

## Pomp and Circumstance. Elgar's own recordings.

Elgar himself conducted four recorded performances of *Pomp and Circumstance March No.1*. The first was during his second acoustic recording session, on 26 June 1914, just weeks before the start of the Great War. The march was severely cut to a timing of just over four minutes and began with the trio tune so that none of its passages were cut. The work was played by some 30-odd musicians from various London orchestras, recruited for the session by The Gramophone Company. On the record label, they were dubbed the "Symphony Orchestra".

Elgar's first complete recording took place during his first session with the new electrical recording system, on 27 April 1926 at the Queen's Hall. The players were the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra. The second march was also recorded at this session, followed by Nos. 3 and 4 in 1927, and No. 5 (actually the first performance) in 1930.



*Elgar conducting. A still from the Pathe film.*

On 12 November 1931, Elgar performed the trio by itself with the London Symphony Orchestra for the opening of EMI's Abbey Road studios. The performance was captured on film by Pathe for release on a newsreel. This is the occasion when Elgar's remarks to the players were recorded. After being greeted by the orchestra, Elgar said: "Morning, gentlemen. Glad to see you all. Very light programme this morning. Please play this tune as though you've never heard it before."

On 7 October 1932, Elgar re-recorded the first two marches with the BBC Symphony Orchestra at the Kingsway Hall for a special Christmas release that year.

Three recordings were made by Elgar of 'Land of Hope and Glory'. The first was in 1924, a 'live' recording made at the opening of the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. The record was not released. Neither was a recording made in 1931. A successful recording with the Philharmonic Choir had, however, been made in 1928, and has been reissued on CD in the *Elgar Complete Edition*, which also includes all his electrical recordings of the March.

The 1914 recording is available on CD in a boxed set issued by Pearl of all Elgar's acoustic recordings. The number is **CDS 9951/5**.

The complete *Pomp and Circumstance* marches conducted by Elgar are also available on HMV Classics, number **5 74001 2**