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EDITORIAL

An editorial last appeared on these pages shortly after the NEWSLETTER and the JOURNAL became separate entities. Now that each publication has its own new editor, it seems appropriate to offer a brief introduction. I do not plan a regular such column. An editor's role, I believe, is to sweep the steps and polish the door-knob, to make sure everything is in good order before you arrive, and then to retire gracefully... but as my preparations are now made for the first time, please allow me to welcome you at the door as well.

The invitation to edit the JOURNAL was unexpected and imposes a heavy responsibility. Even so, when embarking on such an important project, one inevitably examines one's motives. Of course, it is meaningful and gratifying to join the celebration of creativity in the midst of an increasingly destructive world; but what motivates us at a deeper, personal level?

Pause for thought brought before me a scene in 1898. With the daily grind temporarily forgotten, the composer sits at his piano, puffing a cigar and idly letting his fingers wander. A theme emerges; 'What is it?' asks his wife. His reply is a profound expression of hope and creative optimism: 'Nothing—but something might be made of it...'

I am certain I share the sense of an 'enigma' at the centre of all our lives. Its 'dark saying' must be left unguessed. Nevertheless, we instinctively pursue its shadow, catching glimpses of ourselves in the lives of others. The reflection is clearest in those closest to us and in those who share our interests. When we tread the Elgarian landscape, respond to his music, pore over the notes, and examine his life, we are perhaps fathoming our own enigma and by extension moving towards a deeper understanding of others.

I make no apology for once again raising the ghost of Elgar's marvellous and much-discussed Variations, for that music perhaps more explicitly than any other reminds me of my motive for doing what I do. By honouring the memory of the great man, we not only acknowledge the finer creative aspects of humanity, we also explore the potential within our own lives for making something of that which began as nothing.

Phil Maund

Front cover: Two details from a 'team photo' taken at the 1922 Gloucester Three Choirs Festival, showing Elgar and Stanford in academic robes. The complete photograph is reproduced on p. 204 as part of Lewis Foreman's anniversary tribute to Stanford.

[Photo: Lewis Foreman collection]

ELGAR'S *GERONTIUS* A Dream of Transcendence

David Lemon

The religious imagery of The Dream of Gerontius has occasionally proved an obstacle to its wider appreciation. This article peels back its immediate cultural context, revealing a work based on themes which characterise all human experience, and finding points for comparison in the works of Donne, Blake, Turner, and even in Delius's Nietzschean vision expressed in his almost contemporary A Mass of Life.

My parents were married in a London church not far from the museums of South Kensington. Holy Trinity is a finely-spun Gothic affair, and stands discretely at the end of a shady avenue off the Brompton Road. Some of the shade is provided by the looming presence of Brompton Oratory, a huge baroque-style monument to the Catholic revival in England. Standing at the front is a statue of John Henry, Cardinal Newman (1801–90), a great dissenter from the Anglican Church of the mid-nineteenth century, and a prize catch for the Catholic.

I remember the first time I went into the Oratory. From out of a bright eleven o'clock morning, I plunged into a twilight world of magic, splendour, and mystery. I was intoxicated by the heart-stopping perfume and, as my eyes sought through the gloom, I became aware of being in a space both embracing and yet frighteningly large. The dome curved high above, its florid architectural detail obscured by generations of sooty prayers. As an Anglican, comforted that God was on the Queen's side as well as mine, I felt I was trespassing in this temple of Christian outsiders, people whom I knew to have endured centuries of persecution and ostracization for their faith. But the confident Roman building spoke to me of rites more ancient and more universal than the robust English services of my local church, and I experienced an especially joyful thrill mixed of transgression and illumination.

In the rack of pamphlets by the door was a stack of pale cream booklets. Printed on the cover in a rather insipid blue, as if having churned out millions of such little books the very presses were exhausted, was a photograph of a drawn, intense cleric and the legend *The Dream of Gerontius* by Cardinal Newman. From this nine-hundred-line poem, concerning the journey of a man through death into the afterlife, Elgar drew the text for his oratorio.

I relate this personal anecdote because among oratorios (and English ones in particular) *The Dream of Gerontius* is a very strange and exotic creature, and springs from a particular cultural context. It is a context of conflict between Anglican and Catholic, intellect and sensuality, the hidden things of the heart and the surface of rectitude, passion and reticence. Elgar dressed the poem in the clothes of oratorio, as the *Dream* is commonly described for want of an agreed term. But it is not so much a conventional 'numbers' piece for mezzo-soprano, tenor, bass and chorus; it has an operatic tendency. There is no flavour of the church cantata. Nor is it a drama of action or miracles, such as appealed to Handel's and Mendelssohn's audiences. Nor are the places through which the Soul travels familiar to the Anglican sensibility. The Latin prayers on earth, the edge of the abyss of hell, and the waters of purgatory are as unfamiliar to most auditors as Brompton's baroque basilica where Elgar was married to his beloved Alice in 1889.

The appeal of the *Dream* is rooted in the strains of the ecstatic and the sublime which run through English letters and art. I think of the poetry of Donne, the visions of Blake, the roaring yellows and reds of Turner, and even the spires of St Pancras railway station hotel rising out of chilly fog. The nineteenth-century world of the imagination and ideals of medieval and Renaissance art and life were projected into the modern industrial age in a counterpoint



Brompton Oratory, South Kensington, London

[Photo: Phil Maund]

intended to humanise industry and advance the cause of the humanities through science and technology. It was an idea that spread throughout the Empire. Even today the archetypal image of French Quebec City is the Château Frontenac, built as a railway hotel by that not very French nor sixteenth-century organisation, the Canadian Pacific Railway. The visitor to Brompton finds, within a short walk of the Renaissance Oratory, the Venetian splendour of the Victoria and Albert Museum and the polychrome Gothic mass of the Natural History Museum. Then too, in the other direction, there is the mercantile palace of Harrods in its oddly indeterminate Italian style.

The first performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* on 3 October 1900 took place in a classical temple of a concert hall, at a festival in the industrial city of Birmingham. It was an ill-prepared business, and the lack of rehearsal was a severe impediment, even under the baton of the great German conductor Hans Richter. The festival programme Richter was faced with, having received the score of the *Dream* from Elgar's hands on only 23 September, was the equivalent of an Edwardian luncheon—many-coursed and indigestible. It gives a good sense of the musical spirit which filled this ironmasters' hall. On 29 September, Richter rehearsed Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, *The Dream of Gerontius* (its only full rehearsal) and Coleridge-Taylor's enormous *Song of Hiawatha*. On 2 October Mendelssohn's *Elijah* was performed in the morning, and the evening concert comprised Parry's twelve-part cantata *De Profundis*, Schumann's *Genoveva Overture*, Mozart's 'Jupiter' Symphony, Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*, Wagner's *Tannhäuser Overture*, a group of songs, and four of Elgar's *Sea Pictures* with the composer conducting. The next day the *Dream* was given in the morning. In the evening, the dauntless festival-goer would have heard Handel's *Israel in Egypt* and Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony.

Seen from the perspective of the day, such modernist vigour is astonishing. Coleridge-Taylor, Elgar, and Parry were at the peak of their powers. Tchaikovsky would have been only sixty in 1900, but for his premature death in 1893. Wagner, who had died only fourteen years earlier, was still considered the giant among moderns. Even if

the performances were sometimes poor, the pulsing energy of this musical spirit was remarkable. Predictably, reaction to the *Dream* was that the execution left much to be desired, but several musical writers reviewed the piece with understanding and sympathy, and the work was eagerly taken up and performed widely. Sensitive and insecure, Elgar was deeply disappointed by the first performance, but he did not have to wait long for the work, and his star, to rise.

Elgar was Catholic in an Anglican cultural hegemony, a countryman in an urban artistic community, from the lower-middle class at a time when it was usually only the independently wealthy who could afford to be composers. He may have become Sir Edward Elgar and even to have seemed superficially, in works like the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches and the Second Symphony, to set the spirit of Crown and Empire to music; but the man was, in some of his most creative years, the period of the 'Enigma' Variations and *The Dream of Gerontius*, a relative outsider. The journey of the *Dream* is a journey into spiritual territory at odds with the central ideas that informed English religion. We are confronted by the concepts of intercession, purgatory, and embodied angels which drastically demarcated the English and Roman churches.

So, among the host of oratorios, Elgar's work based on Newman's poem has a unique place. It is not drawn from scripture dealing with the Divine Father or the Son, as are Elgar's *The Light of Life*, *The Apostles*, and *The Kingdom*; nor is it a passion, as Bach made familiar; nor is it about some great Biblical hero, such as Handel's *Solomon* or Mendelssohn's *Elijah*. It describes the journey of a human soul, from death through the regions of heaven.

In this article I want to comment on the cultural background of the work, and discuss how we may approach it from our own foreign territories—whether religious, or quite possibly not—and grasp what is universal about Elgar's masterpiece. In my experience many people find it difficult to enter the particular state of Elgar's *Dream*, as if it were somehow a tract rather than a work of art. They may have no difficulty entering a world of magic and wizardry when they encounter Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings* or Wagner's world of concocted myth; nor may they have trouble with Handel's *Messiah*, even if they do not believe in the divinity of Jesus. The entire paraphernalia of Christmas would collapse if its spirit only affected Christians. We suspend disbelief in order to inhabit worlds of myth and theology in which human truths may be discovered and, frankly, so we may be entertained.

When *The Dream of Gerontius* was written there was a considerable interest in the end of things. Ideas of transcendence of death and yearnings for escape from existential dilemmas were familiar themes in the art of the nineteenth century. Wagner, who Elgar admired, was principal among those in musical art who treated death as a kind of transformation to a higher sphere: from the transfiguration of the Flying Dutchman in the redeeming death of Senta, to the love-death of Isolde, and the redemption of Amfortas by the almost Christ-like Parsifal. Wagner at one time contemplated an opera about Jesus, and one on a Hindu subject, *The Victors*.

Furthermore, religious discourse was part of ordinary public discussion, and schisms and arguments were even conducted in newspapers and journals. Such was the correspondence between the Rev. Charles Kingsley (1819–75)—now best known as the author of *The Water Babies* (1863) with its socialist reforming subtext—and Cardinal Newman. This debate gave rise to a long book by Newman explaining his religious views, *Apologia pro Vita Sua* (1864), which ultimately led him to decide that the Roman Church held the true faith.

In the churches, lecture halls, concert halls, theatres, opera houses, and art galleries of 1900 were to be found all kinds of death and redemption. Artists, as well as political philosophers such as Marx and Engels, even signalled the death of societies and nations. Promises of redemption through sacrifice for love, through the woman-soul, through the blood of the Lamb, were challenged to their core in the First World War, when it became too horribly clear that death might not be transformation, but just death. The challenges of Darwin and Marx swamped the debates of Kingsley and Newman. The revolution in Russia was profoundly anti-religious, and widely influential

among intellectual socialists. Artists began to tackle social and political issues, and masses of people lost faith in established religion and esoteric eschatological debate. Indeed, Elgar's own faith dissolved completely. He died in 1934, and while several of his works such as the Cello Concerto, the Violin Concerto, the 'Enigma' Variations, and the symphonies remained firmly in the repertoire, most of his large choral works were consigned to obscurity. (As it happens, Holst and Delius also died in 1934. Peter Maxwell Davies and Harrison Birtwistle, two of the present senior generation of English composers, were born in the same year.)

Today it may be all the more difficult to countenance with any seriousness Newman's vivid evocations of the afterlife, peopled by angels and demons, and with neighbourhoods like Hell and Purgatory. But there are ways to make sense of *The Dream of Gerontius* and to inhabit fully its spiritual and even doctrinal world. They are: one, to understand the themes and characters of the poem as metaphors for human experience; and two (obviously perhaps, for this is principally a work of musical art), to discover in the musical style an exact consonance with the human aspirations which the drama expresses.

First, a brief synopsis. The opening orchestral 'Prelude' lays out all the musical motifs. Elgar's idiosyncratic musical language is rhythmically flexible, and the melodies have a surging quality which describes a forward-flowing trajectory. Part I (which is about forty minutes long, including the 'Prelude') concerns the last hours of Gerontius on earth. He senses the irrevocable collapse of his mortal self, prays for strength and the intercession of his friends, declares the articles of his faith, encounters the terror of the beast of Hell, and—calling on Jesus, Joseph, and Mary—dies. A priest sends Gerontius's soul on its journey.

At the opening of Part II, the Soul—as Gerontius is now called—is moving as if guided by an invisible force. The Angel, a being who has been through all the tribulations of humanity and refined through ages in heaven, greets him. The Angel has been the Soul's guardian throughout its mortal life. The Soul questions the Angel timidly. The Angel's reassurance is: 'You cannot now | Cherish a wish which ought not to be wished.' The Soul asks why it is not in the presence of God the Judge. The Angel tells him that in fact he is on the way, and that judgement has begun.

The Angel guides the Soul past the demons who gather at the gate of the judgement court. The Soul is anxious to meet his Lord; the Angel warns him that he will see God for only a moment, and that the sight will 'gladden' but 'pierce' him. The Angel speaks of the burning ecstasy of St Francis (though not by name) who, in direct communion with God, received the stigmata—the nail marks of the Cross—just before he died. Now, passing the gates of the House of Judgement, the Soul hears a sound 'like the rushing of the wind— | The summer wind—among the lofty pines'. All around we hear the voices of angels praising God, culminating in a tremendous hymn, 'Praise to the Holiest', which found its way into English hymnbooks. Finally, the Soul is brought before God, and stricken at the sight, longs for solace where he may be better prepared for his place in heaven. The Angel gently lowers him into the waters of Purgatory.

In summary, in the words of Elizabeth Jay, 'Gerontius presents the four last things—death, judgement, Hell and Heaven—in a way that makes them seem timeless, natural and even comforting, while incorporating a personalised interpretation of the office for the Dead as well as a wholly Catholic vision of Purgatory.' By transforming doctrines into poetry, Newman enables his reader to inhabit them as a matter of emotional truth, but the ecstatic emphasis of his conception cries out for musical expression.

Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* surfaces Newman's deeper subjects: the ever-hoped-for, deeply-conflicted conciliation between the flesh and sanctity; the eroticisation of spiritual agony (the stigmata are described as an 'agony | Which thrilled through body and soul in that embrace'); and the hope of salvation. These are older subjects than doctrine, and more universal. John Donne (1572–1631), a man with a passion for women and for union with God, wrote as the sixth Holy Sonnet an almost exact parallel to the journey of Gerontius's Soul, imagining the dividing of the parts

of the soul at death (in this context, the word 'impute' means 'consider'):

This is my playes last scene, here heavens appoint
My pilgrimages last mile; and my race
ldly, yet quickly runne, hath this last pace,
My spans last inch, my minutes latest point,
And gluttonous death, will instantly joynt
My body, and soule, and I shall sleepe a space,
But my'ever-waking part shall see that face,
Whose feare already shakes my every joynt:
Then, as my soule, to'heaven her first seate, takes flight,
And earth-borne body, in the earth shall dwell,
So, fall my sinnes, that all may have their right,
To where they'are bred, and would presse me, to hell.
Impute me righteous, thus purg'd of evill,
For thus I leave the world, the flesh, the devill.

Two hundred years later, the Enlightenment had emancipated thought from the domination of politically mandated religion. William Blake (1757–1827), a man of flesh and spirit if ever there was one, wrote under the title *All Religions are One* (c.1788) a series of 'principles' in which 'poetic genius' (identified by Northrup Frye as a synonym for the imagination!) is the source of religion, angels, spirits and demons, the texts of Christianity and Judaism, and philosophy. Blake's far-sighted implication is that it is possible to reconcile dogma and human experience; but for much of the rest of the nineteenth century the secular and religious worlds remained in opposition, and the discourse of eschatology entered into the world of art, as if Heaven and Hell were a casting agency and God the major star.

To take an example, in his painting *The Angel standing in the Sun* (1846), J. M. W. Turner (1775–1851) packed in the Expulsion from Paradise, the Last Judgement, and other stories, including Cain and Abel, and Samson and Delilah. All moral crises are illustrated in the painting, from the Fall to the end of time, presided over by a being standing in the light of God and administering his will.

In musical life, particularly in England, the importance of a composer depended upon his religious works. Dvořák (who also considered *The Dream of Gerontius* as a subject) was popular for cantatas such as *The Spectre's Bride* and for his religious works; Saint-Saëns said of Gounod that while his operas such as *Faust* would not survive, his reputation would be secured by *La Redemption* and *Mors et Vita*, both written for English choral societies.

After the convulsive catastrophe of the First World War, the uneasy realisation there was another war to come, the rise of Fascism, revolution in Russia, and civil war in Spain, the notion that God was either a useful or interesting protagonist in the artist's investigation of the human dilemma seemed distinctly *passé*. Nor were the pettifogging details of dogma of interest in a post-Empire world of international politics and dialectics informed by the discoveries of Freud and Jung.

Blake's 'Principles of the Poetic Genius' are clues to the robust nature of the imagination and its power to subsume and restate experience in forms both sacred and entirely human, even if defiantly godless. The sacred ultimately performs as a metaphor for human experience and becomes useful and interesting for that reason, not because it is taken to be a revelation of the Almighty.

In his 1929 essay, 'One and Many', Aldous Huxley wrote: 'To talk about religion except in terms of human psychology is an irrelevance. Jehovah, Allah, The Trinity, Jesus, Buddha are names for a great variety of human

virtues, human aesthetic emotions, human remorse, human compensatory fancies, human terrors, human cruelties.²

Today newspapers do not report on theological debates. Most artists work in a secular context. When Maxwell Davies wrote his oratorio *Job*, the emphasis of the work was on the humanity of Job and his acceptance of suffering as a condition of living. His glimpse of God is a vision of infinite nature, rather than Gerontius's yearning for union with the Lord of Heaven.

The Dream of Gerontius remains a profoundly Christian work, but it is first a work of art, not an act of prayer. To attempt to restructure its characters and regions in a system of secular or psychological metaphors would be possible, no doubt. However, more directly and affectionately embracing of Newman's and Elgar's intent is to find in the work the expression of the fear of death, the need for consolation in life, the awareness of culpability, the desire to understand even those things which will always remain mysteries, the awareness of evil, and the awareness of love. These are entirely human matters and are bound up with our common life-experience.

The Dream of Gerontius is clearly laid out and easy to follow. The words are not difficult to understand, and Elgar's gift for using keys to convey very precise emotional consonances is expertly employed. He borrowed from Wagner the technique of transforming musical themes ascribed to characters to represent the development of their experience. For example, the music of the dialogue of the Soul and the Angel at the beginning of Part II is the fundament of their poignant farewells as the transfigured soul is slipped into the waters of purgatory.

The Demon's Chorus is specially interesting because it takes into account exactly the opposition to faith that can be found in the antithetical values of Frederick Delius, with whom, notwithstanding, Elgar was later on friendly terms. Delius had no time for the atmosphere of sanctity which permeated musical life at the time. He said, 'Given a young composer of genius the sure way to ruin him is to make a Christian of him... Look at Elgar. He might have been a great composer if he had thrown all that religious paraphernalia overboard. *Gerontius* is a nauseating work, and of course, tremendously influenced by *Parsifal*.³ In his splendid but incredibly large and difficult—and thus rarely-performed—*A Mass of Life* (1904) Delius set words by Nietzsche which make heroes of Gerontius's demons. So, in *Gerontius*, 'The mind bold | And independent, | The purpose free, | So we are told, | Must not think | To have the ascendant' are words written by Newman for what the Soul describes as 'false spirits'. Delius sets Nietzsche's lines:

'O thou my Will, Dispeller thou of care! Thou mine essential in life! Preserve me from all petty conquests! My soul's predestination which I call my fate; Thou in me, Over me, Preserve me for one great final destiny, That I may stand prepared and ripe in the full noon-tide, prepared and ripe like glowing ore in the furnace; prepared for myself and for my deepest and most secret Will.'⁴

Could *Gerontius*'s 1900 demons have provoked the anti-religious 1904 Delius?

And yet, Elgar's and Delius's apparently diametrically opposed visions illuminate the common human aspiration for spiritual completion. Here is Nietzsche's Superman (I paraphrase both Delius's and Elgar's texts): 'My soul's predestination which I call my fate preserve me for one great final destiny that I may stand prepared for my deepest and most secret Will.' What is this, if not Gerontius's super-Soul's song, 'Take me away, and in the lowest deep there will I sing my absent Lord and Love, that sooner I may rise and go above, and see Him in the truth of everlasting day'? The answer might certainly be that each is crucially different from the other, because Nietzsche places the self at the apex of experience while Newman envisions the essential otherness of God. But both recognise the human aspiration for utter fulfilment. Since this state resides only in the imagination, the distinctive types of Nietzsche's and Newman's imaginative solutions to the soul's yearnings are less significant to the reader than his ordinary experience of incompleteness. The music of *A Mass of Life* and *The Dream of Gerontius* evokes the sublime realisation of aspiration, and is an emotionally explicit chimera of transcendence. This is metaphysical entertainment. Since we remain the custodians of our human yearnings, we need no more believe in some kind of super-Self or God to be entirely convinced by both composers that either could exist.



The Angel standing in the Sun (1846) by J. M. W. Turner

(© Tate, London 2002).

Thus, the moment of the Soul's glimpse of God is a moment of ecstasy for which Elgar prepares us with unabashed relish. The build-up is one of the most visceral passages in the work; it is part of a long *accelerando* line leading first to silence, as if God Himself is too tremendous to describe in music, a brief but extremely intense climax as the vision of the Almighty devastates the Soul, then straight to the Soul's impassioned cry of 'Take me away'. What Elgar dramatises here is something unique: the effect on the mortal soul—naked of its worldly carapace and shivering in the region of heaven—of the transfiguring sight of God, supremely hoped for but inconceivably terrible.

Elgar by now has us convinced, or we have resisted too well. There is no point in encountering dogmatic disputes at this point. We may as well take it as completely necessary that such a vision of God compels us, with the Soul, out of its presence, and give way to the conviction that indeed we are content to wait until a final awakening to the ranks

of angels at some distant time. The closing pages are extremely precise, economical even. Elgar's music is almost entirely *piano* or quieter and employs subtle turns of phrase, keeping as throughout close to the sense of the words. This music-drama approach, so disparaged by Delius, actually increases the emotional level to the point at which people who love the work look forward to utter transcendence. 'That sooner I may rise, and go above, | And see Him in the truth of everlasting day', sings the Soul. The music bears the words on its rising motif, and with the Angel's profoundly consoling song of farewell, we watch with compassionate longing as the Soul disappears from view into the purgatorial lake. Our vision of heaven closes with echoes of angelic praise.

1. Northrup Frye, *Fearful Symmetry* (Princeton, 1947), p. 19.
2. Aldous Huxley, 'One and Many', in *Do What You Will* (London, 1929), p. 1.
3. Eric Fenby, *Delius as I knew him* (London, 1936), p. 178.
4. The text of *A Mass of Life* was compiled by Delius and the German conductor Fritz Cassirer from Nietzsche's *Also Sprach Zarathustra*. The quoted text is from the translation by Philip Borg-Wheeler presented in the insert booklet of the Chandos recording of *A Mass of Life* (CHAN9515(2)).

DAVID LEMON was born in Britain, but has lived and worked in Vancouver for thirty-two years. After running a successful business and supporting city cultural life in many ways, he now runs one of the city's principal classical CD stores, The Magic Flute, whilst still finding time to paint and continue his involvement in the artistic life of Vancouver. The University of British Columbia recently awarded him an honorary doctorate.

The text of this article is based upon a talk given by Dr Lemon prior to a performance of The Dream of Gerontius by musicians of the School of Music at the University of British Columbia on 30 November 2001.



*Charles Sanford Terry pictured around the time of his arrival at Aberdeen in 1898
(Alma Mater vol. xvi (1898–99),
reproduced by kind permission of Aberdeen University Library).*

CHARLES SANFORD TERRY IN THE ELGAR DIARIES the chronicle of a friendship

Alison I. Shiel

Charles Sanford Terry (1864–1936) was an outstanding scholar in his own subject, holding the Chair of History at Aberdeen University from 1903 until 1930. Eclipsing his career as a historian, however, is his position as the leading British Bach scholar of his day, his many publications remaining as standard works to the present. To his practical musical activities in Aberdeen he brought insight and knowledge gained from maintaining close touch with musical affairs in England, especially through regular visits to the major music festivals. He developed friendships with the leading musicians of the time, many of whom visited Aberdeen to take part in musical events. Among these was Edward Elgar, with whom Terry enjoyed a close friendship over many years. This first in a short series of articles focuses on his friendship with the Elgar family, taking as its basis information gathered from Lady Elgar's diaries and other sources.

The names of many friends and acquaintances flit across the pages of the Elgar family diaries, some well-known in their own right, others seemingly only familiar because of their regular social encounters with the Elgars. Ivor Atkins, Billy Reed, Fritz Kreisler and others stand secure in the former category. Amongst those whose names are less familiar, it would be all too easy to pass over Charles Sanford Terry, a historian by profession, who in later life became a distinguished Bach scholar of world-wide reputation. His 1928 biography of JSB is still a standard work today, along with his other books on the Bach family and the Bach era.

Terry's friendship with the Elgars was at its most intense between the years 1906 and 1920. For many years before that, Terry had been a regular visitor to the Three Choirs Festival, where he gradually became part of the Elgars' 'inner circle'. The friendship seems to have been firmly sealed in 1906 when Elgar visited Aberdeen University (where Terry was Professor of History and Archaeology) to receive an honorary doctorate in the presence of the King and Queen during the University's quatercentenary celebrations. By that time Terry was doing marvellous musical work in Aberdeen in his capacity as conductor of the University Choral and Orchestral Society¹, and had plans to start a Competitive Musical Festival in the City.² There seems no doubt that he gained much of the inspiration for his musical work in Aberdeen through his frequent visits to the Three Choirs, Leeds and Birmingham Festivals and from the musicians he met there, not least Edward Elgar. The friendship with the Elgars deepened further when, in October 1909, Lady Elgar accompanied her husband to Aberdeen to stay with Professor and Mrs Terry, and to attend a banquet in recognition of Terry's outstandingly successful organisation of Aberdeen's—and indeed Scotland's—first Competitive Musical Festival.

Born in 1864, Terry was seven years younger than Edward Elgar, sixteen years younger than Alice Elgar, and twenty-six years older than their daughter Carice. Despite the disparity in ages, he was eventually to enjoy close friendships with all three members of the family. Significantly, as we shall see, he was to be present to give support and help at several important times in the family's life.

The Approval of Lady Elgar

C. S. Terry was favoured with the early approval of Lady Elgar, who apparently considered him a worthy and reliable friend for her husband. In September 1906 it was to Lady Elgar that Terry wrote with details of the arrangements for Elgar's visit to Aberdeen, noting that it seemed 'almost inhuman' to expect him to travel there in the midst of a busy conducting schedule, but assuring her of his personal attendance on her husband at all times,

and stating that ‘to have Sir Edward among us, and to enable the University to laureate him will be of the highest stimulus’³ (to local musicians and music lovers). His great admiration for her husband was obviously a strong factor in Lady Elgar’s affection for Terry. His background as a chorister at St Paul’s Cathedral and as a history graduate of Cambridge, as well as his academic position at Aberdeen, his reputation as a pioneering historian, and their mutual interest in German culture (both Lady Elgar and Terry spoke good German), must also have been in his favour. Terry, whose father and grandfather were members of the medical profession based in Buckinghamshire, had a private income from his mother’s side of the family, enabling him to buy a beautiful house, Westerton of Pitfodels, near Aberdeen—something he could not otherwise have afforded, even on a professor’s salary. He is repeatedly portrayed as a man of great charm, finesse and congeniality, qualities which certainly will have endeared him to those in the entire Elgar circle.

In Lady Elgar’s diaries Terry is frequently mentioned as having escorted Lady Elgar and Carice to concerts or rehearsals of Elgar’s music, or to the theatre—an arrangement which seems also to have met with the approval of Elgar himself, as it left him free to concentrate on musical matters. On 11 October 1907, in Leeds, the Elgars ‘breakfasted with nice Prof. Terry. E. to Hall and A. with Prof. Terry. Nice seats in Gt. Gallery. Most splendid performance of “The Kingdom”... E changed and we lunched with Prof. Terry and he and I went back to Hall—Dined with Maxwells etc. E. rested. Prof Terry and A. to evening concert...’. The following day there was another ‘nice breakfast’ with Professor Terry, who then saw the Elgars off at the station. On 1 January 1909 Lady Elgar records in her diary that ‘Prof Terry sat by her’ at a rehearsal of the First Symphony in the Queen’s Hall, London; on the same occasion she also famously recorded that ‘E conducted splendidly and looked nobilmente as if he were his music.’ On 6 October 1909 Terry was again in attendance at a performance of *Gerontius* in Birmingham. Afterwards Terry ‘saw us to the train. A really perfect day. D.G.’ In July 1910 Terry attended the York Festival and heard a performance of *King Olaf*, as well as escorting Lady Elgar to another concert. By October 1910 the friendship had become a very warm one, and after a stay with the Elgars at Hereford Lady Elgar writes that ‘Prof. Terry left by corridor [train]. Very sad to go—seems devoted to the Plas Gwyn group.’ And they to him, by all accounts. On 11 October 1910, in a letter to Alice Stuart Wortley, Terry admitted that ‘when I leave Plas Gwyn I always feel like a schoolboy facing the awful blackness of a return to school.’⁴

On 24 May 1911 Terry was to escort Lady Elgar and Carice to the first performance of the Second Symphony in London, and also attended the party for close friends afterwards. Terry left for Aberdeen the next day and Lady Elgar again reports that he was ‘very sad at going’. Significantly Lady Elgar, the great worrier, was greatly reassured when Terry was able to be with Elgar on his various travels around the country. When Elgar was invited to give a speech at a Lord Mayor’s Banquet in Liverpool on 25 September 1909, Lady Elgar specially mentions in her diary that ‘Prof. Terry at Hotel’, and on 30 September that Elgar had returned home with ‘most jocund memories of Liverpool’. Again, with the same implication, when Elgar was in Birmingham for rehearsals for the first performance of *The Music Makers*, Lady Elgar wrote on 16 September 1912: ‘Prof. Terry with him which made A. happy about him.’

In October 1913 Terry was again with the Elgars in Leeds (where *Falstaff* received its first performance on 2 October), going with Lady Elgar and Carice to a performance of the Verdi Requiem—‘very fine’—and to hear the Bach Mass in B Minor. The same trio had earlier gone to the theatre to see J. M. Barrie’s *What Every Woman Knows* (1908), which sadly was declared ‘dreadfully dull’ by Lady Elgar!

When in London, Professor Terry (accompanied by Mrs Terry only on rare occasions) stayed with his sister, Mrs Helen Saffrey, at her home in St Mary Abbott’s Terrace, Kensington. Lady Elgar developed a close friendship with Mrs Saffrey and her husband, and they would regularly visit each others’ houses for afternoon tea parties and dinners. In her diary for 18 April 1910 Lady Elgar records that she and her husband and daughter called on Mrs Saffrey (Lady Elgar spells the name consistently as ‘Saffery’) for tea, ‘and met Mrs Terry there. Charming dear

people.' Carice also became very fond of the Saffreys, and as she started to have an independent social life of her own, they feature in various outings to the theatre and the opera. Like her brother, Mrs Saffrey had a great interest in music, and was a member of the Bach Choir.

Terry and Carice

Terry's friendship with Carice Elgar was a particularly touching one. The Terrys had no children, and the bond between Terry and Carice seemingly arose from a mutual need of one another—Terry to indulge a lively young girl who was young enough to have been his daughter, Carice to enjoy the company of a charming older 'admirer' who regularly came to whisk her away from a sometimes oppressive domestic environment with trips to the countryside or the theatre. Lady Elgar notes in her diary for 4 January 1911 that 'C. and Prof. Terry into town—he bought lovely flowers for C.'; on 17 September that 'Prof Terry and C. for long drive'; and on the following day 'Prof Terry and C. into town.'

On 1 January 1914 Lady Elgar recorded that 'C. to see the Prof and Mrs Terry, and theatre' and that the next day 'E. and C. to lunch with Prof and Mrs Terry and Ivor Atkins, Pall Mall Restaurant'. In March the same year, she wrote: 'C. to Terrys for *Parsifal*'; on 27 July 1916—'C. to theatre with Prof Terry'; and on 7 October 1917—'Prof Terry to tea and pleasant talk. C. walked with him to the station'. One can imagine the lively conversations and laughter which the two enjoyed, and their mutual admiration.

Some mementoes in the keeping of the Elgar Birthplace Museum⁵ reveal a little more of the nature of their relationship, including the fact that Carice called Terry 'uncle'. These include a telegram sent to Carice by Terry after he had attended the first rehearsal of *Falstaff* at St Andrew's Hall in London on 22 September 1913, saying simply: 'Great triumph, much love, uncle'; a postcard bearing a photo of Terry conducting on the South Porch at Gloucester Cathedral during the 1913 Three Choirs Festival, with the enigmatic message: 'Ha!! Ha!!! Ton uncle'; and a card sent from Aberdeen with a newspaper cutting of a hurrying top-hatted man pasted to it and the message 'Note your father's anxiety not to be late for rehearsal! Uncle.' This last item seems to have something in the nature of a private joke attached to it.

Elgar himself was also aware of the bond between Carice and Terry, writing to Carice (who was working in London) on 13 May 1918 to give her news that 'Terry sends a paper announcing that Cambridge will give him an Hony. degree (D. Litt.), so you must congratulate him (if you haven't already.)' (Terry was also to receive honorary degrees from the universities of Edinburgh, Glasgow, Durham, Oxford and, perhaps most significantly, from the University of Leipzig during the Bach two-hundred-and-fiftieth anniversary celebrations in 1935.)

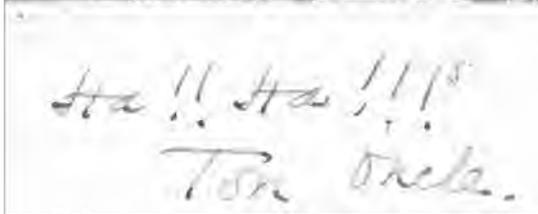
A Worthy Friend for Elgar

Terry's friendship with Edward Elgar came about mainly through their meetings at Three Choirs Festivals. Terry's admiration for Elgar and his work was undoubtedly the starting point; as the friendship matured, Elgar came to rely on 'dear Terry' for his wise counsel in musical and other matters, his reliability and stability, and especially in later life, his conviviality, which must on many occasions have provided a welcome antidote to Elgar's persistent depressive moods.

Terry is first recorded as a member of the Elgars' house party at the 1908 Three Choirs Festival in Worcester, remaining with the Elgars for a few days afterwards. His departure on 15 September is recorded by Lady Elgar with 'much regret'. In 1909, when the Elgars rented Harley House in Hereford, Terry was again a member of the party, starring as 'Precarious Horn' in the famous 'Harleyford Musical Festival' devised by Elgar for the hilarious last-night party of the Festival. Terry also featured in Elgar's proposed 'peddling' wager of the same year, being required to



Two postcards sent by Terry to
Carice Elgar
(reproduced courtesy of the Elgar
Birthplace Museum).



peddle 'a volume of Scottish [sic] History... round the parish: the first legitimate sale wins the Stakes'. Other participants were Frank Schuster, Nicholas Kilburn, and Elgar himself. However, Terry had to suffer the indignity of supposedly being allowed the longest start, of twenty minutes! One can only assume (and hope) that this exercise did not, in fact, ever take place!

At the same festival, Mrs Richard Powell, the 'Dorabella' of the 'Enigma' Variations, tells of being escorted by Terry to a performance of *Messiah* in Hereford Cathedral on 9 September:

Professor Terry promised to take me up into the Triforium of the Choir for it—the Elgars usually heard it from up there—and as soon as the doors were shut and his duties as steward were over, I followed him up. At the top of the steps there was a flat space, rather gloomy and dark, and there was His Excellency [Elgar], lying full-length on three chairs, his head on a large red cushion, with arms folded over his chest and eyes shut. He heard our steps, and when

he saw me he made an awful face and pointed with his thumb to the other side of the Triforium, and shut his eyes again. Professor Terry and I went round to the north side where we found the Lady and Mrs Worthington...⁶

One can imagine the relish with which all the participants acted out this little scene, unbeknown to the large audience below.

The Elgars rented the Cookery School in Gloucester for the 1910 Festival, and Terry was again with them. Lady Elgar records that he 'arrived early and helped', and that 'the house soon began to look nice'. On Sunday 4 September Terry escorted Carice and the Elgars' American friend, Mrs Worthington, to the Opening Service, Lady Elgar commenting in her diary that they were 'all so happy.' In spare moments during the Festival, Terry was again commandeered to escort the ladies on various outings. On 8 September he and Carice went for a motor trip, and 'then Professor Terry took A. lovely little drive to Cooper's Hill.' On the same day Fritz Kreisler had given a private performance at the Cookery School of Elgar's new Violin Concerto, a work with which Terry was to become closely involved.

Not to be outdone by Elgar's sharp wit and sense of fun, Terry provided his own piece of amusement for the Gloucester house party with the following notice:

Gloucester Festival 1910—School of Ecclesiastical 'Ookery—The Hostel—Gloucester—Rules:

1. Reveillé will be sung by the Minor Canon for the week at 8am.
2. Beds must be stripped and dressed over all and blankets must be unfurled at seven for inspection by the Canon-in-Residence.
3. Hot and cold baths will be served from 7 to 7.30. (Note. Any leakage of gas from the bath taps must instantly be reported to the Plumbiarisus.)
4. At eight Breakfast will be announced by a prolonged muffed roll on the Drum.
5. Meal times are as follows:
 - 8am Breakfast
 - 1pm (throughout the octave of Easter and Christmas only) Dinner.
 - 9pm Tea. Compline.
6. More than one meal will not be served simultaneously to the same person without a written order signed by the Dean, the Bishop's Apparitor, and the Diocesan surveyor.
7. The Curfew will knell at 10pm.⁷

Conducting at the Three Choirs

During the 1911 Three Choirs Festival at Worcester, Terry was to take part in musical events for the first time. Ivor Atkins had persuaded Elgar to make arrangements for brass instruments of two of the chorales from Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. The new Elgar-Atkins edition was to be performed at the Festival. Atkins' idea was that the chorales should be played from the top of the cathedral tower as a summons to the audience assembling below. Terry was roped in to share the conducting with Atkins; he had already won his spurs as conductor of the musical forces at Aberdeen University, and as reported in the Preface to the new edition of the *Passion*, had 'devoted himself unsparingly' (particularly in matters of text) to its preparation. That he should be involved in the performance in this way was, it seems, a gesture of recognition for the help Terry had given to Atkins in particular. And Terry no doubt entered into the spirit of the occasion with enthusiasm and delight. The *Daily Telegraph* reported on 15 September that the musicians had played 'with extraordinary felicity', and Lady Elgar waxed eloquent in her diary for 14 September: 'Lovely morning. Wonderful sight and sound of Bach Chorales on Tower. All went outside in Close. Sky bright blue, brilliant sun, gleaming on the brass instruments like a Fra Angelico picture—all poetic and elevating and touching. Just what E would arrange'. Given Elgar's original reluctance to comply with Atkins' idea, and the fact that Elgar wrote impishly on the score that he had been 'incited to the doubtful emprise by the wiles of

Ivor Atkins', Lady Elgar's final comment is perhaps a little unfair to Atkins.

Having been part of the Elgars' house party at Castle House, College Green in Worcester, Terry returned with them to Plas Gwyn for a few days. On Saturday 16 September Lady Elgar wrote: 'E and Prof Terry to Malvern. Spent some time going over the hill. Lovely view, on Short and Kate and were photographed on there [sic] steeds.' This jaunt was referred to by Elgar as 'The Flight from Worcester', referring (rather inaccurately in geographical terms!) to Charles II's flight after the Battle of Worcester. They hired a donkey for Elgar and a small horse for Terry who, according to Wulstan Atkins, was 'far too heavy for a donkey'⁸; the journey was made with great joviality, judging by a photograph of the event.⁹

The Elgars moved to Severn House in London on 1 January 1912, and Terry paid his usual New Year visit to them soon afterwards. On a postcard to 'Dorabella', dated 22 January 1912, he reported that the Elgars were settling in, and that he (Terry) had 'lit the first fire in the Dining Room 10 days ago!'¹⁰ Severn House was the first property which the Elgars owned. Terry, himself a man of property, is believed to have acted as financial adviser when Lady Elgar negotiated the release of trust money in order to buy the house.¹¹

There was no house party at the Three Choirs Festival of 1912. Instead the Elgars stayed at the Castle Pool Hotel in Hereford. Lady Elgar apparently regretted the lack of social contact with close friends, reporting on 7 September that 'Prof. Terry there, but not with us, alas...' However, Carice was able to attend the Sunday service with Terry on 8 September. On Wednesday 11 September the Bach chorales were played on the Tower at Hereford Cathedral, again heralding a performance of the *St Matthew Passion*, but, as Lady Elgar records, they were not received with as much enthusiasm as at Worcester: 'Chorales on Tower very beautiful but people paid no attention and wind carried sound away.'

During the war years, mention of any contact between Terry and the Elgars is largely absent in the diaries. Sadly, Terry suffered a breakdown due to overwork in March 1913, and this may well have limited the amount of travel he was able to do, although there is mention that 'all met at Mrs Saffrey. Prof. Terry there—Nice meeting' on 4 July 1913. Terry had been relieved of all his university duties in Aberdeen, but was well enough to attend the Three Choirs Festival at Gloucester in September, and to again conduct the Bach chorales from the South Porch of the Cathedral. This time a photographer was present.¹²

A Dedication from Elgar

Elgar perhaps felt that this was an appropriate time to dedicate one of his compositions to his old friend; the second of his Op. 73 partsongs, *Love's Tempest*, written early in 1914, is dedicated to Terry. Elgar wrote:

My very dear CST,
Please accept the enclosed dedication with my love.
Clean copies should be sent soon. The thing is only in revise as you see.
It is a good big noise.
Yours ever,
Edward Elgar¹³

In October 1914 Elgar, depressed by the events of the war, greatly appreciated seeing Terry in London, as he wrote to Atkins: 'Dear old Terry is in town and I have had the greatest pleasure seeing him twice. I hope he does not leave for a few days longer.'¹⁴

In addition to all his musical work in Aberdeen and elsewhere, Terry had by this time made his name as a pioneering

historian, and was the author of a large number of publications, especially in the field of Scottish history. The History Department at Aberdeen had expanded rapidly under his leadership, and he was a much respected member of the university community. As a lecturer he was considered brilliant, having the ability to 'marshal intricate masses of detail into lucid and balanced narrative'—a gift which was to be applied to his extensive Bach researches, already bearing fruit in his first major publication, *Bach's Chorales*, the first volume of which (1915) was dedicated to Ivor Atkins.

Lecturing to the Troops

In 1918, and again in 1919, Professor Terry was invited by the War Office to deliver a series of lectures to the troops on the Western Front and on the Rhine. On 5 April 1918 Elgar wrote to Ivor Atkins: 'Terry passed thro' town on his way from the front, where, as you know, he has been lecturing to the acct of shot and shell. We were out when he called and so missed the refreshment of a cheery word—the whilk I want badly—from him.'¹⁵ Lady Elgar's final reference to Terry in her diary is on Sunday 13 April 1919: '...suddenly Professor Terry appeared—Had had much wonderful experience—and poured out his accounts of them.' Terry had apparently just returned from his second lecture tour, which had been to the Army of Occupation on the Rhine. It is significant that his steps should again gravitate towards the warm welcome he knew he would receive from the Elgars.

Terry's support of the Elgars at important times—of joy, sorrow, triumph or anxiety—has its final manifestation at the time of Lady Elgar's death in April 1920. Edward Elgar, writing in Alice's diary, records on 3 April 1920: 'A. no better. Bad night. Dr Rose. Muriel [Foster] to tea. C. with Sanford Terry to Opera (Meistersinger). (I made her go for needed change).' That Terry should fulfil this role with Carice is entirely in keeping with the nature of their friendship; in relation to her father as well as to herself, Carice must have welcomed Terry's steady presence at such a painful time. Alice Elgar died on 7 April, and Terry was one of the few people outside the family who attended her funeral at Little Malvern. Along with Frank Schuster, he was one of the trustees of her estate¹⁶, thus fulfilling his final duty to one with whom he had shared warm mutual devotion.

Without Lady Elgar's regular diary accounts of Terry's visits, and assuming that she was the instigator of many of the social encounters in which he was involved, documentation of his friendship with the Elgars becomes sparse after her death. However, despite the many changes to society brought about by the aftermath of the war, it is recorded that Ivor Atkins remained in close touch with Terry in the ensuing years. After spending a few days with Terry in Aberdeen in 1924, Atkins reported in a letter to Elgar, dated 11 May, that Terry 'was tremendously occupied with all his irons. He really is the most restlessly energetic man I know.'¹⁷ Terry was by this time even more involved in his Bach researches, and becoming known as a leading authority on the subject. In 1924 he was invited to write the introductory notes for a performance of the Mass in B Minor at the Three Choirs Festival; these were used again at subsequent Festivals, including that of 1936, only two months before he died. That his great interest in Bach had been inspired through his friendships with Edward Elgar and Ivor Atkins is very evident. That, however, is another story.

1. Alison I. Shiel, 'Charles Sanford Terry and Aberdeen University Choral and Orchestral Society', *Aberdeen University Review*, lix, no. 206 (Autumn 2001), pp. 122–133.
2. Alison I. Shiel, 'Aberdeen's Competitive Music Festivals 1909–1913' in *Northern Scotland*, Vol. 22 (August 2002).
3. Hereford and Worcester Record Office 705:445 parcel 11 (xxvii) 4014.
4. HWRO 705:445 parcel 22 (i) 7916.
5. Elgar Birthplace Museum, 1383 Scrap Album 1909–14.
6. Mrs Richard C. Powell ('Dorabella'), *Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation* (London, 1937), p. 94.

7. Elgar Birthplace Museum, 1383 Scrap Album 1909-14.
8. E. Wulstan Atkins, *The Elgar-Atkins Friendship* (London, 1984), p. 232.
9. *Ibid.* 8, p. 259.
10. *Ibid.* 6, p. 98.
11. Letter to the author from E. Wulstan Atkins, 15 January 1999.
12. *Ibid.* 8, p. 258.
13. *Letters of Edward Elgar and other writings*, edited by Percy M. Young (London, 1956), p. 215.
14. *Ibid.* 8, p. 265.
15. *Ibid.* 8, p. 287.
16. Percy M. Young, *Elgar, O.M.* (London, 1955), p. 204.
17. *Ibid.* 8, p. 376.

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Sir Charles Villiers Stanford

SIR CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD (1852–1924): CHORAL MUSIC A Personal Odyssey for the 150th Anniversary of his Birth

Lewis Foreman

To mark this year's anniversary, and to acknowledge Stanford's often strained association with Elgar, the author traces his quest to unearth long-forgotten treasures of Stanford's vast and varied choral output.

A provincial newspaper once reported a local choral society had sung the music of the celebrated composer Stan Ford. Would the Irishman in Stanford have been amused, or would the patrician Cambridge academic have been insulted by this inadvertent slight? Although Stanford was a man who easily took offence—not least in his notorious break with Elgar—the Irishman would have probably triumphed. Stanford, principal teacher of composition at the Royal College of Music for almost forty years, is remembered for many waspish anecdotes directed at his students; that concerning his favourite pupil Samuel Coleridge-Taylor is typical. The young composer had brought the fair copy of his Symphony for Stanford to see, a manuscript full-score representing immense labour to its young composer. As Stanford turned the pages and felt in his pocket for his famous gilt propelling pencil, he inadvertently flipped over a cup of tea which went all over the score. As Coleridge-Taylor looked on in horror, quick as a flash Stanford remarked: 'Oh, it's a Symphony in T—eh, me bhoy?!'

Stanford's is a remarkable case. Although long recognised as a composition teacher, only now (nearly eighty years after his death) is he beginning to achieve the recognition due to a musical giant who in the 1880s reinvigorated British music. One can remember a time, all too recently, when to admit enthusiasm for anything but his church music was to invite ridicule. Indeed, in the third edition of the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* (1928), Fuller Maitland—a disciple of the composer—admitted his own bewilderment and despair at the side-lining of his mentor:

It is always difficult to prophesy within a few years of a composer's death what place his works will ultimately gain; and the task is especially hard in the case of Stanford, for before we can predict what place he will hold in the history of art, we must know what is to be the fate of that 'modern music' with which he had so very little sympathy.... If the artistic revolution of our own day should be a repetition of that great revolution when the rich polyphony of the 16th century gave way before the halting utterances of the early monodists, then it is to be feared that Stanford's name will be known by only a few compositions.

Stanford came from a cultured and well-off Dublin protestant family, and showed a brilliant musical talent from the first. While ostensibly a classics scholar, at Cambridge he quickly established a commanding reputation in music. He became organist of Trinity College and was appointed conductor of the Cambridge University Music Society when still an undergraduate. He was, his pupil John Ireland remembered, an 'Irishman to the marrow', with a peppery, mercurial temperament which, particularly in later years, led him into unwise disputes, often souring relationships with old friends and colleagues. Yet on musical matters Stanford could take the wider view, if the music commanded it. Although not entirely sympathetic to *The Dream of Gerontius* ('it stinks of incense'), he upbraided the 1902 Leeds Festival committee's decision to reject Elgar's masterpiece, writing: 'It is the duty of a great choral society in a great town to let its public form their own judgement... to lead and not to follow'.

Stanford wrote extensively in most accepted forms, including chamber and instrumental music, orchestral music, symphonies, choral works—both liturgical and secular—church music, piano and organ, songs with piano and orchestra, and ten operas. In his prime his music was found successful and attractive, and was widely played, though many occasional works tended not to be repeated. Later, unsympathetic to early twentieth-century modernism, he found himself relegated in favour of his own students, and came to be thought of as 'old hat'. After

his death, most of his music was quickly forgotten—indeed, actively rejected—apart from rare performances by a few champions.

Stanford's church music is an exception; it quite established itself in his lifetime, and has retained the standing it enjoyed almost from the first. Much of the orchestral music is also now recorded and we are exploring his chamber music again. However, my own first enthusiasm for Stanford came with a school performance of *The Revenge*, a vivid and tuneful choral ballad (running for twenty-three or four minutes) first heard at Leeds in 1886. For many years it was Stanford's most successful non-liturgical choral work. Some may now have reservations about Tennyson's patriotic words, including:

These dogs of Seville,
The children of the devil.

I have no links with the fishing industry, but, speaking personally, I can live with this. As a curtain raiser, say, to Vaughan Williams's *A Sea Symphony* it is a great sing, and choirs and audiences love its tunefulness and its vivid sea and battle music.

Exploring Stanford's choral works became more difficult when publishers began throwing out sets of performing material they had held in their warehouses for seventy or eighty years, just at the moment of revival. I remember the



Above: Stanford (extreme right) at the Gloucester Three Choirs in 1922. With (from left to right) Elgar, Herbert Brewer, Bishop Gibson, Hugh Allen, Lord Gladstone, Granville Bantock, Dean Gee, Henry Hadow.

Facing page left: Stanford featured on Wills's series of composers cigarette cards.

Facing page right: A well-known post-card portrait of Stanford published by Augener.

enthusiasm of Malcolm Smith at Boosey & Hawkes when discussing possibilities for the forthcoming season in his lair in the B&H hire library. Choirs such as the Chelsea Harmonic Society, Kensington Choir, and Broadheath Singers all explored this repertoire, and a good number of works were successfully revived. This does not happen any more; Malcolm and his contemporaries have all retired, and their successors seem neither to know nor care. Even recently-sung music cannot always be found again, so intending pioneers should be persistent.

In the 1970s the BBC broadcast two such revivals. The first, in 1974, was Stanford's entertaining choral ballad *Phaudrig Crohoore*. It has not been heard since, but can be recommended to choral societies looking for an attractive and amusing novelty. The *Requiem* was quite a different proposition. A work on a substantial scale, its revival in 1976 was a revelation, and after further performances it is now available on compact disc. Even more successful—possibly because it is shorter—was Stanford's *Stabat Mater*, first heard at Leeds in 1907, but forgotten for a very long time before being given at the Milton Abbey Music Festival in 1987. Richard Hickox eventually conducted it at Leeds, eighty-eight years after its first performance, and soon after recorded it for Chandos with a distinguished team of soloists. This returned a real repertoire piece into circulation, and I was delighted with how grand it sounded in Guildford Cathedral last year. If you want to decide if Stanford is for you, borrow the disc from your public library; I will be surprised if you are not quickly on a Stanfordian 'Road to Damascus'.

While a substantial list of Stanford's many shorter choral works still awaits revival, others have been heard again recently, including the popular *Songs of the Sea* and *Songs of the Fleet*, and the less familiar *The Battle of the Baltic*, *Ave Atque Vale* and *The Bard*. None have disappointed, though the six-movement *Te Deum* (written for



a tempo

tol - lis pec - ca - - - ta mun - di, do - na no - bis pa - - - -

pp Pa - - - cem,
pp Pa - - - cem,

a tempo

pp - cem, pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem.
pp pa - - - - - cem, pa - - - - - cem, pa - - - - - cem.
pp pa - - - - - cem, pa - - - - - cem, pa - - - - - cem.
pp pa - - - - - cem, pa - - - - - cem, pa - - - - - cem.
pp Pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem.
pp Pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem.
pp Pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem, pa - - - cem.
pp pa - - - - - cem, pa - - - - - cem, pa - - - - - cem.

ppp

Agnus Dei.

Dec. 1919.
H. 9895.

Leeds in 1898 and heard twice in the 1980s and again at Leeds in 1999) does not have quite the flair of the *Requiem*. The Mass in G was revived—with orchestra—by Paul Rodmell in a service at Birmingham Oratory in May 1993; it proved to be a work apart and much less flamboyant than its shorter contemporary concert works. Of the remainder, I would suggest to intending pioneers the *Elegiac Ode* (Boosey & Hawkes) of 1884, which takes words by Whitman that Stanford's pupils would soon after set so memorably themselves. Another notable score from the 1880s is *The Voyage of Maeldune* (Novello); I was interested in proposing this for a concert to celebrate the present anniversary, but the publisher could not find the performing materials.

Stanford's late music presents a fascinating case of a composer out of his time. He was spurred on by very real financial need, and also his view of himself as a significant figure, an opinion his younger contemporaries shared less and less. Yet Stanford's output at this time was remarkable, though it was played little if at all and has since been forgotten. Perhaps the saddest example of this neglect is the huge mass-setting *Via Victrix* for soloists, chorus and orchestra. This was Stanford's 'thanksgiving for victory' in 1918. Although published by Boosey & Hawkes, it appears not to have enjoyed even one performance, though the 'Gloria in Excelsis' was extracted and promoted as a separate concert piece. Another late choral work is the brief *At the Abbey Gate*, a nine-minute evocation of the return of the Unknown Warrior to Westminster Abbey. It sets touching words by Judge Darling, and preceded a performance of *Gerontius* in 1921. But the late work I have long been most enthusiastic about, though I have never heard it, is another engendered by the First World War: *Merlin and the Gleam*, a setting of Tennyson's enigmatic poem for baritone, chorus and orchestra. The orchestral full score was lost when Stainer & Bell's warehouse near Yarmouth is reputed to have subsided into a Norfolk broad! It is being re-orchestrated from the published vocal score for the Broadheath Singers' concert on 28 September by the Stanford expert Dr Jeremy Dibble, whose book on the composer is expected from Oxford University Press in November. Even played through on the piano, this is a noble score; with the added dimension of the orchestra it should be a fine discovery. As no previous performance has been traced, this may well be a world premiere.

On the death of Parry in 1918, Stanford remarked in the *RCM Magazine* (vol. 15, no. 1, p. 7):

Schumann once wrote of the impossibility of appreciating the heights of peaks when the spectator was too close to the mountain ranges. It requires above all things, time. Time to go a sufficient distance, and time to explore the peaks themselves.

This has proved equally true for both Parry and Stanford. Their contemporaries would be amazed at quite how long it has taken—so long in fact that some of their music, preserved for decades, has now disappeared. Fuller Maitland would probably be even more amazed at how some of Stanford's music even he did not hear is now recorded and available. The chase has been rewarding and there is still some way to go. To readers with performing groups I strongly commend a Stanford revival—your performers will enjoy the experience and there are still remarkable discoveries to be made.

LEWIS FOREMAN is well-known for many books, articles and CD booklets, notably on British music. He recently edited Oh My Horses!, a volume of essays on Elgar and British music during the First World War, published by Elgar Editions. Although nominally retired, his activities as repertoire adviser to various record companies and as the Music Trustee of the Bax and Dyson Trusts continues to result in many CD revivals, most recently of York Bowen's Second Symphony. With his wife, Susan, he is currently working on an historical gazetteer of musical London commissioned by Yale University Press. All illustrations in this article are from Lewis Foreman's collection.

Facing page: The soprano's final 'dona nobis pacem' which ends Stanford's Via Vitrix.

*Right: Sir Charles Villiers Stanford by 'Spy',
published in Vanity Fair, 2 February 1905.*



SYMPHONY No. 1

A Paper Trail to its Past

Arthur D. Walker

A recently-acquired copy of the miniature score of Elgar's First Symphony offers clues to the work's publishing history, and Richter's acclaimed 1908 first performance in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester.

The reactions of the press to the first performance of the First Symphony in Manchester on 3 December 1908 under the baton of Hans Richter gave high praise to the work. A leaflet advertising the miniature score was distributed during March 1909, quoting *The Times*, *Daily Telegraph*, *Morning Post*, *Standard*, *The Manchester Guardian*, and *The Yorkshire Post*, and nineteen further comments from other newspapers. It also notes the arrangement for piano solo is on sale and the piano-duet arrangement is 'in the Press', both arrangements made by Sigfrid Karg-Elert. (The piano-duet arrangement was published in August 1909.)

I had assumed a copy of the miniature score which I purchased in 1953 was a first issue. A previous owner, Isaac Hirst, had signed the top of the title-page and dated it 5 March 1909; this was three months after the first performance in Manchester. On examining the score a few years ago during the early stages of work on my book on the printing of Elgar's works, comparison with later printings revealed hand-engraved corrections. It also has the following pencilled note by Isaac Hirst on the title-page: 'By wireless from Queen's Hall Jan 30. 1930 Conducted by Sir Edward Elgar. April 13/32 Sir H. Wood. Nov. 30/32 Sir E. Elgar.'

Another copy, a more recent addition to my library, signed by Clifford Knowles (one-time leader of the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and solo violinist on Charles Groves' 1970 recording of the *Nursery Suite*), and dated 'M/c [Manchester] Jan 1937', looks the same, except for a Novello price label over the original price, which was seven shillings and sixpence, now ten shillings; this would be the price Clifford Knowles paid for it. The score has minor changes to the hand-written corrections, and in some cases they have been made more legible. As in my first copy, 'Printed by F. M. Geidel, Leipzig' appears on the title-page, but has been removed from the bottom right-hand corner of page three.

Recently I purchased another copy of the symphony which casts doubt on my original assumption that the hand-dated 1909 copy is a first issue. The score has been bound in half-leather; the front and back covers were not retained. (The Hirst copy has both covers.) At the foot of the title-page there is no reference to Geidel, only at the foot of page three. None of the corrections appear at any point in the work, and there is no price on the title-page (this must have been added to the second issue). Further, to confirm this is a first issue, an inscription on the title-page reads as follows: 'H. P. Richardson from F. Bray Christmas 1908.' It would have been purchased by F. Bray as a present for H. P. Richardson perhaps a week or so before Christmas 1908. The copy has, at the foot of the title-page, the stamp of a Leeds music dealer, Hopkinsons' Successors Ltd of 5 & 6 Commercial Street.

In addition, pencilled timings in the score offer insight into early performances under Richter and Elgar. At the top of page three is the following note: 'Bradford (Richter) March 5. 1909. 54 minutes. / Elgar (Leeds), Nov. 3. 1909. 50 minutes.' Timings have also been added at the end of each movement, two at the end of movements 1 to 3, but only one at the end of the work; they are as follows (the first is that of Richter):

I

20

19

| | | |
|-----|-------------|-------------|
| II | 7½ | 6 |
| III | Richter 10½ | 12 Elgar |
| IV | 13 | [no timing] |

Richter's timings were taken only three months after the first performance in Manchester. I cannot envisage him changing his ideas in so short a period, thus they may give an indication of the timings of the first performance. It is also interesting to note that whilst Elgar's and Richter's first and fourth movements are broadly similar, Elgar's second is considerably quicker, his third somewhat slower. (The fact there is no timing for Elgar's final movement suggests it was a similar length to Richter's.)

The text of Symphony no.1 printed in the Elgar Complete Edition is that of the 1912 reprint (the composer's 'Note' was not printed in the miniature score until the 1912 reprint). The new information now suggests this was the fourth rather than the third issue.

ARTHUR D. WALKER is a former music librarian at the John Rylands University Library of Manchester. He has edited music by Handel and Bruckner, authored a bibliographical study on Mahler, and is currently engaged in a similar project on Elgar. He is also a member of the Brontë Society and the Yorkshire Dialect Society, and has compiled indices for the publications of both organisations.

REPORTS

Surrey Elgar Conference

School of Performing Arts, University of Surrey, Guildford, 13–14 April 2002

Members of the select—albeit self-selected—group (countable, I think, on one hand's worth of fingers) which attended both the Society's Golden Jubilee weekend in Worcester last September and the Surrey Elgar Conference were surely all struck by the contrast between a glorious celebration attended by so many members of the Elgar Society, and an academic conference at which half the persons present either gave a paper or took the chair for a session. Nevertheless, the sense of participating in a seminar enhanced involvement at Guildford, with nearly everyone present having something to say. Among encouraging signs for the future of serious study of Elgar's music was the involvement of many younger scholars, some currently working on postgraduate degrees, and of a distinguished quartet of academics from America. Publication of the material is to be expected; some may appear in a Cambridge Companion to Elgar and a new volume of Elgar Studies within the next couple of years.

By a strange coincidence, on the Saturday evening the Epworth Choir gave a performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* in Guildford Cathedral. But delegates loyally attended a performance on campus which perhaps offered a rarer opportunity, for most of us, despite the relatively modest forces involved, have probably heard fewer live performances of the Piano Quintet than of *Gerontius*. The Quintet was nobly unfolded by Piers Lane with the Medici String Quartet, who also contributed Britten's Third Quartet (not perhaps the most apposite choice—if not Elgar, how about Stanford?). Piers Lane also played the *Concert Allegro*, which came over as only half coherent (for which I am not blaming the pianist), and the enchanting piano version of *Dream Children*.

The primary purpose of the conference was of course academic, and it achieved a further substantial step in the acclimatisation of Elgar studies to European and American standards of scholarly rigour and critical exactness. Reliable scores are indispensable for the study of any music, although if analysts and critics had to wait for completion of our 'monumental editions' the breed would have become extinct before their material was available. I hope I do not hear any cries of 'Who cares?'; Elgar is too significant a figure to evade the kind of scrutiny we apply to (say) Strauss, Mahler, or Sibelius, to name only a few of his symphonically-minded contemporaries. The conference was inaugurated with an account from Robert Anderson, informative and witty, and spoken without notes, of the history and present state of the Elgar Complete Edition and its resurrection as the Elgar Society Edition.

Christopher Kent (Reading) followed with a paper on the First Symphony, which took pride of place among the works studied (with *Falstaff* a perspiring second). Dr Kent's sketch studies are a major element in the serious Elgar literature of the last few years, and this presentation did not disappoint. The genesis of this masterwork matters as one of the clearest examples of Elgar's re-conception of viable musical material in a new form—sketches for a string quartet becoming the central movements of the symphony—and also because of the continuing controversy concerning its tonal structures. What Elgar called 'a nice *sub-acid* feeling', a phrase Paul Harper-Scott (Oxford) incorporated into this title, is embodied in the first Allegro theme, which some (helped by the key-signature) ascribe to D minor, while others (helped by some pivotal harmonies) ascribe to A minor. The probable answer is that it has a strong flavour of both; a case—to echo Harper-Scott's title—of 'Tonal Malaise'. The embedded A minor of the first movement, he pointed out, comes in a final plaintive moment to affect the closing bars. There is no doubting the prevalence of D minor for much of the fourth movement, leaving us with a symphony which is in A flat but only just. Both Harper-Scott and Timothy Jackson (North Texas) in the immediately following paper employed Schenker's analytical methods (extending Jackson's already published work on Tchaikovsky, Bruckner, Strauss, and Sibelius). It was interesting to note that their application of Schenker's ideas on repertory the great theorist was probably unaware of (and certainly never discussed) produced divergent results. Unfortunately there is no time in a forty-

five-minute conference slot to digest, still less to check, the musical thinking which produces these analytical results. In the following discussion at least some points of agreement were reached before the need to adjourn for dinner.

The other paper on the first day was the keynote address by James Hepokoski (Yale), whose work on Verdi and Sibelius is perhaps better known than his fine essay on the Elgar symphonies. Hepokoski's 'Reflections on a "Welsh tune"' dealt revealingly with the formal and stylistic elements in the Introduction and Allegro. He concluded (correctly, I am sure) that the 'Welsh' tune (its Welshness essentially confirmed by an intervention from Diana McVeagh, who would certainly know) is not the 'second theme', and that a traditional analysis in terms, precisely, of an introduction and sonata-allegro fits the piece well—besides conforming to Elgar's description, with the 'devil of a fugue' in lieu of development. In this interpretation the 'Welsh tune' is more honoured by its dissident placing in relation to the form, thanks to its belonging essentially, in terms of tempo, to the introductory section, and to its permanent lack of completion, even at its apotheosis. This oversimplifies a subtle argument whose intricacy rightly honoured a masterpiece.

On the second day we were reminded of Paul Harper-Scott's impish suggestion (illustrated by a computer-adjusted recording) that *Falstaff* might logically end in E minor. Daniel Grimley (Surrey) took as his theme 'Narrative and Retrospection', while Aidan Thomson (Oxford), in 'Chivalry reclaimed', found more than the obvious reasons to compare the piece with Strauss's *Don Quixote*. Grimley's title also included the word 'Tragedy', and in reminding us of the piece's quality as symphonic 'character study', he suggested that Elgar reinterpreted Shakespeare more than has generally been assumed. The question arises, particularly near the end, whose voice are we hearing in this complex musical narration—Elgar's or Falstaff's? Whose melancholy, one might ask? Christopher Mark (Surrey) reviewed Elgarian melancholy under the rubric 'Thou makest darkness'. His main focus was naturally the Cello Concerto, a work whose emotional and musical complexity, despite its deserved popularity, could easily be underrated. Mark convincingly pointed to the relation between its formal originality—including 'deformation' of expected forms—and its emotional impact, surely in large part resulting from meditation on the recent war.

Matthew Riley (Royal Holloway) took us on a magical tour in pursuit of 'Elgar's Fourth': not another symphony, but an interval which, perfect or augmented, or both in sequence, haunts many of Elgar's most characteristic ideas in varied moods (consider the openings of the Violin Concerto and *Cockaigne*). His wide-ranging exploration did much to justify our intuitive sense that certain phrases and harmonies are quintessentially Elgarian. Two splendid papers from the other American contributors completed the conference. Byron Adams (California Riverside) seemed to delve into the private thoughts of John Henry Newman, relating *The Dream of Gerontius* to a strain of Roman Catholic decadence in a paper at once richly evocative of past mores and curiously topical. Charles McGuire (Oberlin College) tackled *Caractacus*, showing how H. A. Acworth was by no means a passive partner in the enterprise, and how his work evoking the Malvern hills and pre-Roman Britain resonated with contemporary references which would not have escaped the composer, and which once again—being issues of race, Empire, and the Celtic revival—still resonate today.

This conference was a rich feast for Elgarians, and it is a pity that so few were there to be enlightened and to enjoy. The excellent organisation was in the hands of Daniel Grimley and Christopher Mark, to whom our warmest thanks are due.

Julian Rushton

'The Circumstances of Pomp—Sir Edward Elgar as a Historical Figure'

A Lecture by Professor David Cannadine
County Hall, Worcester, 11 May 2002

Professor Cannadine, Director of the Institute of Historical Research, is one of our most distinguished historians,

and author of numerous books on late nineteenth- and early twentieth-century British history. On a previous occasion he made a contribution to Elgar studies by his searching review of Jerrold Northrop Moore's *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*. At this lecture he revealed to his audience that his first encounter with Sir Edward Elgar was with the eponymous railway locomotive; but as a West Midlander himself, the composer's career and its historical implications have intrigued him for many years. He pointed out that historians have been reluctant to deal with 'high art' figures as part of their narrative, but that there is a real need to look at Elgar in more prosaic terms if we are to comprehend him properly. Elgar's life spanned three of Eric Hobsbawm's eras—the Ages of Capital, Empire and Extremes—but he started with no capital, was never an Imperialist, and hated Socialism, the USA and the Nazis almost equally. The speaker dealt in turn with Elgar as local hero, national icon, and internationalist composer.

Elgar was sensitive about his provincial beginnings. He acquired from them the lower-middle class obsessions with money and social status, characteristics that were magnified by his marriage to Alice Roberts. In mid-century Worcestershire the middle class was essentially pre-industrial—small shopkeepers and professional men who feared the working class, were unduly deferential to the upper class and the established order, and had a strong urge for social climbing. In consequence, he suggested, Elgar inherited 'an inner core of conservatism', mentioning his hatred for Gladstone and Macdonald, his reaction to the 1906 election, and his membership of the Junior Carlton and later the Athenæum. In fact, Elgar was more fortunate in his origins than he was ever prepared to admit. There was much musical activity in Worcester, and the small-town ambience enabled him to make social contacts with locally influential figures, such as Hubert Leicester, relatively easily. Worcester was also a place with a strong sense of local identity and civic pride; pageantry, both civil and military, was commonplace. The speaker drew attention to Elgar's Honorary Freedom of the City, the Guildhall portrait, and the composition of *Sursum Corda* for a major civic occasion, suggesting Elgar's fascination with ceremony may well have had its origins here. He also involved himself deeply in Conservative politics. Worcester was one of the most corrupt parliamentary seats in the country, but intriguingly Elgar considered offering himself as MP. The county was dominated by Tory gentry; so too was Gloucestershire, but Parry rejected the implications, whereas Elgar embraced them whole-heartedly, and was obsessed with coats of arms and genealogy. This confined and rather suffocating world has been given insufficient attention in the biographies, though immortalised musically by Elgar himself in the 'Enigma' Variations.

The second stage of Elgar's career was as the national 'laureate' composer. Here there was ambivalence; Elgar wanted recognition, but it could only come from those whom he regarded as artistic philistines. To achieve this recognition it was also necessary to leave Worcester and go to London, but his initial sojourn there was not a success, and he bore its marks all his life. He was, remarked Professor Cannadine, a man who seemed to collect rebuffs as a hobby. His alienation was increased by the largely erroneous belief that his Catholicism was a source of disadvantage. But Elgar intensified the problem himself—for example, Birmingham was the very last place in which *Gerontius* should have been premiered. Royal veneration was at its height from 1897 to 1911—precisely the period of Elgar's greatest achievement. Lord Beauchamp and his sister were attached to the Royal Household, and Elgar exploited these and other royal connections. The Queen accepted the dedication of *Caractacus* in 1898, and the Coronation March was composed for the new monarchs in 1911 (even though Elgar thought them both incapable of artistic appreciation). Elgar's obsession with honours culminated in his appointment as Master of the King's Musick. He entered a great period of 'honorification', and the speaker challenged the common assumption that it was Alice who drove this by pointing out that the pace did not slacken after her death. It was, said Professor Cannadine, 'a neurotic craving' fitting in well with Elgar's desire to dress up. However we should remember that he effected a breakthrough, in that after him it no longer seemed strange to give the highest honours to musicians.

The years 1897 to 1911 also saw the apogee of imperial pageantry. Elgar wrote *The Crown of India*, music for a Pageant of Empire and talked about (but never wrote) a 'Gordon' symphony; not, suggested the speaker, a very impressive output—Elgar's interest in empire was very limited. His imperial music has a sombre hue. He compared Elgar in this regard with his contemporaries, Lutyens and Kipling. Though there are some points of similarity (all three were Tories, each was associated with a cosy rural background, and each was nostalgic about an imagined past), the differences are much more striking. Kipling turned down all honours; both he and Lutyens travelled the

Empire extensively; both were generally energetic optimists; and both married better, socially and financially, than Elgar. Essentially he was rooted in Europe—Germany, Italy and, to a lesser extent, France. In contrast to his domestic politics, artistically he was a liberal internationalist.

Professor Cannadine concluded his lecture by postulating the view that Elgar was a typical product of the nineteenth-century provincial conservative world. No British composer since has had so many obstacles to recognition, nor was any so conservative; but the effort meant once recognition was achieved he had no inner compulsion to go further. As Elgar himself said: 'After the OM what was left?' His music has nothing to do with the 'Spirit of England', and little with the now utterly vanished world in which he lived. Undoubtedly a great composer, he is also a remarkable and well-documented representative of his time and class. His career should receive much more attention from the historian.

This was a meticulously researched, brilliantly presented, and provocative lecture. We can only hope that Professor Cannadine's challenge to historians will be picked up in the near future, not least by himself.

Carl Newton

BOOK REVIEWS

Dream Children and The Wand of Youth Suites

Elgar Society Edition, Vol. 25
edited by Christopher Grogan

The determination to revive Novello's noble edition of Elgar's music (barely a quarter done when the company experienced a further takeover) began with one of the Society's youngest members, Roger Dubois. All of us had thought about the Elgar Edition, discussed how good it would be to revive, and wrung our hands. It took the clear sight of youth to grasp and hold up the standard for all to see: that incomparably the most important possible function for our Society is to make available in authoritative editions the works of the man we honour.

The next hero of the enterprise is our redoubtable chairman, Andrew Neill. He grasped the moment, chaired an *ad hoc* meeting in London, and steered between the Scylla of potential competing interests and the Charybdis of nay-sayers. His triumph is before us—or the beginning of it is: the Edition continued in its original format, with all interests represented on the new editorial board—the Society, the Elgar family and Will Trust, the Trustees of Elgar's Birthplace, together with Novello and the Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music. The Edition was relaunched at St James's Palace, the London home of music's Best Friend in the Royal Family.

Perhaps the greatest of Roger's and Andrew's triumphs has been to secure again the services of the old Edition's editor-in-chief after all these years. Dr Robert Anderson is literally irreplaceable as the scholar of pertinacity and loving care. His agreement to stand forward again is for many of us the best guarantee that the revived Edition will take up its former very high position for comprehensive accuracy.

* * *

As the first Elgar Edition under the Society's imprimatur, this volume selected itself. It had been commissioned and fully finished by its editor, Christopher Grogan, more than a decade ago. Its riches had lain complete but unavailable throughout the interval. Now it makes an ideal entry to the revival: for its music reaches back to Elgar's creative beginnings.



The Elgar Society
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260 pages,
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£85.00

The new volume's greatest achievement (to my mind) is its assemblage and scrutiny of a great breadth of manuscript sources scattered early and later through Elgar's sketches. This material, presented in the 'Sources' section of the editor's Foreword, reveals for the first time the persistence of these musical ideas in Elgar's thinking. In tracing the musical ideas back as far as surviving MSS take him, Mr Grogan seems occasionally to fall into a pit dug especially for young scholars (as Mr Grogan was when he did the work). It is to assume that because no MS survives, therefore no MS ever existed. This assumption sometimes leads his Foreword to conclude that Elgar (progressively throughout his life) misrepresented the dates or eras of the music's origins. Would it not be more seemly to think that the creator of the music being edited knew what he was talking about? Elgar's memory might have lost some early sharpness through the years: whose doesn't? But Mr Grogan makes occasionally heavy weather over Elgar's later uncertainties as between 1869 and 1872.

Of course we would like to know which. Certain knowledge of an answer would have enabled me to sharpen considerably the comments I was able to make in the *Creative Life* about Elgar's adolescence. But one has to accept the limitations of time and chance.

The material which survives, as Mr Grogan fully realises, offers riches. For the truly Herculean task of assembling it all in good order and finding economic words to describe each source, I honour him. This part of his task could not in my view have been better done.

In the 'Commentary' section, setting out editorial alterations made in the scores, I could have done with fuller explanations. A majority of us who may own and consult this volume are neither conductors nor practised musicologists. It is not adequate for my understanding simply to cite 'alterations... stemming directly from Elgar'. 'The source' of these in *The Wand of Youth* (Mr Grogan tells us) is Elgar's MS full score. (That for *Dream Children*, he writes, 'no longer survives': how can he know that, unless he applied the torch himself, or saw it done?)

Yet does a MS full score automatically take precedence over a printed score? Even a composer of Elgar's stature may be allowed further thoughts. Which of us, writing for publication, has not made an improvement in proof, or accepted an editor's suggestion? Unless all of Elgar's corrected full score printed proofs have survived to be consulted, this entire area remains more or less a closed book. Mr Grogan cites one such set of proofs for the Second *Wand of Youth* Suite 'with many suggestions from John Pointer and comments by Elgar': yet it is not clear whether the citations which follow in a single paragraph of the Foreword are exhaustive. I suspect not, but would like to have been told.

In fact most of the editorial changes in the music are minor. Many concern the lengthening or shortening of slurs, *crescendo* or *diminuendo* carrots.

Some fascinating questions remain. Whose was the hand that pencilled 'Wand of / YOUTH' at the bottom of the 1881 'Minuet' sketch? It would have been helpful to have eliminated, in a note, obvious candidates such as Lady Elgar, Carice, May Grafton, Jaeger.

On page ix Mr Grogan refers to Elgar's supposed 'habit of removing manuscripts from his study when he retired at night'. In fact there is evidence on either side. Fred Gaisberg, on a visit to Marl Bank in the last year of Elgar's life, saw Third Symphony sketches on the composer's bedside table. But in 1910, closer to the *Wand of Youth* time, Elgar described

to W. H. Reed the experience of coming down in the morning to find a note from Alice pinned overnight to a section of Violin Concerto MS.

The Foreword's opening history of the compositions is full indeed—once or twice perhaps over-full. Actual over-writing (e.g. 'major works of substance' in the second sentence) is rare. But do we need the whole text of Archibald Ramsden's draft contract to publish *Dream Children*, in view of the fact it was never executed? And for that matter, was Ramsden really a music publisher, in addition to being a well-known piano dealer? If so it is 'new' knowledge, and should be sourced.

Several times Mr Grogan refers to a two-stave Elgar score as *ipso facto* a piano version. Might it not as easily be a short-score sketch—a mere memorandum of the horizontal argument before scoring? Even if a two-stave Elgar MS was afterwards found mostly suitable for piano publication, that does not demonstrate (as Mr Grogan appears to conclude on pages x and xiv) that Elgar's disclaimers were disingenuous.

If I remark these few spots on a bright sun, it is only in hopes of assisting future Edition editors—amongst whom I much hope to find Mr Grogan again. The talents he shows here are rare, as no one knows better than I do.

* * *

There is no shadow of doubt in my mind that the Elgarian world is a better place with this volume in it. For it contains important work, well enough done to preclude the need of doing it again. That is the ultimate accolade for a scholarly edition.

Every Society member should therefore consider the purchase of this volume. Even if you (think you) don't read music, this book will bring you closer to the man we all venerate. The simpler pieces might actually teach you to read their music if you persist with them.

For those who already have that advantage, the volume is indispensable. It is also a Janus. For it looks back to the roots of Elgar's genius. And as the first volume in the renewed Elgar Edition with the Society's support, it looks to the resumption of the best thing we can do for Elgar.

Yet it can only continue if we all support it. This means you. I know how many calls there are on our pockets, even for Elgar interests. And this Elgar is expensive (though there is a kindly ten-pounds-a-month plan to ease the burden). But as one of my elders and betters once observed, "When you pay a high price for genius, you're getting it cheap". This is our Society's immortality, as it is Elgar's.

Jerrold Northrop Moore

Elgar and the Three Cathedral Organists, and other essays

by Relf Clark

Relf Clark is familiar to London Branch members as their secretary. He read music at Oxford, is a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, and Publications Officer of the British Institute of Organ Studies. His doctorate was a study of the work of the organ builder Robert Hope-Jones. This valuable and readable little book is based on a number of talks and lectures which Dr Clark has given over the years. As he acknowledges in his introduction, a good lecture does not necessarily make a good article, and some small

adjustments have been made.

The opening chapter, which gives the book its title, deals with the composer's friendship with Ivor Atkins, Herbert Brewer, and G. R. Sinclair, who filled the organ lofts of Worcester, Gloucester, and Hereford respectively during the years of Elgar's greatest creativity. The author admits that the trio could have become a sextet with the addition of Percy Hull, Herbert Sumsion, and Hugh Blair. (And what about Charles Lee Williams, Brewer's predecessor? Having retired in 1897 through ill-health, he outlived Brewer by eight years, and was one of Elgar's oldest friends.) To be honest, and with the exception of Ivor Atkins, the article does not tell us a great deal more about the three men than what can be found in other published sources: Brewer—despite his autobiography—and Sinclair remain somewhat shadowy figures. Nevertheless, it is useful in providing the background to the 1896 Hope-Jones organ in Worcester Cathedral, and in discussing the transcriptions for organ of works by Elgar which were made by the three men, and their use in recital programmes. Appendices to this chapter deal with the relative specifications of the Hill (1874) and Hope-Jones (1896) organs in Worcester Cathedral; a selection of recitals by Atkins; and a complete list of the transcriptions. There is also a reference to the 'Enigma', linked to Bach and Sinclair; and this is enlarged upon in an appendix to the book, entitled 'Some reflections on Variation XI'.

The following chapter, on Elgar and Howells, is a fascinating read. It looks at the lives and careers of both men, and the extent to which they were an 'outsider' or an 'insider' so far as the English musical establishment was concerned. Dr Clark speaks of 'moralists' and 'pragmatists', attaching the former label to Elgar, the latter to Howells. Very stimulating indeed.

The final chapter is on Elgar and Vaughan Williams, and examines the vexed question of what constitutes 'Englishness' in music. Both men were regarded as quintessentially 'English' composers, but the author (rightly) places them firmly in the European tradition.

The book is nicely produced, and scholarly, factually accurate, informative, and thought-provoking; with photographs of Atkins, Brewer, and Sinclair. Recommended.

Geoffrey Hodgkins



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Life with Glorious John: A Portrait of Sir John Barbirolli

by Evelyn Barbirolli

Those of us who were privileged to meet and chat with Lady Barbirolli at our Jubilee weekend in 2001 will be interested in and delighted by this book, along with all lovers of music, anecdote and Sir John's music-making. Her enthusiasm and deep love for all music, and her wonderful memories of a great Elgarian—Sir John Barbirolli—shine out from this easy-to-read and factually most interesting book.

It begins with Lady Barbirolli's memories of Sir John (and, incidentally, a whopping misprint in the very first sentence), a section full of stories and recollections describing their life together, and the musicians they met and worked with—many of whom became friends. The next section contains three appendices, all equally interesting and very informative. The first is a chapter written by JB himself on 'The Art of Conducting', followed by a transcript of a discussion held in 1999 to celebrate the centenary of JB's birth. The panel

consisted of Michael Kennedy (who wrote the foreword to the book), Daniel Barenboim, Lady Barbieroli, two orchestral players from the Hallé who played under the Barbieroli baton in his later years, together with Clive Smart who was Senior Manager at the Hallé from 1960 to 1991. The discussion (part of a two-day symposium) is illuminating and contains many good stories and insights. The third appendix is an extensive (and, as far as I can see, comprehensive) discography of the recordings currently available on disc.

Certainly the personality that was JB comes over very strongly in this book—as one would expect from the pen of the person who knew him best. But for more of an analysis of his way of working, and his methods of presenting the music, it is perhaps his own words which best illuminate what we already know from listening to his marvellous legacy.

My favourite Elgarian story about JB comes from Michael Kennedy, who describes going backstage to see the great conductor after a performance of the First Symphony in the Free Trade Hall, Manchester. JB just sat there for five minutes, before suddenly grasping Michael Kennedy's hand and saying, with tears in his eyes, "God—I love that piece." Another great story: JB loved to cook, having learnt about food and wine from his French mother. On one occasion he was conducting the Hallé, with Clifford Curzon playing Brahms' First Piano Concerto. Between the first and second movements, whilst the orchestra was re-tuning, JB stepped off the rostrum to have a word with the soloist. Afterwards Michael Kennedy asked Sir Clifford, "Was JB worried about something?" "No," he replied, "he just came to tell me supper's in the oven—it's all prepared!"

Wendy Hillary

RECORD REVIEWS

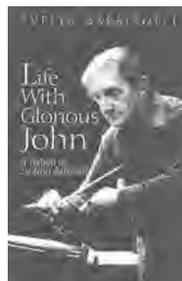
'Enigma' Variations — Gardiner/Vienna Philharmonic

In the South (Alassio)—Concert Overture, op. 50; Introduction and Allegro, op. 47; *Sospiri*, op. 70; 'Enigma' Variations, op. 36.

Küchl Quartet, Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra

conducted by John Eliot Gardiner

It is all but forty years since I last conducted John Eliot Gardiner. That was in a Bach cantata, and we have now both conducted all of them. It took me seventeen years; it took Gardiner one. That does not mean I directed the music seventeen times as slowly; but certainly my first impression of this Elgar CD was that I wanted none of the works faster. It so happens that the Introduction and Allegro is unusual among Elgar's major works in having no metronome marks and not having been recorded by him. Therefore a conductor can let loose as he will this superb welter of string sound. Gardiner and his magnificent Viennese players begin in grandest form, and one anticipates a performance of notable eloquence and understanding. Yet it does not quite work out like that. Even at cue 1, the Allegretto seems imposed on the music rather than being its natural expression. The Allegro itself knows nothing of Elgar's subtle cloudscapes but proceeds with a non-nonsense briskness that is more exhilarating than satisfying. Even the 'Welsh' tune conceives a longing for city life at odds with its supposed origin at what Elgar called 'Llangrannoggywoggygygwyssill'.



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In the South is far more Gardiner's piece, and its obvious Straussian panache must have made the VPO feel thoroughly at home. I have always been a heretic with regard to the middle section, which is certainly no development. Tovey was surprised that Steinbach thought the work 'episodic'; I am not. I could wish Elgar had never spotted that Roman viaduct or worried himself and us with the strife of the Middle Ages. That said, how could one possibly manage without the 'canto popolare'? It is here that Gardiner conjures the most magical sonorities, and I could only suggest to the solo viola that he sings his tune repeatedly (though preferably not to the Shelley words Elgar ill-advisably requisitioned as a marketing ploy) until its shape is as innocent and natural as the horn player makes it. I was put firmly in my place when discovering that Elgar's recording takes a few seconds less than Gardiner's. For sheer extrovert brilliance, this version takes some beating.

In the Variations, too, Elgar is usually faster, with 'C.A.E.' and 'Ysobel' the only exceptions. Gardiner is less than gallant towards Alice Elgar, both in her own variation and in her 'E.D.U.' reappearance. The texture comes across with a clumsiness that is not in the score and occurs seldom in performance. Perhaps Gardiner's fundamental mistake is to hustle the middle section of the theme. He starts in late Elgarian manner, as if all the friends pictured within were already dead, the composer included. But this he cannot keep up. Whenever in the Variations the major section is recalled, the music is moved on apace. The result is that the 'whimsical and witty remarks' of 'R.P.A.', the repeated passage in the otherwise delicious 'Dorabella', and even the ruminative core of 'Nimrod' lose some of their effect.

The VPO is magnificent, and would be yet more so under a more thoughtful and disciplined conductor. I am not sure that its 'continental performance traditions' add anything to what British and American orchestras have so far revealed of Elgar, as Stephen Banfield suggests in the notes; and no Elgar professor should imply that the strange and intense *Sospiri* was written 'to order' or had anything to do with a 1914 recording contract. It was another work Elgar never committed to disc.

Robert Anderson

Symphony No. 2 in E flat, Op. 63

London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Colin Davis

I have always felt that Elgar's A flat Symphony is more approachable than its successor, because to an extent it is more 'obvious' to the listener. Although Elgar famously asserted that the symphony without a programme is 'the highest development of art', every Elgarian knows of his famous comment on the earlier work to Walford Davies regarding the 'massive hope in the future'. However, with the Second Symphony, there are more unanswered questions. It was a work long in gestation, although the actual writing of it was done relatively quickly in 1910 and 1911. Elgar wrote that 'the spirit of the work is intended to be high & pure joy: there are retrospective passages of sadness but the whole of the sorrow is smoothed out & ennobled in the last movement, which ends in a calm &, I hope & intend, elevated mood'. But the well-known epigraph from Shelley, 'Rarely, rarely, comest thou, Spirit of Delight!' suggests sadness and unfulfilled longings. The work certainly ends in a 'calm' mood, but 'elevated'? Michael Kennedy describes these last pages as 'solemn'; and whilst we may stop short of those fertile imaginations who have heard here an elegy for the passing of an age, and a presage of the global conflict only three years away, I guess 'elevated' is not a word which would naturally spring to mind here. Other puzzles include the 'hammering' section in the Rondo, the clock (on the harp)



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striking eight in the first movement, and others. Elgar himself spoke of a 'feminine' voice, and of 'a woman dropping a flower on the man's grave' in the second movement. Professor Trowell deals at length with many of these points in his excellent 'Elgar's Use of Literature' in Raymond Monk's *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*. I am surprised that no-one has picked up on the musical association with the two places named at the end of the work—Venice and Tintagel. The latter is the setting for *Tristan und Isolde*, the most famous tragic love affair in music; and Wagner wrote most of this work in Venice in 1858 and 1859. Is this a coincidence? Possibly.

As you may have guessed, this is a lengthy preamble to my main point, that good performances of the Second Symphony, either live or on record, are not as numerous as the First (although of course it is perfectly possible to give a fine reading of the work without any knowledge of these extra-musical connections). My review of Sir Colin Davis's First Symphony recording in the last issue was enthusiastic, and I was looking forward to hearing this new disc. Once again, it is slow (almost fifty-eight minutes), and this is a hazard in the Second Symphony. Elgar's friend Canon Gairdner called it 'the passionate pilgrimage of a soul'; Elgar himself said that the work was 'tremendous in energy', and his own recording is a masterly demonstration of such a description. The emotion generated by the work is such that after fifty or so minutes the listener needs the 'calm' of the ending; if insufficient 'passion' is generated earlier, the final pages of the 'pilgrimage' are somewhat blunted in their effect. However, I am not equating passion with fast speeds: Barbirolli generated a good deal of passion, but was certainly not fast (although quicker than Davis, even in his 1964 recording). Davis's reading doesn't really take off—right from the first note in fact. Elgar's marking here is *Allegro vivace e nobilmente* (dotted crotchet=92), but the opening is also marked *largamente*, so there is some flexibility. Some conductors move from the B flat to the top G within three or four seconds of the start; Davis takes about six. My main criticism is a lack of shape, particularly in the first two movements. Elgar wanted ebb and flow in the music; hence the numerous tempo indications (marked R, A and L in the score). There are several of these in the first seven pages before the return to *Tempo primo* at fig. 7. Davis ignores all of them, and the music sounds somewhat rum-ti-tum rather than restless as a result. Yet elsewhere his reading is too leisurely and episodic. The reprise of the eerie cello theme at fig. 33 is prosaic, and goes for nothing, as does the *Impetuoso* at fig. 55.

The second movement is better, but still not totally convincing. Most disappointing of all is the wailing oboe counterpoint to the main theme at fig. 79. This is marked *molto rubato*, *quasi ad lib.*, but apart from a couple of notes it is entirely *a tempo*.

The Rondo is good in parts; an impressive opening, similar to Elgar's. There is some nice attention to detail in the scampering woodwind parts, and some well-observed *pianissimos*; but I found the 'hammering' episode less than terrifying. The movement is spoiled for me by an unmarked and uncalled-for *ritenuto* at fig. 130, necessitating an unmarked *animato* at fig. 132.

The final movement is the most successful; the opening statement is just right, and the themes of the second subject are played beautifully with great attack and confidence. The Coda is well-judged by Davis, and the 'sunset' ending very effective.

The recording, from two live performances in October last, is fine, although the strings have a tendency to be overwhelmed in the *tuttis*. The audience is wonderfully silent, but here and there one can detect a few grunts of encouragement from the conductor. The



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composer's own recording is still very much the bench-mark, and I am also very fond of the first recordings by Boult (1945) and Barbirolli (1954).

Geoffrey Hodgkins

Complete Organ Works

Sonata in G major, op. 28; *Vesper Voluntaries*, op. 14; *Cantique*, op. 3; *Loughborough Memorial Chime*; Sonata in B flat major, op. 87a.

John Butt (organ)

That Dr Butt is a J. S. Bach scholar renders this a remarkable recording, for the organ music of Bach does not have much in common with that of Elgar, and the great Harrison & Harrison organ of King's College, Cambridge, on which this recording was made, does not have much in common with the instruments of Bach's day. Clearly, there is a story here, and one wonders what it is.

Elgar's organ works are 'music written for organ' rather than 'organ music', in the sense that there is little here that positively cries out for manuals and pedals, and little that belongs to the great traditions of organ composition. (It is instructive to compare them with those of Elgar's Roman Catholic contemporary Max Reger (1873–1916), who wrote chorale-based works, fugues and passacaglias.)

Elgar's G major Sonata is essentially an orchestral work written on three staves, and few would argue that it does not work a good deal better in the version made by Gordon Jacob. Similarly, the *Vesper Voluntaries* would make a charming orchestral suite; and the Second Sonata is a re-working by Ivor Atkins of the *Severn Suite*, op. 87. Possibly because Atkins was a professional organist, the Second Sonata, with its non-organ origins, is—paradoxically—a good deal more grateful to play than the G major, the 'Toccata' and the 'Fugue' (respectively the second and third movements) comprising good examples of organ textures.

Though slight, the other works recorded here make welcome fillers. The *Cantique*, op. 3 comes over as not entirely insubstantial; and the Loughborough piece (not as far as I know recorded previously) has something of the haunting, wistful quality characteristic of so many of Elgar's shorter works.

Dr Butt's playing is clean, measured, and stylish throughout, and I fault it only in points of detail. Very quiet passages tend to be muffled by the Swell (or, as the case may be, Choir) shutters to the extent that they sound uncomfortably distant. The *sforzando* markings are ignored—reflecting, perhaps, that Elgar had in mind the trigger swell pedals of the Victorian organ, rather than the balanced pedals of this 1934 Harrison, with which it is difficult to effect a really sudden clo-sure of the box. I felt that the organ's great range of colour could have been deployed just a little more in the G major Sonata, but otherwise the instrument is used most resourcefully, the powerful Harrison reeds (not far removed from the reeds on the Worcester organ as it was in the 1930s) being used in the Second Sonata in a way which conveys something of the sound of a great band. In the grander

passages of both sonatas, there are some odd toyings with the pulse, and I do not understand why in the coda to the *Vesper Voluntaries* Dr Butt effects a *diminuendo*—it should be *fortissimo* right to the end.

It would be ungracious, especially in these pages, not to welcome a recording such as this, but I could not help wondering whether it was really necessary and (thinking of the sonatas) what prompted yet another recording of these far-from-neglected works (again, one wonders what the story is). There is much English organ music of Elgar's time that languishes in relative obscurity. For example, Parry's beautiful chorale preludes have not to my knowledge been recorded in their entirety, and it would be a great treat to have them. But perhaps that is Dr Butt's next project.

Relf Clark

The Music Makers — Williams/Oxford Orchestra da Camera

Zoltán Kodály, *An Ode: The Music Makers* (introduced by Madame Kodály); *A Summer Evening*; Edward Elgar, *The Music Makers*, op. 69.

Christina Wilson (mezzo-soprano), Choir of Oxford Orchestra da Camera; Oxford Orchestra da Camera conducted by Howard Williams

This CD is a gem, a recording of a concert given at St John's, Smith Square on 24 May 2001. Though Elgar's setting of O'Shaughnessy's poem is 'relatively... well-known', I had never previously heard Kodály's, let alone knew the circumstances of its composition. It was written for the septcentenary of Merton College, Oxford in 1964, when Kodály was eighty-one. The connection was Laszlo Heltay, one of Kodály's pupils who had come to Merton College in 1959. This is the work's premier recording.

It is an interesting setting, vigorous where Elgar's is contemplative. A brief but powerful orchestral introduction leads to a unison statement of the first verse. The orchestral playing and choral singing here, as throughout, are rich and vibrant, well-intoned and very pleasurable to hear. Harmony breaks out at the start of verse two and the choir (especially the sopranos) displays its firm sense of pitch. The brass playing, too, is well-voiced. Verse three belongs to the men, with trumpet *obbligato*, a section with pseudo-Welsh overtones. The women rejoin for verse four and the music becomes busier. Kodály omits the next verse ('They had no vision amazing'), moving straight on to 'And therefore today is thrilling'. The next two verses are beautifully set, with tenor-bass imitation followed by soprano-contralto, ending with a full choral unison. These two verses show how fine is each section of a choir giving its first public performance. For the last verse, we return to music akin in spirit to the opening. Kodály allows himself, for once, a little verbal repetition in this coda. The final couplet is set to mystic, mostly *a capella*, harmony—'...we are the dreamers of dreams'—ending on a long held chord and then... applause.

For some Elgarians, his setting of *The Music Makers* may be as unfamiliar as Kodály's was to me. It is, however, one of my favourite Elgar works and I fail to fall in with those who carp about its sequences and his self-quotation. There is precedent, after all, for both—in J. S. Bach, to name but one. Elgar does with the words what a genius will do—makes them completely his own. He includes only one verse more than Kodály, but his piece lasts nearly thirty-eight minutes to Kodály's ten and a half! We are clearly on an altogether grander scale.

I have nothing but praise for this performance, distributing this equally between choir,



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orchestra, soloist, and conductor. The singing is wonderful. Right from the start we know we are in for a treat: witness the final sibilant 's' of 'We are the music makers'. Unanimity of this order comes from both intelligent choral brains and secure direction. Diction is superb, phrasing and breath control equally so. There is unanimity of attack and complete integration of vocal blend. The playing is inspired: rich strings, fat, opulent brass, marvellous woodwind and wonderful timpani, snare drum and cymbals. The soloist, Christina Wilson, has a voice to drool over: powerful, majestic. Mezzo she may be but rich contralto she sounds: a perfect 'line', impeccable diction, the voice always beautifully 'placed'. But what leaps out of this performance is the wonderful direction of Howard Williams. This piece is a nightmare drive of sudden gearshifts, U-turns of tempo, mood swings all too obviously reflecting Elgar's character. Williams may be driving a Rolls-Royce, but his foot on the accelerator and brake is light as a feather and solid as a rock. It is a superb piece of performance management.

There remains *A Summer Evening* and Mrs Kodály. The tone poem is beautiful, a piece well worth having, the cor anglais soloist a joy to hear. Madame Kodály is also a joy. She gives an eight-minute intro-duction, reflecting on her husband's life, achievements, interests, influences; but, though she added a unique dimension to the original concert, she does not sit well as Track 1. After having heard what she had to say once, I would now like to hear the music straightaway.

This is a CD to treasure. I shall listen to it often—for Kodály's relatively innocent yet virile choral piece, his superb orchestral work, and a superlative performance of the Elgar. Somm are to be congratulated on their enterprise.

Paul Adrian Rooke

Stephen Hough's English Piano Album

Alan Rawsthorne, Bagatelles; Stephen Reynolds, Two Poems in homage to Delius; Stephen Hough, Two *Valses enigmatique*; Elgar, *In Smyrna*; Stephen Reynolds, Two Poems in homage to Fauré; Bantock, *Song to the Seals* (arr. Hough); York Bowen, *Reverie d'amour*, *Serious Dance*, *The Way to Polden*; Frank Bridge, *The Dew Fairy*, *Heart's Ease*; Kenneth Leighton, Six Studies (Study-Variations).

After the keyboard music of the sixteenth century it took until the turn of the nineteenth to the twentieth century for an English revival of such music to appear once again in serious quantities. This resembled the situation in France, though we had no Saint-Saëns to initiate the revival, neither did it go on to emulate the great piano music produced by Debussy, Ravel and Fauré. In the case of British music there was the obvious influence of the German Romantics such as Wagner and Brahms, but judging from this collection, the French played their part too. This is not a comprehensive review and does not include obvious composers such as Bax, Ireland or Cyril Scott. Hough himself has a couple of tracks, whimsically charming waltzes of an enigmatic nature, which leads us nicely to EE himself. No 'Enigma' but his fragmental (barely four-and-a-half-minute) *In Smyrna*, inspired

by a Mediterranean cruise in 1905 and part of the precious little he wrote for the piano. It sounds as if the great man is improvising (as indeed he had been back in 1899 before putting pen to paper for the great Variations) on a theme in the left hand, which is immediately identifiable as Elgar himself.

The rest of the disc is also extremely enjoyable: Alan Rawsthorne's capricious Bagatelles; Stephen Reynolds' clever pastiche homages to two composers he admires (Delius and Fauré); a haunting arrangement by Hough himself of a song by Bantock; three charmingly contrasting York Bowen pieces; two heartfelt post-First World War miniatures by Bridge; and Leighton's neglected but innovative Studies. Hough's playing is masterly, never reducing any of the tuneful music to salon style but investing it all with feeling and conviction. Let us hope some of these items will find their way into, or back into, recital programmes. The recording is first class, and though the title may imply Stephen Hough's personal selection, it is one all of us can enjoy and I recommend it without reservation.

Christopher Fifield



Somm
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Handley conducts Elgar on 'Classics for Pleasure'

- *Pomp & Circumstance* Marches, op. 39; Symphony no. 1 in A flat, op. 55.
- *Sea Pictures*[†], op. 37; Symphony no. 2 in E flat, op. 63.
- *Cockaigne* (In London Town)—Concert Overture, op. 40; Serenade in E minor, op. 20; Introduction and Allegro, op. 47; *Falstaff*—Symphonic Study in C minor, op. 68.
- Ralph Vaughan Williams: *The Lark Ascending*; Fantasia on 'Greensleeves'*; Fantasia on a Theme by Thomas Tallis*; Edward Elgar: Serenade in E minor, op. 20; Variations on an Original Theme ('Enigma'), op. 36.

H Bernadette Greevy (contralto); I David Nolan (violin)
London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Vernon Handley
(except * Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra)

Vernon Handley's is, in some respects, a very British story. He has devoted himself to the composers of this country, and conducted more first performances than any other I can name. In so doing he has followed in the footsteps of his mentor, Sir Adrian Boult. His recordings have set a standard which others can only envy, and he has toured the world proselytising music from these islands. For many years he has fought a crippling illness which would have led others to hang up their batons. As a reward, he has been ignored by those with the power to grant him the recognition accorded to others keener to court the limelight and to content themselves with repeating the German classics. Life is unfair, but 'Tod's' greater reward is in the pleasure he has brought to countless thousands through his conducting—including the German classics—and his recordings, many of which can be classed today as 'standards'.

It is Handley's Elgar that concerns us here, but I must draw your attention to CFP's reissue of his Vaughan Williams. The 'standard' recordings for me consist of *Job* (the finest sound of any recording), *A Sea Symphony*, *A London Symphony*, the *Pastoral*

Symphony and, above all, the Fifth *Symphony*.

But what should we make of Handley's Elgar? I recall attending the recording of the A flat *Symphony* in Abbey Road in 1979 (so long ago!). This was a memorable occasion for me, as it showed what a close rapport Handley had with the LPO in the days when it played British music, and his efficient way of getting the sound he wanted. I also succeeded in smashing the spectacles of a distinguished vice-president on the floor of the studio, but that is another story!

I have long recommended these recordings, and although they cannot compare with the best in contemporary sound, potential listeners should not be put off, for the aural quality of both symphonies is still excellent. What we have here are versions of these important works played by a fine orchestra, and conducted by a great Elgarian with that essential understanding of the ebb and flow of Elgar's music, his *rubato*, and his constant changes of light and emotion.

Space does not permit full analyses, but listeners can take it for granted that these budget CDs are of immense value, and that no performance falls short of the very best. In the previous issue of the JOURNAL I examined the reissue of Sir Adrian Boult's 1949 performance of Elgar's A flat *Symphony*; I advised then how much more I preferred his 1976 recording to the earlier performance, and latched onto his sense of pulse and momentum, so essential in both symphonies. On the surface, Handley's performances are slower than Elgar's; however, his sense of pulse and momentum conveys the feeling that his performances are full of life and purpose. Let us consider a few examples.

Towards the end of the first movement of the A flat *Symphony*, Handley manages the hint of the motto theme as it emerges from the back desks of the strings at fig. 48 in masterly fashion. Within his own pulse he sustains the theme's prominence as it sinks into musical mists. In the closing bars he conjures an almost tactile stillness as the orchestra hints at the struggle the theme will eventually face before it emerges triumphant into sunlight at the symphony's close. The playing here by the LPO is wonderful, too.

Crucial to any performance of the E flat *Symphony* is the ability of the conductor to get inside that extraordinary opening with its constantly changing tempi, forward movement and, almost impossibly, the simultaneous sense of regret. This is what makes it so difficult for musicians who have not studied Elgar deeply (like the late Giuseppe Sinopoli) to produce a convincing result. Handley's experience is evident at this opening, which takes you by the hand straight away. There is no sluggishness, but equally there is no suggestion of being grabbed around the neck. The *Largamente* in bar 1, the *Accelerando* in bar 2, the dotted crotchet=92 *in tempo* at bar 4, the dotted crotchet=104 at bar 9, and so on; it is all there, and we feel secure.

Handley also gives us a *Falstaff* to treasure. This complex score is expertly managed, with the detail not obscured by the span of the work, from its atmospheric beginning to tragi-comic ending. In between the LPO excels in the emotional variety of the music; the poignancy of the 'Interludes', *Falstaff's* march, and his drunken sleep. Tension can so easily sag at the end, but again Handley sustains the atmosphere (now the fog of death, not alcohol). The final *pizzicato* is as much a nail in *Falstaff's* coffin as his dismissal by the new king.

Handley always uses divided strings, which nowadays is unfashionable. Their extra clarity serves Elgar particularly well, as do these recordings. Ideally, EMI should re-record

Handley in contemporary sound, but failing that, these CDs are a fine tribute to one of the country's master conductors.

Andrew Neill



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LETTERS

From: Andrew Neill, Chairman

When Geoffrey Hodgkins published his first JOURNAL in September 1991, he had the unenviable task of taking over from Ronald Taylor. Ronald had set a standard for production and editorial content which was hard to better, and what was worse, he had been doing it since 1977. If I say Ronald was the right man to do the job when he took over from Wulstan Atkins' pioneering NEWSLETTER, there is no doubt in my view that Geoffrey was absolutely the right person to follow in those formidable footsteps.

In producing a journal such as ours, we always face the problem of never having enough to spend on it and the continued doubt that there will be material to publish! As Editor, Geoffrey worked for nothing, accepting the praise as well as the brickbats and the self-imposed criticism that has always infused his attitude to publication. What is more, there is always that small cloud which gets ever bigger as the next deadline nears. We are indeed fortunate that he gave us his all for over eleven years, a time which saw tremendous growth in this Society, increasing interest in Elgar's music, and the challenge of dividing the JOURNAL into a separate NEWS and the more scholarly JOURNAL.

Of course, one cannot satisfy 'all of the people all of the time', but I am sure there are few who would criticise the standard Geoffrey continued, the changes he introduced, the discernment of his editorial judgement, and the way he blended the activities of the Society whilst widening our knowledge of our great composer.

His wit, his tolerance of other's views, and his concern to do right by those who feel they have something to say are an example to us all. In his first editorial he referred to the 'pioneer spirit' that existed among members of the Society when he joined in the early 1970s. If we still maintain something of that spirit, then much of that is due to him. He went on to say, '...it is thrilling and gratifying to look back now and see what has been achieved, including the significant contribution made by the Society and its members (and dare I say it the JOURNAL).' Well he could say it, for it was true then and it is true now.

Geoffrey, thank you for all you have done to maintain our most valuable product, the way you have enhanced it, and the imagination with which you have managed the job over the years. You have left a daunting legacy. However, I am sure you are comforted by the knowledge that those taking over are more than capable of continuing the tradition and standards set by your predecessors and maintained by you. Please enjoy the next deadline without a feeling of guilt, and above all enjoy the next edition of the JOURNAL in the knowledge that you can read it with surprise and a freshness denied you for a long time!

On behalf of us all, Geoffrey, thank you.

100 YEARS AGO...

After the triumphant Düsseldorf performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* on 19 May, the Elgars spent another fortnight in Germany, touring with their friend Rodewald. They visited Cassel, Eisenach (Bach's birthplace), and Dresden, arriving back in London on 4 June. Richard Strauss was in town conducting his own works, and after the concert Elgar had supper with him. The following day he and Alice attended *Die Meistersinger*, and saw Strauss again. On arriving back in Malvern on the sixth, Elgar was very busy with correcting proofs of the *Coronation Ode*. Six days later he went to Sheffield to rehearse the choir for the work, and from there to London to go through it with the orchestra. Back home once more on 17 June he began cycling, and on the twenty-fourth he was taking tea with Rosa Burley in the small hamlet of Stretton Grandison, when he was told the King was ill and the coronation postponed.

This gave him the opportunity to contemplate the work which had been commissioned for the 1903 Birmingham Festival—an oratorio on the life of Christ and the establishment of the church, entitled *The Apostles*. He was to write his own libretto, and began to read a number of theological books. On 2 July he wrote to Ivor Atkins that he was 'now plotting GIGANTIC WORK'. July saw preparations for the Three Choirs performance of *Gerontius* in September. Elgar went to Hereford and Gloucester to rehearse those sections of the Festival Chorus, and to London to go through the solo parts with John Coates and Plunket Greene. On 20 July he left for Bayreuth in the company of Archibald Ramsden, Alfred Kalisch and others. They saw the first three operas of *The Ring*, as well as *Parsifal* and *The Flying Dutchman*. The hot weather affected him and he was glad to return. On 31 July the diary records: 'Began to be very busy collecting material for *Apostles*'.

After thinking they would go to Birchwood, the Elgars decided to accept Rodewald's offer to stay at his cottage at Saughall near Chester. They left on 8 August and found their fellow guests included Ernest Newman and his wife, and Granville Bantock. Elgar wrote to Jaeger: 'It is very nice & restful here'. On 21 August Elgar bicycled back to Malvern, staying overnight at Shrewsbury (Alice and Carice returned by train). He composed two songs during the following week—*In the Dawn* and *Speak, Music*—and took them to Boosey's in London on the twenty-ninth.

On 1 September, Alice wrote: 'E's dear Mother passed away most peacefully in the morning'. Elgar conducted a rehearsal of *Gerontius* in Worcester that evening, and the following day he and Alice left for London, where an orchestral rehearsal took place on the third. They returned the following day, when Elgar attended his mother's funeral. On 6 September they went to Worcester for the Festival, staying at Castle House on College Green. Elgar was represented by a number of works—*Sursum Corda*, *Sea Pictures*, *Cockaigne*, and his arrangement of *God save the King*. But the big event was of course the performance of *Gerontius* on the morning of the eleventh. The soloists were John Coates, Plunket Greene, and Muriel Foster. Alice's diary evokes the impact of the day: 'Gerontius—Most beautiful, most wonderful in Cathedral. Prelude never to be forgotten. Vast audience wonderful [—] rapt attention. Soloists too wonderfully good & impressed. The Speyers came & lunched & returned afterwards not wishing to hear anything else. Crowds of people came all the aftn. & to tea—& in the evening... A most wonderful day to have had in one's life. D.G.'

Geoffrey Hodgkins

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