory and had been a pupil and personal friend of Cardinal Newman. Was it at this point that Elgar noticed the coincidence of the title of the oratorio they were about to hear, with the words of the dying Gerontius in Newman's poem?

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107 MONKHAMS AVENUE, WOODFORD GREEN, ESSEX IG8 0ER

Tel: 0181 - 506 0912

Fax: 0181 - 924 4154

e-mail: *hodgkins @ compuserve.com*

CONTENTS

Vol.11, No.2

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Articles

Elgar's <i>Te Deum & Benedictus</i>	70
One Story, Two Visions - textual differences in <i>Gerontius</i>	75
Elgar and Queen Mary's Dolls' House	89
Elgar's <i>Polonia</i> , Op 76	97
Obituary : The Rt Hon the Lord Menuhin	110
Elgar and the Boy Violinist - a batch of letters	111
Video Review	115
Book Reviews	116
Record Reviews	120
Letters	123
100 years ago...	127

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