

# Beau Brummel

## Incidental music to a play by Bertram P Matthews

<b>Approximate Length:</b>	3 mins 30 secs
<b>First Performance:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	5 November 1928
<b>Venue:</b>	Theatre Royal, Birmingham
<b>Conductor:</b>	the composer

In his later years, Elgar had shown his adeptness at producing significant scores as incidental music to dramatic works. *The Crown of India*, to accompany a masque staged for King George V's coronation in 1912, was the first of these, followed by the wartime fantasy *The Starlight Express* in 1915 and the music for Laurence Binyon's play *Arthur* in 1923.

After Lady Elgar's death in 1920, Elgar sold both Brinkwells, the Sussex retreat at which he had composed most of the *Violin Sonata*, *String Quartet* and *Piano Quintet*, and *Severn House*, the imposing Hampstead mansion which had served as his London home since 1912, and returned to his former peripatetic ways. In 1928, these took him to Tiddington House, Stratford-on-Avon, where he stayed for a little over a year. While resident in Stratford, he would often attend the memorial theatre for productions of the great Shakespearian plays and this appeared to revive his interest in composing further incidental music.

What emerged, however, was not music of Shakespearian grandeur but a score to accompany a play by the far lesser known playwright Bertram P Matthews. His play, *Beau Brummel*, was staged at the Theatre Royal, Birmingham in November 1928, with Elgar conducting the orchestra on the first night. The score has remained unpublished with the exception of the minuet which alone has outlived the play.