

Allegretto • Requiem • Harmonically Music • Promenades
Evesham Andante • Rosemary (That's for Remembrance) •
Pastourelle • Virelai • Sevillana • Une Idylle • Griffinesque •
Gavotte • Sal
Eyes • My Lo
Serenade • L
Sursum Corda

The Elgar Society **Journal**

Highlands • The Light of Life • King Olaf • Imperial March •
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Variations on an Original T
Chanson de Nuit • Chanson
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• Carillon • Polonia • Une Voix dans le Desert • The Starlight
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of the Fleet • The Sanguine Fan • Violin Sonata in E minor •
Concertino for Violin and Piano • Quintet in A minor • Overture

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The Elgar Society

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The Editor does not necessarily agree with the views expressed by contributors, nor does the Elgar Society accept responsibility for such views.

Front Cover: A wax cast of Percival Hedley's striking bust of Elgar. The bronze cast of the bust is housed at the National Portrait Gallery where it arrived in 1928 at the bequest of Leo ('Frank') Schuster, Elgar's devoted friend who had died at the end of the previous year. In this issue, Arthur Reynolds tells the story of the bust and unearths the life of the artist who created it.

EDITORIAL

Scholars and enthusiasts of all disciplines could learn salutary lessons from the story of Ötzi, the five-thousand-year-old 'iceman' discovered in the Alps in 1991. Despite using sophisticated imaging equipment, early examinations of the body failed to identify an arrowhead embedded in the shoulder; consequently, when a new study revealed this startling piece of evidence ten years later, all hypotheses about how Ötzi had met his end had to be rapidly and radically revised. The arrowhead had been there all the time; the fact the body was preserved inviolate allowed subsequent investigators to make their remarkable find.

Music scholarship has changed almost beyond recognition since the early 1990s, and a new generation of scholars is emerging, equipped with new tools, techniques and ideas. What a great pity then that the numerous letters between Elgar and his Novello publishers—explored and many (though by no means all) reproduced by Jerrold Northrop Moore in his two-volume *Elgar and his Publishers* (1987)—are slowly being scattered to the four winds. Scholarship thrives on the re-examination and re-assessment of source materials; the piecemeal sale of items from the Novello collection denies posterity the opportunity of new discoveries and insights, at how great a cost to the future study and appreciation of Elgar and his music we will never know.

Further, this documentary diaspora was by no means either necessary or inevitable. Both in 1996 (when the Novello collection was put up for auction for the first time) and in late 2002 (when the leftovers came back on the market), the vendors received offers from reputable heritage organisations including, on the latest occasion, the Elgar Birthplace Museum. Had these offers been accepted, the collection (or its remnant) would not only have been preserved intact, the amount paid for it would have exceeded that raised by the auctions. Last December, the total hammer price of those items which were sold was only half the Birthplace's pre-auction offer!

In terms of conservation and scholarship, this break-up of the Novello collection amounts to something similar to putting Ötzi through a bacon-slicer and selling him off by the pound; and on the evidence so far it seems the process will continue until the last rasher is sold.

Phil Maund

Hedley's Elgar

Arthur S. Reynolds

A cryptic inscription on the shoulder of the National Portrait Gallery's bronze bust of Elgar is the starting point for this fascinating tale of musical detection, in which a hitherto 'unknown' sculptor emerges as a prolific, cosmopolitan artist, whose work and love of music brought him into contact with many of the greatest musicians of his era.

The world's homage to Edward Elgar and his works is manifest in the multitude of visual images made of him in every conceivable medium. Which is your favorite? In my view, the most magnificent likeness of Britain's greatest composer is Percival Hedley's bust, the bronze cast of which is on permanent display in Room 29 of the National Portrait Gallery.

The head-to-upper-torso work, measuring 437mm high, 350mm wide, and 180mm in depth, depicts Elgar in early middle age at the height of his dashing good looks. The head is held high above an Edwardian stiff collar with its tie knotted in the fashion of the day. Below, Hedley has composed the clothing to transform mass into movement. The waistcoat, shaped into a flying wedge that plunges down to the base like an arrowhead, is flanked by jacket lapels thrown back to suggest a motion of wings. The brilliance of this effect is evident when viewed together with other works of sculpture displayed in the National Portrait Gallery's nineteenth century wing. Some sculptors have evaded the challenge of modern dress depiction by ending their works at the neck or by dressing their subjects in Roman togas. In the works of others, the animation of the face above contrasts with the stasis of the bulk below. Hedley's composition is literally head and shoulders above the rest, in my opinion.

At the back on the left shoulder, Hedley has incised 'LONDON MDCCCCV'. On the rear right shoulder we find this inscription: 'OP: DCXXVII: AD NAT: FEC: PERCIVAL HEDLEY'. Until 2001, the following caption accompanied the bust:

SIR EDWARD ELGAR, BT 1857–1934
Composer; Master of the King's Musick 1924–34;
Established his reputation with his *Enigma Variations*,
1899, and *The Dream of Gerontius*, 1900; Elgar's other
works included the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches,
1901–7, the *Violin Concerto*, 1910, and the *Cello Concerto*,
1919, compositions which have won him renewed popularity,
and a vast audience, in recent years.
By Percival Hedley (1870–1932)
Bronze cast of bust, cast in 1927
Bequeathed by Leo. F. Schuster, 1928

In 1968, I wrote to the curator pointing out the work could not have been executed in 1927 because Elgar was seventy years old in that year, while Hedley's bust portrays the man in his prime. For thirty-two years,

answer came there none; but therein lies a tale.

* * *

Who was Percival Hedley? Where could one see other works by him? Apart from the Elgar bust, neither the National Portrait Gallery nor any other British public collection I consulted possessed any example of his sculpture. All my efforts to locate Hedley in books on British sculptors of the early twentieth century proved fruitless. Neither Sotheby's nor Christie's could help. I contacted numerous specialist scholars; a few had heard of Hedley, but none could offer any information about him or his works. The sole mention of the artist I could find in print anywhere was this single entry in Alice Elgar's diary:

31 May 1904 (Tues). E to dentist at 10. then Frank fetched him & took him to Mr. Hedley's to see his bust, then to Langham to fetch A—then to lunch at Hindoo [sic] restaurant...

My mystification deepened when I acquired a version of the bust made from wax. Could this be the original model from which Hedley cast the National Portrait Gallery bronze? If so, the two works should be identical. But they are not. The wax image presents the head raised slightly higher and more forward *vis-à-vis* the bronze example. In addition, there are differences in the drapery of the coat on the lower right-hand side. Carice Elgar-Blake declared the wax version to be superior to the bronze and, in her view, the most perceptive likeness of her father she had ever seen.

In 2001, I learned the National Portrait Gallery had expanded its staff to include the post of Curator 20th Century Collections. Perhaps its occupant would be helpful. So I wrote again, this time identifying myself as the owner of the wax model for the bronze cast. When I asked once more why the Gallery had settled on the 1927 date, in view of the evidence of Lady Elgar's diary and the 1905 date on the back of the bust, I was happy to receive a reply thanking me for 'alerting us to the misinformation on the caption to the Percival Hedley bust of Elgar'. The letter went on to say the caption had been appropriately amended, so I hastened to Room 29 where, to my dismay, I found the new caption was identical to the previous text except that the penultimate line had been changed to read: 'Bronze cast of bust, modelled in 1905 and cast in 1927'.

How could the Gallery assert that only the wax version was made in 1905, while the bronze cast did not appear for more than two decades? Further correspondence with the curator provided this explanation: 'The bust itself is indeed dated twice in Roman numerals, thus: LONDON MDCCCCV and OP: DCXXVII: AD NAT: FEC: PERCIVAL HEDLEY'. The basis for the Gallery's allegation was the following translation from the Latin: OP = opus, the final work; DCXXVII = 1927 in abbreviated form; AD NAT = *ad nationem* or 'given to the nation'; FEC: PERCIVAL HEDLEY = made [cast] by Percival Hedley.

This suggests Frank Schuster (who bequeathed the bust) acquired the waxwork in 1905 and kept it in his possession for the remaining twenty-two years of his life. Then in 1927, shortly before his death, he commissioned a bronze cast from the wax model as his gift to the nation to commemorate his friendship with Britain's foremost composer. Since Percival Hedley lived until 1932, he was available to arrange for a foundry to make the cast in 1927. The final work did not reach the National Portrait Gallery until 1928, because Schuster died on 27 December the previous year.

I was not convinced, but I could offer no basis for an alternative explanation until an Elgarian friend showed me a medallion 25mm in diameter (about the size of a current ten pence coin) bearing an image of Elgar at its centre surrounded by this inscription:

EDWARD ELGAR OP: DLXXXVII: AD NAT: FEC: PERCIVAL M. F. HEDLEY.

In the minute recess beneath the raised portrait image we find incised: 'London 1904'. So Hedley had made two portraits of Elgar, a medal and a bust. Taken together, the two inscriptions make clear that the Roman

numerals after 'OP' are meant to signify not dates but opus numbers. The inscription on the face of the medallion proclaims that Hedley's Elgar medal, struck in 1904, is his five hundred and eighty-seventh work. *Ergo* his Elgar bust, produced one year and forty opus numbers later, is his six hundred and twenty-seventh work. And 'AD NAT' could not mean *ad nationem* because there is no appearance of the medal in any British public collection. It must mean *ad naturam*, 'from life'.

I fired off another missive to the National Portrait Gallery presenting my findings, and pointing out that composers are not the only artists who use opus numbers to identify the sequence of their works. Back came a response acknowledging, 'It certainly seems entirely plausible, though 627 works seems a very high count by any standard and for any sculptor, medallist or not. I await further news.'

In other words, the Gallery was not prepared to budge from its position without additional evidence. I could take my contentions no further, until I met the eminent sculptor and medallist Ian Rank-Broadley, who suggested if Percival Hedley had produced a portrait medal of Elgar as well as a bust, perhaps he was only incidentally a sculptor and chiefly a medallist. If so, Mr Rank-Broadley felt certain I would find a profile of Percival Hedley in the definitive dictionary of medallists produced by Dr Leonard Forrer. To view a copy, he advised me to pay a visit to Howard Simmons, a leading dealer in medals, whose Simmons Gallery is located near the British Museum.

Mr Simmons offered crucial help in two ways. First, he happened to have for sale an example of the Elgar portrait medal—the only one he had seen during more than twenty years in the trade. Second, he made available to me his copy of Forrer's six-volume *Biographical Dictionary of Medallists*, published in London by Spink & Son Ltd between 1904 and 1916. Together we searched the Forrer tomes without success. But Forrer had produced two supplements in 1923 and 1930, and there in the first we found six pages of biographical information on Percival M. F. Hedley.

Forrer tells us Hedley's origins were deeply rooted in British soil. His grandfather, Joseph H. Hedley was a former British vice-consul in Cairo; and great uncle William Hedley had given his name to 'Puffing Billy', having built Britain's first locomotive. But there Percival's Britishness ended. The young Hedley grew up in Vienna, where his father, Professor Florance H. Hedley, taught painting and modelling at the Consular Academy. Percival did not arrive in Britain until 1899, when he was nearly thirty years old, and stayed only a few years before returning to the Continent, where he lived mainly in Geneva until his death in 1921. But if Hedley died in 1921, how could he have supervised a bronze casting in 1927? The National Portrait Gallery's caption gave 1932 as the last year of his life, but Forrer is precise on the death date: 'The artist died on 29th July 1921'.

Forrer's profile offers a ready response to the Gallery curator's sceptical concern about the 'very high count' of Hedley's opus numbers. We learn the young Percival began modelling at the age of four, had his own studio at eighteen, and at forty-seven organized an exhibition to celebrate the production of his thousandth work in 1917.

Percival Hedley must have nourished a deep love of music because Forrer relates that after completing a four-year apprenticeship to the famous Viennese sculptor Joseph Beyer, as well as studies at Vienna's Academy of Fine Arts, Hedley took courses in music theory taught by Professors Anton Bruckner and Edward Hanslick. He also attended lectures in pathology and anatomy given by Brahms' close friend, Professor Theodore Bilroth, through whom he met the composer.

In his early twenties, Hedley accepted a commission to execute a series of busts of composers for the International Music Exhibition in Vienna. Forrer tells us '...it was then and there that he first commenced his 'Famous Musicians', a task to which he has ever since devoted most of his attention... [In] the course of his travels, Mr. Hedley made the personal acquaintance of almost every contemporary musician of note, and most of them were added 'in effigy' to his gallery.'

Forrer's list of Hedley's 'Portrait-plaques' amounts to a veritable *Who's Who* of contemporary musicians including Ignacy Paderewski, Camille Saint-Saëns, Jan Kubelik, Arthur Nikisch, Hans Richter, Sir Alexander



Left: Percival Hedley's portrait plaque of Lily Elsie.
(By courtesy of the British Museum Trustees)

Right: Frontal view of Percival Hedley's bronze bust of Elgar now in the National Portrait Gallery.
(By courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London)



Left: Photograph by Toby Wale of the portrait medal of Elgar produced by Percival Hedley in 1904. The photo image is approximately 2½ times actual size.

Mackenzie, Clara Butt, Eugen d'Albert, Mischa Elman, Glazunov, Tchaikovsky, even Maurice Kufferath, manager of the Brussels Opera, whose father Ferdinand was the beloved piano teacher of the young Alice Roberts. Forrer extols Hedley's portrait medals of Brahms as being 'justly considered the best likenesses of the great composer.'

What a pity public collections of British medals include so few examples of these masterworks. There are none in the V&A's assemblage, and the only Hedley item in the British Museum collection is a plaque measuring 90mm by 100mm ('OP: DCLXXXVI') depicting Lily Elsie, the music-hall figure who sang the title role in the 1907 première of *The Merrie Widow*. Only an artist with Continental training could have conceived the swirling *art nouveau* fantasy Hedley achieves by weaving Miss Elsie's hair into her feather head-dress.

My friend's Elgar medal had previously belonged to Hubert Leicester. His example is accompanied by a note in Leicester's hand stating Hedley created the work to commemorate the three-day Elgar Festival in 1904. If so, the medal would have been in circulation when the Festival took place in March. Could Schuster have been sufficiently impressed by its sculptural quality to ask Hedley for a bust, the model for which was ready for viewing by the end of May?

If the medal and bust were made from life, why is there only one reference to Hedley in Lady Elgar's diary? The likely explanation is she did not record the studio sittings because she was not present. Frank Schuster's commission was probably one of his 'boys only' projects. The only reason Alice Elgar happens to mention the 31 May 1904 visit to Hedley's studio is because the boys collected her for lunch afterward.

That visit was almost certainly to view the original model. The fact Hedley dates the final work to 1905 rather than 1904 indicates the foundry he had chosen was unable to achieve the casting until some months after Elgar's visit to his studio. In any case, he was obliged to produce the cast by the early part of 1905 because Dr Forrer tells us 'his splendid bronze bust of Sir Edward Elgar was shown at the Royal Academy'. The Academy's current librarian confirms the bronze bust is indeed listed in the catalogue for the Summer Exhibition which opened in April 1905.

I wrote again to the National Portrait Gallery, delivering the *coup de grâce* of the exhibition catalogue entry, and asking if I might now rest my case. I also suggested that whilst correcting the dates of the casting and of Hedley's death, the Gallery take the opportunity to update the caption's reference to the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches. The initial text would have been written when the bust arrived at the Gallery in 1928. At that time there were only four marches composed between 1901 and 1907. But Elgar produced *Pomp and Circumstance* No. 5 in 1930. Back came a reply thanking me for 'sorting out the enigma of the inscription, it at once becomes so obvious' and referring me to the revised caption text which reads as follows:

SIR EDWARD ELGAR, BT 1857–1934
Composer; Master of the King's Musick 1924–34;
Established his reputation with his *Enigma Variations*, 1899,
and *The Dream of Gerontius*, 1900; Elgar's other works
included the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, 1901–7
and 1930; the *Violin Concerto*, 1910, and the *Cello Concerto*,
1919, compositions which have won him renewed popularity,
and a vast audience, in recent years.
By Percival Hedley (1870–1921)
Bronze, 1905
Bequeathed by Leo F. Schuster, 1928

We now know the history of the bronze cast, but what about the wax version? Mr Rank-Broadley thinks it unlikely this is the original model. He believes Hedley would have modelled in clay from which the foundry

would have taken a gelatin mould for casting. He says that at the time it was common practice for British foundries to test a sculptor's mould with an initial cast in wax. The wax version allowed the artist to correct and confirm the intended sculptural details. After the bronze cast had been achieved, the preparation materials—the clay model, the gelatin mould and the wax cast—would have been broken up and melted down for re-use. The Elgar wax bust was broken into three fragments that unaccountably never reached the furnace.

Sometime after Hedley's death, the fragments found their way into the possession of Harold Reeves, an organist turned dealer in music manuscripts and memorabilia with a shop in London's Shaftesbury Avenue. Reeves moved his business to Bournemouth at the onset of the Blitz in 1940. There he retired in 1946 and sold his stock to a young dealer called Kenneth Mummery. For nearly fifty years thereafter, Mummery earned his living chiefly by producing catalogues offering for sale portions of Reeves' inventory, as well as items he repurchased over the years from former customers of Reeves.

In 1959, one of Mummery's customers devoted to Elgar spotted the head perched on a hat rack atop a tall bookcase in Mummery's sitting room. The head and collar were intact but separated from the shoulders and base. Mummery's wife located the left shoulder in their basement, but the remaining fragment never turned up.

Mummery's client purchased the available fragments and turned to the head modeller at Madame Tussaud's for help. Since the sculpture was made from microcrystalline wax, she was able to achieve a nearly faultless reconstruction using photographs of the bronze version as well as snapshots of Elgar. The re-creation of the right shoulder produced slight differences in the jacket folds. Moreover, something about the eyes led her to believe Hedley had misconstrued the angle of the head, so she brought it forward and raised it slightly. Now we know why the two examples of Hedley's masterpiece do not match, and why Elgar's daughter preferred the wax version.

Arthurian legend tells us only three knights proved themselves sufficiently virtuous to look upon the Holy Grail: Galahad, Bors, and Percival. What this Percival was able to observe and render ought to form the stuff of legend too. In Forrer's words, 'It is his power of observation, and faculty of retaining the characteristics and details of the features, combined with the complete mastery over all technical difficulties, which lies at the bottom of his extraordinary success.'

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Muriel Foster, from a period postcard.

Muriel the Gorgeous

Charles A. Hooley

The contralto Muriel Foster (1877–1937) was among the group of elite executants who enjoyed a warm friendship with Elgar, yet her story has remained largely untold. This article pays tribute to the singer by piecing together her career from published research and contemporary reports, mapping her early rise, noting the effects on her career of family and motherhood, and charting her performances in the UK and abroad.

August Jaeger wrote on 23 October 1903 to Elgar, four months after the London première of *The Dream of Gerontius* to ask, 'How is Muriel the gorgeous?' He was referring, of course, to Muriel Foster, the young English contralto who made every heart beat faster that memorable night with her inspiring interpretation of the Angel. Perhaps Jaeger had an inkling of the impact she would soon have on Elgar's world.

With her twin sister Hilda, Muriel Foster began her life's journey in Sunderland, a gritty ship-building town on the north-eastern coast of England. It was St Cecilia's Day, 22 November 1877, and what joy must have reigned in 'Fosterville' that night! They were highly musical tots who sang duets to please the folks and, in time, their new sister Winifred.

Alas, nothing is known of other childhood happenings, but the story picks up in 1896 with Muriel enrolling at the Royal College of Music in London, soon to work with Anna Williams, a recently retired oratorio soprano. She also experienced opera in the raw via a student production of Verdi's three-year-old *Falstaff*, and a fetching Mrs Q. she must have been, if that was her part. But she was not impressed, saying, 'If this is opera, I'll stay with oratorio!' Her natural talent attracted interest and her calendar began to fill.

Composer Frederic Cowen brought Muriel to the stage. As music major-domo in Liverpool, Manchester and environs, he brought her to Bradford in 1896 to sing in Hubert Parry's *King Saul*. Cowen regarded Clara Butt, Agnes Nicholls and Muriel Foster as young artists with tremendous promise: 'the two latter if not quite, began their careers (in Liverpool) in a performance of Parry's oratorio, *Judith*.'¹ (Anna Williams, incidentally, had also made her mark in *Judith*.)

As part of Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee in 1897, a series of lectures about music created during her reign was given at the Royal Institution by J. A. Fuller-Maitland, the prominent music critic. When he needed a singer to illustrate certain points, he called upon Muriel, and so circumstances kept her immersed in the music of her own land.

The city of Hull, also by the sea, drew her early and often. She first came on 29 March 1898 for Dvořák's *Stabat Mater* (a favourite to both C. V. Stanford and Elgar) with the Vocal Society and Alice Simons, Charles Ellison and A. Foxton Ferguson, G. H. Smith presiding. After Mendelssohn's *Hear My Prayer*, they finished with Schubert's 'Unfinished'.

Muriel returned to Hull that year on 18 November to sing in Stanford's cantata *The Voyage of Maeldune* (op. 34). First given in Leeds in 1889, it was deemed an important work in which 'solo voices are utilized as well as band and chorus and the fancifulness of Lord Tennyson's theme is reflected by the musician in the most felicitous manner.' It abounded with grace and melodic charm, and was at the same time scholarly. In Hull, Muriel sang with Agnes Nicholls, Hirwen Jones, Daniel Price and the Harmonic Society, her voice

'proving very resonant and well sustained'. Stanford led. In the evening she offered his version of 'Mad Bess' by Purcell 'in richly sympathetic manner and (with) admirable taste. Her vocalism was greatly admired and she was deservedly recalled', so said the press. That year she was proud recipient of the London Musical Society's prize.

Muriel's London début came in 1899 with her sister Hilda, as they offered duets by Brahms, Cornelius and Edward German in St James's Hall. She arrived, too, that September at the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester as Narrator in Elgar's first oratorio, *The Light of Life*. Miss Williams had sung in the première at Worcester on 8 September 1896, so why not her protégée three years later? Over the next few seasons, she was a Festival regular, revolving between the old hallowed cathedrals at Gloucester, Hereford and Worcester.

That autumn on 24 November, she visited Newcastle with Agnes Nicholls, Joseph Reed and Daniel Price to help Hans Richter and the Newcastle and Gateshead Choral Union introduce the locals to Beethoven's 'Choral' Symphony. She came to Hull a third time on 8 March 1900 to sing with the Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted for the most part by Henry Wood. (He remained their permanent conductor until a few years before World War II.)

The Society is to be congratulated on its choice of a vocalist. Miss Muriel Foster's highly-trained contralto, and her artistic style, did much for the success of the evening. It was a pity, after the high praise which has been bestowed on its accompanying powers, [that] the orchestra did not have a chance to shine, Purcell's 'Mad Bess' accompaniment proving rather too 'catchy' for them, and no wonder. 'When all was young' however, from Gounod's FAUST, went extremely well and in the second part Miss Foster sang with great success Somervell's 'Shule Agra', 'Dance with Romeika' (as an encore), 'The Sweetest flower that Blooms' (Hawley) and 'Hush-a-ba Birdie' (Bunten). In these she was ably accompanied by Mr. E. G. Welsh, ARCO.

Audience members with a train to catch melted away during the *Rienzi* overture.

Clara Butt enjoyed a huge success introducing Elgar's *Sea Pictures* at Norwich in 1899. Muriel created hysteria of her own, singing four of the songs on 15 March 1900 at a St James Popular Concert. Stanford wrote to Elgar to say Foster had not 'the whopping voice of C. B. [Clara Butt] but she has more poetry and is musical to her fingertips.' Anna Williams too wrote about her star's success, and again a week later to seek a special composition for Muriel to sing at a concert to open the College's new hall: 'I fancy she may be near Malvern soon, do if you possibly can hear her sing. She has a wonderful musical insight and imagination.'

With such encouragement, one would think Elgar would have set everything aside to hear her. Not so. He took no notice, being immersed in last-minute details attendant to the *Gerontius* launch. Queen Victoria though was not too busy to notice, and soon Muriel sang at Windsor Castle. The grand old lady heard at least one last glorious sound before she died the following year. Still a student, Muriel received the Musicians' Company medal as best at her college.

As has been well-documented the première of *The Dream of Gerontius* in Birmingham on 3 October 1900 was not the much-hoped-for triumph. Far from it. Trouble began in March, just before rehearsals. Chorus-master Dr Heap caught pneumonia and died, aged fifty-three. His replacement, urged out of retirement, was not up to the task. Conductor Hans Richter, usually 'Mr Reliability', under-estimated the work's complexity and scheduled insufficient rehearsal time. Then, to top matters, the printed music arrived late! Of the singers—Marie Brema, Edward Lloyd and Plunket Greene—only Brema emerged relatively unscathed. It was a severe setback for Elgar, but conductor Julius Butts departed, praising the music to the skies and eager to present *Gerontius* in Düsseldorf.

Muriel continued to sing *Sea Pictures*, offering three songs in Manchester on 15 October 1900 together with Stanford's arrangement of Purcell's 'Mad Bess' at a Gentlemen's Concert in the Free Trade Hall. And she heard Hilda say, 'Good-bye girl, the stage is yours. I'm 'Mrs. Bramwell' now and I'll get along nicely

without all this excitement.'

Elgar, in response to many requests, extracted the essence of *Gerontius*, which he duly presented on 16 February 1901 at St George's Hall, Bradford. After the 'Prelude', an attractive young lady arose to sing *The Angel's Farewell*, giving 'a peculiarly artistic and sympathetic interpretation... [and she] thoroughly entered into the spirit of the music'. Muriel and Elgar had come face to face, finally. On this occasion she sang four of the *Sea Pictures*, giving Elgar a comparison with Butt. A good step all this was, as she graduated from the College at about that time, eager to impress the world of music.

Time to Explore

Muriel decided America was there for the taking, so she sailed with Emma Albani to the latter's Canadian homeland. In Toronto's Massey Hall on 22 March 1901, they joined baritone Douglas Powell, Hungarian violinist Tivadar Nachez, F. Brossa (recently first flautist with the Hallé), and Watkis, the accompanist. Muriel offered 'Since we parted' by Francis Alletsen, 'Love the peddler' by Edward German, and a duet with Albani, 'D'un coeur qui t'aime' with music by Gounod, lyrics from Racine's *Athalie*. It was encored. She impressed the *Toronto Globe*: 'Miss Foster made a very favourable impression. She has a voice of excellent quality, rich and warm colored, and even throughout its compass. Her style is of a good school; she sings expressively without being sentimental, and altogether she is a very satisfying artiste.' They repeated the concert on 4 May.

Back in England, it was her misfortune to suffer a serious illness that incapacitated her for a while. As for Elgar, his *Gerontius* introductory woes continued in 1901 with fine but less than ideal performances in Worcester on 9 May, which he conducted, and in Butts's first attempt in Düsseldorf on 19 December. After two years, Elgar still yearned to hear his masterpiece as he visualized it.

Recovered, but still not in her best voice, Muriel sang in Hull's first Verdi *Requiem* on 18 March 1902 with Maggie Jaques, Harry Stubbs, Joseph Lycett and the Hull Vocal Society. G. H. Smith, who presided, followed with Schubert's 'Unfinished' Symphony and Handel's Coronation Anthem.

Breakthrough!

The stage was now set. Her next major engagement came in Düsseldorf on 18 May where, despite a nagging bronchial condition, she sang in Bach's Mass in B minor. The following night, still unwell, she followed destiny's direction, singing the Angel in the fourth performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* with Ludwig Wüllner and Johannes Messchaert. Butts conducted, while Elgar, Jaeger and others from England in the audience were absolutely delighted. Kudos began to arrive:

...it was Muriel Foster, with her impressive and moving performance as the Angel who was the great sensation at this festival.²

...the part of the Angel was given to Miss Muriel Foster with the wonderfully beautiful and genuine voice that has long been recognized as her most remarkable gift, and with considerably greater and most impressive eloquence than any previous experience might have led one to expect from her.³

The songs of the Angel were quite splendidly sung by Fraulein Muriel Foster, before whose lovely voice and technically-accomplished singing in the Mass yesterday, even Frau Noordewier-Reddingius in the less prominent soprano part paled...⁴

A richer, warmer mezzo-soprano voice I have rarely heard, and her musicianship was of the highest. I am quite



*Above left:
Emma Albani, famous Canadian soprano,
friend and frequent stage companion of Muriel
Foster, view from cover of retirement
programme;*

*Above right: Elgar with young Anthony Goetz,
Muriel's son, taken at Severn House, about
1915;*

*Right: Dr Ludwig Wüllner, Gerontius at Muriel's
first Dream in Düsseldorf and later at
Westminster Cathedral, both key performances
in establishing the work, a postcard view.*



sure that Elgar conceived all his mezzo-soprano parts in *Gerontius* and later oratorios with Muriel Foster in mind. I do know that no other mezzo-soprano or contralto ever extracted a word of praise from him over their interpretation of his parts.⁵

Certain great singers have been as convincing in oratorio as on stage or in concerts. It is far easier to realise the mood of 'Die Junge Nonne' than to sit for a couple of hours and never to let the audience forget that you are not Miss Muriel Foster, but the Angel in *Gerontius*. To achieve such a feat is wonderful.⁶

While euphoria reigned and the celebrations carried on long into the night, Muriel slipped away to resume her tour. She visited Berlin, Frankfurt, Cologne and Holland where she sang with Mengelberg's orchestra.

At the Three Choirs Festival in Worcester on 11 September 1902, Brema was engaged for the Angel but illness kept her away. Muriel, who was Elgar's original choice, sang instead. The *Manchester Guardian* approved: 'Foster gave a rendering of the part of the Angel so rich in the noblest artistic qualities that she need not fear comparison with any rival.' Elgar was on the rostrum for his *Sursum Corda* at the opening services, and at the secular concert for the *Cockaigne* overture when Muriel sang the second, fourth and fifth songs of *Sea Pictures*, supplanting Brema's two by Saint-Saëns.

Muriel achieved another first at the Sheffield Festival on 1 October in a cantata, *Gareth and Linet* by Sir Henry Coward. He led as Muriel sang with Ella Russell, Ben Davies and David Bispham. Choral leadership was Coward's strength; composing was not. The principal attraction came the next day when Elgar conducted *Gerontius*. Once again Brema was ill, so Muriel sang instead. It was a triumph, and in the midst of the hubbub stood a radiant Muriel Foster. That day she also sang the solo in a further Elgar première, the *Coronation Ode*. It was ready for the 1902 coronation celebrations but due to the King's illness it had remained unperformed.

Muriel was twenty-four, a luscious artist perfectly endowed to sing Elgar's music, while her principal rival, Marie Brema, was twenty years older and a prominent Wagnerian. Many found Brema a perfectly acceptable Angel, but for Elgar Muriel was perfect. He saw her as key to the future success of *Gerontius*, and in 1903 she would show how right he was.

She lost no time reprising her Angel role in Edinburgh in January with Cowen conducting. She and John Coates received fine notices. Elgar took them both to Hanley on 13 March. Then it was time for a change. A week later in Hull she sang Grieg's *Olaf Trygvason* with Ivor Foster, local soprano Ethel G. Kaye, and the Hull Harmonic Society. It concerned 'a certain wild Olaf from the North, who becomes a Christian in England and returns to Norway to convert his countrymen. His methods are those of a human tornado. He is countered by The Prophetess who in wrath breaks forth into a torrent of imprecations against the headstrong Olaf. Here, however, Grieg shows a fine disregard for his contralto soloist. Miss Muriel Foster sang the fiery music of the infuriated woman magnificently, but the wear and tear on her voice must have been quite Wagnerian.' During the second part, her 'delivery of Gluck's 'Che Faro' will live long in one's remembrance. Not often has the pathetic lament of Orpheus been rendered with more of 'soul' than Miss Foster brought to bear. She is herself again and singing superbly. Exceedingly graceful was her singing of Saint-Saën's lovely song 'Printemps qui commence'...'. It was her last visit to Hull.

She returned to *Gerontius* in Birmingham on 26 March, but along the way she wrote to Elgar, 'I have heard that there is a possibility of *Gerontius* being done in London. I am writing to ask you to put in a good word for me. I love the part so much and would very much like to sing it in London.'

Then it was off to Russia for two weeks in April to impress music-lovers with her inestimable art in concerts that concluded in St Petersburg. Thus she was insulated, as machinations continued prior to that first London *Gerontius* on 6 June 1903, though amidst the glamour she thought about Elgar's coming triumph, and on her last day in Russia, sent a telegram, pressing her case to be a participant. She may have

sensed she was Elgar's choice, as indeed she was. The unfinished Westminster Cathedral had put Hugo Görlitz in charge and he pressed hard for Brema, his client. In the end Elgar prevailed, and Muriel did not fail. Dr Ludwig Wüllner, the Gerontius, was widely praised for his intelligence and diction, pleasing Elgar and others, but when it came to beautiful tone, well that was quite another matter!

That autumn on 9 September she assumed her place at the Three Choirs Festival at Hereford to sing a cantata, *The Atonement*, which the Festival had commissioned from Samuel Coleridge-Taylor. She duly sang with Emma Albani, Emily Squire, William Green and Andrew Black, with Dr G. R. Sinclair at the helm. The next day she faced *Gerontius*.

By the time the Birmingham Festival opened on 14 October, Elgar had a new oratorio, *The Apostles*, ready to be experienced. In his earlier works he had presented his female characters as passive and motherly. Now, with Muriel Foster's talents uppermost, he fashioned a powerful figure in Mary Magdalene. Muriel joined Emma Albani, John Coates, Ffrangçon-Davies, Kennerley Rumford and Andrew Black, and together they fashioned an immense success. Muriel came back two nights later to sing Anton Bruckner's *Te Deum* with Agnes Nicholls, William Green and Andrew Black. Post-festival on the 20th, she visited Windsor Castle with Ben Davies and pianist Leonard Borwick to meet the new King Edward and Queen Alexandra and to entertain royal guests from Italy.

In the midst of the Birmingham excitement, Elgar and Richter were shocked by the sudden death of a close friend, Alfred Rodewald. In his honour, they gave a concert in Liverpool on 5 December when, amidst a welter of Wagner and Beethoven, Muriel sang Brahms' Alto Rhapsody and *The Angel's Farewell*.

To America a Second Time

Having enjoyed her earlier visit, Muriel departed for America again in March 1904. By 18 April, she was in Toronto's Massey Hall for a recital with baritone Cyril Dwight Edwards, pianist Emiliano Renaud, violinist Alfred de Seve and accompanist Kate Eadie. The *Globe* reacted: 'Miss Muriel Foster as is well known, has a beautiful voice, mellow, sympathetic and rich in colour. She has, moreover, temperament while singing with artistic finish, which is something to be thankful for in these days when temperament is made to excuse so many crudities in singing. Among her selections were Goring Thomas' aria 'My heart is weary', Franz's sombre but emotional 'Im Herbst', Grieg's 'Im Kahne', and songs by Olga Rudd, G. W. Cox and Del Riego. Miss Foster once more won a pronounced triumph, every number being greeted with enthusiastic applause.'

Entraining for Chicago, she appeared at the Auditorium on 30 April, offering Elgar's *Sea Pictures*, and *Hymnus* (op. 33, no. 3) by Richard Strauss, with veteran conductor Theodore Thomas leading the orchestra. From Chicago she travelled to the banks of the Ohio on 13 and 14 May for Cincinnati's world-famous Summer May Festival. The incidental music and funeral march from Elgar's *Grania and Diarmid* set a serious mood for *The Dream of Gerontius* that followed with Muriel, Green and Watkin Mills. Agnes Nicholls added Fidelio's 'Abscheulicher!'. The next day, Ernestine Schumann-Heink was first up to sing 'Divinités du Styx' from Gluck's *Alceste*, and Brahms' Alto Rhapsody. Muriel then sang 'In Haven', 'Where Corals Lie' and 'The Swimmer' from *Sea Pictures* and Strauss' noble *Hymnus*. Tchaikovsky's '1812' Overture brought the party crashing to a gaudy close.

Then she gave *The Apostles* its first US performance with the New York Oratorio Society. As David Bispham (who sang Judas) explained, 'The English alto Muriel Foster was in an agony of dread and pain, because of the approach of what might have resulted in lockjaw had it not been taken in time. That evening she placed between her teeth, at the back of her mouth, which she could open but with great difficulty, a wad of paper to keep her jaws from coming together. In this plight she bravely went through the performance, though the audience must have wondered at the strange enunciation which sometimes marred her otherwise distinct delivery of the text.'⁷

Because of her travels, Muriel missed the great 1904 Elgar Festival at Covent Garden with the King and Queen present. Louise Kirkby Lunn sang *Gerontius* and *The Apostles* on consecutive nights of 14 and 15 March 1904.

Under these circumstances, Muriel likely enjoyed the high seas more than usual, and surely was even happier to be home and in harness again on 11 June at a huge Jubilee Concert at the Crystal Palace, to see all those familiar faces—Albani, Nicholls, Davies and Santley, with August Manns conducting. To show how much they missed and prized her, the London Philharmonic Society awarded her their Beethoven Medal.

It must have felt good, too, to be back at the Three Choirs Festival. At Gloucester she sang in *Elijah* on 6 September with Coates, Ffrangon-Davies, Mildred Jones and Frederic Austin, following on the 7th by Parry's short oratorio *The Love That Casteth Out Fear* with Plunket Greene. The Gloucester organizer, Herbert Brewer, saw it as quite a coup to give *The Apostles* so soon after its première. He was right—the audience loved it! Brewer rewarded everyone by conducting his own oratorio *The Holy Innocents* on 8 September, with Muriel, Albani, Coates, Ffrangon-Davies and Baker.

At this time, Elgar was encouraging a young composer, H. Walford Davies, so when his new cantata *Everyman* was introduced at the Leeds Festival on 6 October 1904, it is no surprise Muriel Foster was a soloist. In this version of the old morality play, she was joined by Cicely Gleeson-White, John Coates and Henry Lane Wilson, with Stanford conducting. When *Everyman* moved to the Queen's Hall, London on 5 December, thanks to adroit manoeuvring by Arthur Fagge and his Royal Choral Society, Muriel and Cicely returned with Gregory Hast now the tenor and Kennerley Rumford in the title role. 'Commendable' was the most-heard reaction.

In 1905, she sang *Gerontius* at Worcester on 12 September, and *The Apostles* two days later with Coates, Albani, Baker and Plunket Greene. As is apparent, she had been busy at major concerts in London, other larger English cities, and abroad. In her travels, she had met a rising musical personage named Ludovico Goetz, and in 1906 they married. In due course, a son Anthony was born. In her new status she sang less, but of course the Three Choirs Festival was an event she would not miss. That year at Hereford she repeated both *Gerontius* and *The Apostles* with Coates, Nicholls, Ffrangon-Davies, *et al.* and, in between, Bach's Mass in B minor with Albani, Coates and Higley.

An important date was due. The forty-second Birmingham Triennial Festival opened on 2 October 1906 with *Elijah* and *The Apostles*, the latter conducted by Elgar. Next morning it was Muriel's turn. Those that could thronged the Town Hall to watch as Muriel, Agnes Nicholls, John Coates, William Higley and chorus ascended the stage. Then Elgar stepped forth to lead *The Kingdom*, his final oratorio. In continuing his tale of the apostles and the establishment of the church in Jerusalem, with Mary Magdalene as a consoling presence throughout, Elgar was moved to new heights of inspiration in the famous soliloquy, anticipating no doubt Muriel's interpretation. To conclude, Richter led the *Missa Solemnis*, and Muriel sang the first English performance of a solo cantata by Christian Ritter, an eighteenth-century German composer.

Absent in 1907, presumably to tend her newborn, she was back in Birmingham the following September for Verdi's Requiem and Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with a fast-rising John McCormack, Aino Ackté and Clarence Whitehill, Wood conducting. There was a second event with Wood; in the *Record Collector* (November 1956), Pauline Donald reported, 'I also sang in the St Matthew Passion; a performance memorable to me for Muriel Foster, the great English contralto, who came out of retirement to sing in this Bach production.'

After that, it was more champagne and roses, until she fell ill, seriously enough to cause a vocal crisis and a total withdrawal from singing. In time, her voice returned with new powers of interpretation, but she remained less active. She chose venues with care, including memorials and special occasions, events involving Elgar's music, and times when she simply needed a session with her fans.

Her ardent admirer, A. J. Jaeger had been ill too, and that summer he lost his battle with tuberculosis.

What better way, Elgar thought, of marking his passing than a concert of music by those English composers he had so admirably served? So on 24 January 1910 he joined Parry, Walford Davies and Coleridge-Taylor, each leading their own works. The gorgeous one said 'bon voyage' with Brahms' Alto Rhapsody aided by the men of the Alexandra Palace Choral Society.

Helping Albani Bid Adieu

When Emma Albani presented her farewell concert at Birmingham Town Hall on 22 February 1911, she invited Muriel to take part, along with Gregory Hast and Peter Dawson. Robert J. Buckley effused over the star, but liked Muriel too: 'Miss Muriel Foster, who had a tremendous reception, sang Schubert's 'Erl-King' with superb voice and perfect art; once more one recognised the irreparable loss to English music consequent on her retirement, when at the height of her powers, from the concert-platform.'

Others agreed: 'Miss Muriel Foster, whose voice has preserved nearly all its old glory, sang Schubert's 'Erl-King', Schumann's 'Du bist, wie eine Blume', and some minor things, the titles and composers of which are unknown to me. Lieder singing never showed Miss Foster at her very best; her voice, beautiful as it is, has too little variety of colour for that. In the Schubert ballad, the 'Erl-King' was only imperfectly suggested by a *pianissimo*; and the turning on of something like the full power of her voice for the child's lines had the curious effect of making him seem much bigger and older than the Erl-King himself. But both here and in the Schumann the beauty of Miss Foster's voice was a rich compensation for anything that may have been wanting on the descriptive or psychological side.'

And: 'Miss Muriel Foster shared the honours of the concert. Her voice has greatly increased in the upper register. She sang Schubert's 'Erl-King', accompanied by Miss Adele Verne, wrongly called a duet on the programme. She made much of it, giving different expression and tone to the various voices. For an encore she sang Schumann's 'Du bist ure eine Blume', [*sic*] the other songs given by her being Henschel's 'No more' and Harty's 'At sea.' Obviously she had been missed.

* * *

She was part of another farewell of sorts in London on 30 March as Hans Richter, in failing health, gave a concert to celebrate the fiftieth anniversary of the London Symphony Orchestra, and to aid the British Musicians' Pension Fund. After a vigorous 'Enigma' Variations, his last, Muriel once more rendered her familiar *Angel's Farewell*.

By this time, Muriel and Elgar were the best of friends, both professionally and socially, often getting together in their respective homes. David Bury reports it was at the Goetzes that Elgar met Paderewski in June 1911, while that same year, when the Elgars moved to Severn House, Hampstead, the Goetzes presented them with a settee. That autumn, as Elgar introduced his *Coronation March* at Worcester, Muriel was present to sing two of the master's *Sea Pictures*.

Manchester's musical faithful anticipated the upcoming Hallé Orchestra Pension Fund Concert on 21 March 1912 as another chance to see the legendary Richter in action. The day arrived, but Richter did not; Michael Balling conducted in his place. 'However Miss Muriel Foster's presence atoned for much', pleasing a packed house. Balling 'proved he is a safe interpreter of the classics'. As autumn leaves began to fall at Hereford, Muriel sang Elgar's new songs, 'The Torch' and 'The River' for the first time with orchestra, bringing down the curtain on her Three Choirs experience.

Elgar had earlier begun work on *The Music Makers*, taking inspiration from Arthur O'Shaughnessy's poem. He poured in everything of his nature to create a choral singer's dream, with a contralto solo for his semi-retired friend. At the Birmingham Festival, during the afternoon of 1 October 1912, Wood led off with Mendelssohn's *Elijah* with Carrie Tubb, Clara Butt, John McCormack and Clarence Whitehill. After dinner, it

was Elgar and Muriel back on stage to give the première of *The Music Makers* (op. 69). Sibelius ended this musically splendid day conducting the first performance in England of his Fourth Symphony.

The next evening, with Wood back on the podium, Muriel, Aino Ackté, John McCormack and Clarence Whitehill gave a Verdi Requiem that would acquire a delicious notoriety. It was reported Elgar stormed into the green-room afterwards, shouting, 'That was the worst performance of the work I have ever heard!' When Madame Ackté asked to be introduced to him, the composer refused to see her, reducing the poor lady to tears. The next day he sent her a note of apology, upon the back of which she scrawled, 'Dummy!' Yet Wood in his autobiography described the performance as 'the happiest and certainly the truest Italian rendering of Verdi's Requiem I ever directed... I doubt whether I shall ever hear another quartet of singers who will let themselves go and dominate a whole performance as these four did.'⁸ Hm!

That summer Muriel sang in a series of concerts at Queen's Hall with baritone Herbert Heyner and the London Symphony Orchestra, led in turn by Nikisch, Mengelberg, Harty and others, then at Proms concerts with the Queen's Hall Orchestra from 16 August until 25 October. During the first week of October, the Leeds Triennial Festival drew upon her talents to invigorate Hamilton Harty's *The Mystic Trumpeter*, a new work based on a Walt Whitman poem.

A regular at Royal Philharmonic Orchestral Concerts since 1904, Muriel stood on 20 January 1914 to render 'Aus der Tiefe des Grames' from *Achilleus* by Max Bruch. She returned for the Bruch during the season finale on 31 March under Mengelberg's direction. Afterwards she was awarded the Society's highly coveted gold medal. The medal would not go to a singer for another thirty-nine years, at which time it was handed to another fine contralto, Kathleen Ferrier.

On 13 May that year, as part of a Bach Festival in Oxford, a certain 'Miss Hilda Foster' appeared at New College Chapel to sing Bach's 'Süsser Trost' for soprano, 'admirably interpreted... to the accompaniment of solo flute, oboi d'amore, and strings.' That evening she 'sang charmingly a group of four songs selected from the 'Geistliche Lieder'.' Muriel's twin reborn? Not likely.⁹

As the country slipped into the cruelest of wars, many festivals closed. Like her colleagues, Muriel sang for war charities, including concerts organized by composer Isidore De Lara to help persons in the arts adversely affected by the conflict. In the summer of 1914, she joined Louise Edvina and Marguerite D'Alvarez at the Haymarket Theatre in London to start the series in style. Beecham spoke on 'Art versus Charity' as De Lara persuaded his titled friends to empty their pockets. By his own count, he produced 1,300 of these concerts, and no doubt Muriel appeared in her share.¹⁰

In 1916, Muriel had asked Elgar to make a special arrangement of a song by Handel. On 23 March Elgar settled in to his task. She arrived at Severn House three days later to receive it, expressing delight with the master's effort. As she left, Charles Mott, his wife and child arrived, along with other guests. She encountered the ill-fated Mott again on 23 November that year in Manchester when they joined Gervase Elwes for still another *Gerontius*, one which Elgar conducted.

Muriel appeared again on 22 May 1917 to help her friend Elgar whip up interest in his ballet *The Sanguine Fan*, the occasion being a variety matinee at the Palace Theatre. His graceful tunes, however, and her 'Farewell' by Tosti and 'Love went a-riding' by Bridge were simply lost amidst a *mélange* of sound and action. At least the concert produced a sum to benefit the War Emergency Fund of the Church of England Waifs and Strays Society.

That summer, Muriel and twenty-one other singers sang afternoon concerts at the Royal Albert Hall with the Royal Choral Society under conductor Sir Frederick Bridge. *Elijah*, Verdi's Requiem and *The Dream of Gerontius* were on the bill, so she may have taken part, but then again perhaps she was content to offer songs and ballads. For Landon Ronald's own series, each Sunday afternoon at the Albert Hall, vocals were the domain of a quintet of low-voiced lovelies—Muriel, Clara Butt, Marguerite D'Alvarez, Kirkby Lunn and Olga Haley.

Her work was not lost on the *Musical Times*: 'Vocal recitals by Miss Muriel Foster are events that are

too rare. She is one of the elect few. It was gratifying to find that she was in splendid voice and full of vitality on the occasion of her appearance on 30 November 1917 in Wigmore Hall. The programme of course was an exceptionally good one.' She began with two airs by Bach, added four Elizabethan songs arranged by Keel, and then Chausson's *Chanson Perpétuelle* (op. 37) assisted by the Belgian String Quartet. 'Perhaps the 'big' style reveals Miss Foster at her best, but there were not lacking moments of lightness and grace.' For her English group she added: 'I am like a Remnant of a Cloud', 'The Sleep that Flits on Baby's Eyes' and 'Fog Wraith' by John Allden Carpenter; 'Sea Fever' and 'The Song of Autolveus' by John Ireland; and 'The Stranger's Song' by Balfour Gardiner.

'For her second recital, given on 14 December 1917, the programme was entirely English, comprehending songs by John Ireland (a new vocal rhapsody, the words by Harold Munro, was a remarkable item), Roger Quilter, Janet Hamilton, Purcell, Blow, Frank Bridge, Ruby Holland and Landon Ronald. Again we record the depth and breadth of Miss Foster's interpretations.'¹¹

Muriel in a military setting? Yes, it happened at Queen's Hall on 31 January 1918 at a special jubilee concert for Major J. Mackenzie Rogan. His own Band of the Coldstream Guards supplied the music and the sabre-stirring effects. After *Carillon*, Muriel sang 'Where Corals Lie' and 'The Swimmer' in a re-scoring by Rogan especially for the concert. Also featured was 'Ho, Jolly Jenkin' from Sullivan's *Ivanhoe* sung by Thorpe Bates, and music by Edward German, Frederic Cowen, Alexander Mackenzie, Eric Coates and Rogan himself. A national subscription enabled Arthur Fagge and Mackenzie to present Rogan a healthy cheque towards the end of the concert.

She continued to mix professional music-making with social high jinks. At a recital on 27 February she pulled out all stops, bringing her broad, warm style and splendid voice to bear on many fine songs, three by Debussy, 'Ballades de François Villon', very strikingly performed. In the summer she rejoined Ronald at the Royal Albert Hall. On 15 October she was amongst a select party Elgar invited to Severn House for a preview audition of his Violin Sonata. Later that month, Elgar on the cymbals and Muriel with Myra Hess portraying a nightingale gave a unique performance in Queen's Hall of Haydn's 'Toy' Symphony in aid of the Red Cross.

At the Wigmore Hall on 2 May 1919, she helped give a special send-off to the late Lieutenant-Commander F. S. Kelly, a capable and earnest musician from Oxford with a wide reputation as pianist and composer. She was joined by Leonard Borwick, M. Fleury (flautist) and the Queen's Hall Small Orchestra under Mr Frank Bridge. Kelly's music dominated, notably his *Elegy* for string orchestra and harp in memory of Rupert Brooke. Over a ten-week season, beginning on 16 August, she brightened Proms concerts with the Royal Choral Society.

Although Elgar wrote music for Muriel to sing and had arranged a song or two for her, oddly enough he never dedicated anything to her. As early as 1903, she had requested a special song to sing while in America. He came close subsequently with two dedications: in 1909 *A Child Asleep* for her son Anthony, and in 1913 *Carissima* for small orchestra for her sister Winifred Stephens. That same year, according to Michael Kennedy and reported by Bury, Elgar began framing for her a scena (*Callicles*) to a text by Matthew Arnold, but nothing came of this effort.

Their close ties continued until Alice Elgar's passing. Muriel was last outside the family to visit the dying Alice on 25 March 1920. Afterwards, Elgar spoke of the affectionate feeling the two shared. 'She always called Alice, 'The little wren'. Alice was the glue that held this little group together, and when she was gone Elgar and Muriel drifted apart. He abandoned many of his previous associations; she retired from singing to spend time with her family and friends, and perhaps a spot of teaching.

Finally, words by Landon Ronald in 1922 to describe his song, 'A Little Winding Road', which Melba had made famous as an encore: 'It is a song (one of a cycle called *Four Songs of the Hill*) which has been a great selling success, and the artist who first sang the complete cycle was that exquisite singer (who has now retired) Miss Muriel Foster.'¹²

It is amazing to think this artist sang so much music that was either totally new, or new to her particular audience. She included music by Elgar, Beethoven, Verdi, Mendelssohn, Bach and Dvořák, not to mention English contemporaries like Stanford, Parry, Coleridge-Taylor, Walford Davies *et al.*

For Muriel, ever the serious, quintessential oratorio and concert singer, the grease-paint and stage antics of opera held little appeal; she probably regarded the whole business as silly nonsense. Similarly she avoided the recording horn, making no records of Elgar's music, nor for that matter anyone else's. We'll never know why she decided so. Outside of David Bury's research, which tells so much, just memories and photographs remain. Hopefully this pooling of information will help keep her memory alive: for one thing is certain, she did so much for Elgar and his music she should never be forgotten. Muriel Foster's time on earth ended in London, two days before Christmas 1937.

1. Sir Frederic H. Cowen, *My Art and My Friends* (London, 1913), p. 279.
2. E. Wulstan Atkins, *The Elgar-Atkins Friendship* (Newton Abbott, 1984), p. 74.
3. Arthur Johnstone, 'A New Kind of Musical Eloquence', in *The Best of Me: A Gerontius Centenary Companion*, edited by Geoffrey Hodgkins (Rickmansworth, 1999), p. 143.
4. *Niederrheinische Volkszeitung*, 20 May 1902, translated by David Mason in *The Best of Me*, p. 207.
5. Sir Henry Wood, *My Life of Music* (London, 1938), p. 214.
6. J.A.Fuller-Maitland, *A Door-Keeper of Music* (London, 1929), p. 190.
7. David Bispham, *A Quaker Singer's Recollections* (New York, 1920), p. 311–312.
8. Quotation from a book about John McCormack by James McPherson provided in a letter to the author.
9. *Musical Times*, 1 July 1914, p. 476.
10. Isidore De Lara, *Many Tales of Many Cities* (London, 1928) p. 251.
11. *Musical Times*, 24 November 1917 and 1 January 1918.
12. Landon Ronald, *Variations on a Personal Theme* (London, 1922), p. 64.

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Edward Elgar, *The Crown of India*, and the Image of Empire

Corissa Gould

The almost universal neglect of the music for The Crown of India in Elgar literature is symptomatic of a disquiet felt by authors over the imperialist sentiments expressed in the masque. This article re-examines both the text and the music, arguing that a more open and honest approach is required if we are to gain a true insight into Elgar's own beliefs and ideologies.

Elgar's life and works are enmeshed in an ideology of Empire: his beliefs were entirely in accordance with the dominant imperialist doctrines of his time, and with his music for *The Crown of India* he was willing to publicly expose his beliefs through a work which articulates these doctrines, both musically and literarily.¹ This statement challenges the prevalent view that Elgar was somehow embarrassed and troubled by anything which could be judged to link him implicitly with the imperialist regime. While this supposition has been questioned before, approaching it through the study of Elgar's neglected score for *The Crown of India* provides significant insights into his own imperialistic beliefs, and unravels some of the misunderstandings that surround debate about his ideological values.²

The music for *The Crown of India* was written in the early months of 1912 in response to a commission from the music-hall impresario Oswald Stoll.³ It would accompany an 'Imperial Masque' with libretto by Henry Hamilton⁴, and in addition to composing the score, Elgar was engaged to conduct performances at the London Coliseum for two weeks. The extremely lavish and expensive production, devised by Stoll as part of a music-hall programme, involved mime, pantomime and music, and celebrated King George V's Delhi Durbar of December 1911. This event had marked the climax of the only royal tour of India by a reigning King-Emperor and caused much public excitement in England. The durbar ceremony itself was an adaptation of a court ritual of the Mogul empire, an occasion at which the ruling princes would meet to discuss politics and legislative changes, and also, perhaps more significantly for the English, to present themselves before their subjects in order to receive homage.⁵ First commandeered for British political use at the Imperial Assemblage of 1876, it was hoped that substituting their own leaders for the princes would 'place the [Monarch's] authority upon the ancient throne of the Moguls, with which the imagination and tradition of [our] Indian subjects associate the splendour of supreme power!'⁶ Thus the 1911 Durbar offered the British an opportunity to demonstrate the loyalty, obedience and contentment of their subjects, as pictures and film of the Indian princes offering obeisance to the King and Queen were shown throughout the Empire. It was almost certainly the biggest news-reel event to date, and after a dramatic race to get the footage back to England, it was distributed to cinemas across the country where it played to packed houses, including the Coliseum.⁷

The propagandist aspects of the 1911 Durbar were transferred directly into the masque: the first of its two tableaux concerns King George V's controversial announcement that the capital of India would move from Calcutta to Delhi; the second is a re-enactment of the durbar ceremony itself.⁸ Personifications of India and the main Indian cities try to resolve the dispute between Delhi and Calcutta as to who is the most worthy

capital. Delhi claims her longer past and traditions justify her right to supremacy, calling on the emperors of the Mogul dynasty to testify to her greatness:

But from my chronicles alone I cull
Four names whose splendours nothing shall annul,
Four Emperors of that Dynasty Mogul
Which was my diadem and now shall be
My witness. Shades august, remember ye
The days of Old! That Delhi whom ye made
Your own and loved here, calls on you for aid;
Akhbar the wise, Jehangir, Shah Jahan,
Aurangzebe, foremost in my glories' van.
Once more to vouch me yours unto this last
Come, oh ye mighty ones from the Past.

In contrast, Calcutta cites her current commercial and artistic success, and calls on the British East India Company for endorsement:

...So much for "To-day."
Nor is my "Yesterday," though it be brief,
Or blank or brazonless that holds in fief
The deeds of Britain's grit and gallantry.

When no decision is reached by the cities themselves, Delhi defers to St George 'as the spirit of English Chivalry'. St George declines to offer judgement, instead suggesting the King, who is on his way, should make the ruling. The King's choice of Delhi is, of course, portrayed as being entirely endorsed and welcomed by the Indians, despite contrary evidence from contemporary accounts. Both India and St George proclaim the virtues and legitimacy of imperialist policy, often in crude, explicitly emotive language, and the first tableau draws to a close with India's unequivocal proclamation of the altruistic nature of Britain's rule:

And happy Britain—that above all lands
Still where she conquers counsels not commands.
See wide and wider yet her rule extend
Who of a foe defeated makes a friend,
Who spreads her Empire not to get but give
And free herself bids others free to live.

This is followed by one of the main songs of the work, 'The Rule of England'. Sung by St George, the text reinforces the righteous and dutiful notion of British rule that propaganda tried to instill in the British population:

Lift aloft the Flag of England!
Hers it is to lead the Light,
Ours to keep her yet the King-Land,
Keep her ancient Honour bright,
Her manhood ever glorious
Her Valour still victorious,
Lift aloft the Flag of England,
Break the Wrong and make the Right!

Elgar's contribution to the masque was over sixty minutes of music, consisting of seven orchestral numbers (including the 'Dance of Nautch Girls', 'Warriors' Dance', and the 'Entrance of "John Company"'), two songs, and six pieces of melodrama. The music was immensely popular with audiences and press alike, the latter frequently citing it as the most exciting aspect of the production. Thus the *Daily Express* proclaimed after the première on 11 March 1912: 'It was Elgar's day. It was Elgar's triumph... Truly *The Masque of India* is the production of the year.' The excitement was also captured in Alice Elgar's diary entries:

E., A., & May [Grafton—Elgar's niece] to afternoon to Coliseum, 1st performance in afternoon. Great success, very enthusiastic. In evening all went and Mr Macarthur joined in box—bad place to see—good to hear. Better [—] performances crowded and immense enthusiasm. E had to appear again and again. Home not too tired.

Tuesday 12 March—E. keeping well D[eo].G[ratis]. Good accounts everywhere of the Masque. E. and May to performance—A. & C[arice]. with him in evening. Very interesting to see again and just as much enthusiasm.

The extent of Alice's enthusiasm is evident from a hitherto unpublished letter to Arthur Troyte Griffith (the inspiration for the seventh 'Enigma' variation). On 23 March 1912, Alice wrote:

We are all going to the Masque this evening we hope. Next week E. will have more leisure after this fortnight of conducting. There is immense enthusiasm and crowds. It is the most beautiful sight, I never tire of it. It is quite indescribable.

Indeed, Alice appears not to have tired of the work at all. It is evident from her diary that she attended numerous performances, often taking friends or members of the family: in fact, it seems either she or a family friend was present at every performance Elgar conducted. Furthermore, on 26 March, just three days after Elgar had fulfilled his contractual obligation, both he and Alice were back at the Coliseum for the evening performance, conducted by the Coliseum's musical director Alfred Dove. This indicates their interest in the work went beyond what was required under the terms of the commission.

Elgar's *Crown of India* music was not just part of a transient curiosity, forgotten (like the libretto) at the end of the production run. It appears to have found enduring popularity, at least for the remainder of Elgar's life: arrangements for piano and brass band were made shortly after its completion, and five orchestral movements were published as a suite by Boosey & Hawkes later in 1912. More indicative of the work's status is the number of live transmissions on BBC Radio in the years before Elgar's death. The suite, or parts of it, were broadcast a total of one hundred and two times during the period October 1923 to February 1934, thus remaining very much in the repertoire of the station's performers, and establishing a place in the emerging broadcast canon.⁹ Furthermore, a recording of two movements of the suite, the 'March of the Mogul Emperors' and 'Warriors' Dance', made under Elgar's baton by the London Symphony Orchestra in 1930 at the composer's own suggestion, sold a very respectable 1,364 copies. This was marginally more than the 1930 recording of the First Symphony (1,343 copies) and only slightly fewer than the 1932 recording of the Violin Concerto with Menuhin (1,383 copies).¹⁰

Evidence of Elgar's own views on the composition are found in his correspondence. He concluded a letter to his close friend Edward Speyer: 'I am so sorry I cannot come to you—but I must finish the Masque—which interests & amuses me very much.'¹¹ To Alfred Littleton at Novello, he wrote:

The Masque is going to be very gorgeous and patriotic... I shall write the music at once & it will not interfere with the other thing [i.e. *The Music Makers*]—I think you will like the idea.¹²

The letter that perhaps reveals most about his attitude towards the work was sent to Frances Colvin in response to her congratulations on the première. Here he states, it is 'an inoffensive thing and some of the

music is good!¹³ It comes as a surprise then, given the popularity of the work and Elgar's positive attitude towards it, to learn that Michael Kennedy dismisses it entirely in his biography, stating Elgar himself 'viewed it quite frankly as a potboiler', and that over an hour of music was "'cooked up" from discarded sketches' in the space of a few months.¹⁴ Similarly disparaging remarks are found in the majority of Elgar literature, and it has become accepted practice to regard *The Crown of India* as inconsequential, to claim like Percy Young that it 'filled Elgar with some alarm on account of its political emphasis.'¹⁵ Such assertions serve to distance the composer from the explicitly imperialist politics behind the work and have been justified by the careful selection of evidence. The crucial and revealing quotation from Elgar's letter to Frances Colvin is not given in any known published source, except Jerrold Northrop Moore's *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime* and, more recently, Robert Anderson's *Elgar and Chivalry*, where the whole letter is given.¹⁶ Instead, it is usually printed without this first qualifying sentence, thus implying, rather misleadingly, that Elgar's only interest in the work was financial:

When I write a big serious work e.g. Gerontius we have had to starve & go without fires for twelve months as a reward: this small effort allows me to buy scientific works I have yearned for & I spend my time between the Coliseum & the old bookshops: I have found poor Haydon's Autobiography—that which I have wanted for years [—] & all Jesse's Memoirs (the nicest twaddle possible) & metallurgical works & oh! All sorts of things—also I can more easily help my poor people [his sisters and brother, and their families]—so I don't care what people say about me—the real man is only a very shy student & now I can buy books—Ha! Ha! I found a lovely old 'Tracts against Popery'—I appeased Alice by saying I bought it to prevent other people seeing it—but it wd. make a cat laugh. Then I go to the N[ational] Portrait Gallery & can afford lunch—now I cannot eat it. It's all very curious & interesting & the *people* behind the scenes are so good & so desperately respectable & so honest & straightforward—quite a refreshing world after Society—only don't say I said so.

My labour will soon be over & then for the country lanes & the wind sighing in the reeds by Severn side again & God bless the Music Halls!

Love to you both

Edward

The fact Elgar was offered a large amount of money for the commission is often cited as the primary reason for questioning *The Crown of India's* artistic value. However, although the financial rewards of the work cannot be ruled out as a significant factor, especially given the Elgars had just moved into the hugely expensive Severn House, Elgar's artistic integrity and concern with image would have prevented him from participating in a production he could not support ideologically. The prime motivation for its composition is, perhaps, less relevant than the fact Elgar chose to do it at all, especially since he repeatedly demonstrated throughout his career he had no qualms about turning down commissions that did not appeal to him: *The Crown of India* was the only commission for stage he accepted before the First World War.¹⁷

Contrary to the commonly promoted view then, it seems from the available evidence that neither of the Elgars had any real reservations about the masque, its ideology or Edward's involvement. The very fact they took many of their closest friends to the production and wrote about it in such emphatic terms indicates they were in no way embarrassed by it. This assertion is further confirmed by Elgar's decision to record two movements, the fact he conducted the suite at the 1912 Three Choirs Festival, and later, in 1924, reworked three numbers for the British Empire Exhibition at Wembley. However, one must be aware of other factors in Elgar's desire to promote the work. *The Crown of India* not only gave him the kind of commercial success he had been striving for, it also provided definitive proof of the popularity of his music and his status as a composer. For a man who often expressed feelings of social inadequacy and inferiority, this must have been a huge boost. At last he was (just about) able to afford his own home—an outward sign of middle-class security at the beginning of the twentieth century—and was receiving the widespread recognition and commendation he craved. By sharing

the experience with his friends, most of whom were by birth of a higher social standing, he was perhaps able to demonstrate he had finally infiltrated the middle-class on the grounds of achievement. In addition, it was expected that a middle-class gentleman of his era would fully support the monarchy and establishment, a support which Elgar displayed by dedicating works to members of the royal family, by his involvement with royal occasions (most notably Queen Victoria's 1897 Jubilee and the coronations of Edward VII and George V), and in his role as Master of the King's Music. His participation in *The Crown of India* was another way of showing his loyalty to the Crown, and of demonstrating the gentlemanly beliefs and values he so revered.¹⁸

Much as been written about the reformation of the English musical canon in the years following the First World War, and the effect that it had on the story of Elgar's reception.¹⁹ For those wishing (as many did in the 1920s, 30s and beyond) to present Elgar as the quintessential English composer, the master of the symphony and other highly regarded genres of abstract music, his ceremonial and imperial works posed a considerable problem, being inseparably bound up with pre-War confidence and imperial strength. There has also been a general reluctance to accept that Elgar could have supported imperial policies in any way, thus making him more palatable to late twentieth-century sensibilities. Almost all considerations of the available evidence have concluded Elgar wrote imperialist works only in order to align himself with the prevailing attitudes and political beliefs, and not to reflect any personal complicity. The result has been a confusing web of avoidance, justification and apology, a major casualty of which has been *The Crown of India*, stripped of all significance as a result of postcolonial embarrassment over England's imperialist past. But far from being inconsequential, Elgar's music for the masque provides an invaluable insight into both his life and his imperialist beliefs. Rather than shying away from the imperialist aspects of the production, he referred to it as an 'inoffensive thing'—what could be more indicative of his ease with its ideological basis and propagandist aspects?

His empathy with the imperialist ideology behind the libretto is demonstrated in more than Elgar's own written comments on the work: he also endorses it on a musical level. In his score he renders the binary opposition of East and West through the juxtaposition of a quasi-oriental style of writing to represent India, and ceremonial pomp to represent St George and the King. This polarity is nowhere more evident than in the music of the two marches—the 'March of the Mogul Emperors' and 'The Crown of India March'. The 'March of the Mogul Emperors' appears in the first tableau, as Delhi summons the Emperors to testify to her greatness. The stage directions indicate the spectacle of the procession as the Emperors enter, 'each attended by a retinue of courtiers, guards, &c..' To match this striking scene, Elgar created an animated, boisterous B minor march with relentless drive and rhythm in 3/2 time. Perhaps he was playing a musical joke on the Emperors with the use of this time signature, to which it is, of course, impossible to march properly. There would have been, at best, a hemiola effect and at worst an uncomfortable, uneven stride. Indeed, he may have been forcing them to demonstrate their incompetence, with orderly marching reserved for the 'civilized West', thereby highlighting a prevalent Orientalist trope of the time and one of the central justifications of Western domination: the unchanging and ancient East denied any modernity or progress without the West's intervention.²⁰ Thus Rudyard Kipling, an almost exact contemporary of Elgar and a notorious imperialist, wrote that if the British were to leave India, the country would dissolve into 'one big cock pit of conflicting princelets' within six months.²¹ It was, perhaps, this perceived uncouth element of the Indians that Elgar aimed to portray: despite their best attempts to march, they cannot quite get it right.

Like other Elgarian marches, the wind, brass and percussion play a prominent role in the 'March of the Mogul Emperors', but there is none of the stable diatonicism that normally characterizes such works. Instead, the music rushes through various and often quite remote key centres with a ferocity that propels the movement forwards. The themes make prominent use of diminished fifths and chromatic passing notes, while appoggiaturas and acciaccaturas add to the tonal instability. The incessant rhythms compound the volatility, with the syncopated motive of the first theme becoming an unrelenting ostinato figure behind the more lyrical second theme. Towards the end of the movement, a new ostinato figure begins (this time played

by six on-stage trumpets) which repeats the mediant to the sharpened leading-note but continually avoids resolution to the tonic. Instead, it cuts through the orchestral texture with a disquieting and insistent dissonance, until lost in the massive B minor chords at the conclusion of the movement.

'The Crown of India March', composed for the imperial procession of functionaries, soldiers, courtiers, and of course the Emperor and Empress, appears in stark contrast: it contains all the tuneful diatonicism and stately pomp one might expect Elgar to produce in response to such a parade. The chromaticism of the previous march is gone and, as if to prove a point, Elgar does not stray far from keys closely related to the tonic, E flat major, remaining in the major mode throughout, in contrast to the minor mode of the 'oriental' march. Interestingly, he also includes a rendition of the chorus of the song 'The Rule of England' as an interlude, thus emphasizing the honour and righteousness of English rule in overt terms. This repetition does not feature in the libretto at this point; it was, perhaps, Elgar's own idea to add it as an explicit reaffirmation of the sentiments he wished to convey.

The binary opposition of musical styles is maintained throughout Elgar's music for the masque: India's music is in the minor mode, Britain's is in the major; India's is largely chromatic in contrast to Britain's diatonicism; India's rhythmic volatility contrasts with the regular rhythms of the West, and so on. Having established this, Elgar is able to use these signifiers to reiterate the ideologies inherent in the libretto. The music to the final scene of the production leaves no doubt as to the dominant party, as a theme in the minor tonality directly associated with India throughout the masque is pitted against the theme from 'The Crown of India March' in the relative major. India's theme makes repeated attempts to infringe upon the cadential progression, but is finally and emphatically beaten back in the closing bars. Again, Britain overpowers the East, and musically India is made to submit to her British rulers, mirroring once more the sentiment of the libretto. Of course, Elgar's quasi-Orientalism is in no way genuine or authentic, but is instead based entirely within a Western musical dialect. As such, he echoes the libretto's story of British dominance, observing India from a wholly British viewpoint; India is not allowed to speak for herself. For all its chromaticism and ostinato (trite signifiers of Western musical depictions of the exotic), the 'March of the Mogul Emperors' is essentially a march in the form of Western art music, albeit with an unusual time signature.

The triteness of Elgar's oriental signifiers was not lost on contemporary commentators, some critics observing that with their use his music lost part of its characteristic individuality. The critic of the *Standard* wrote on 12 March 1912:

He seems to be handicapped by the fact that an Eastern subject has to some extent demanded Eastern idioms and this has not contributed to the exercise of that individuality of phrase and terminology that are so peculiarly his.

However, the majority of audiences at the Coliseum would have been familiar with the conventions of Orientalism in music and their significance. The exotic was a highly popular subject in music-hall, theatre, songs, and salon pieces; and musical comedies reinforcing standard Indian stereotypes were commonplace in the spectacular theatre tradition at the end of the nineteenth century, with productions such as *The Grand Mogul* and *The Nautch Girls* anticipating titles used in the masque.²² By employing standardized techniques, Elgar was communicating with the audience in terms that would have both appealed to them and been understood as representing the East. In addition, he was adhering to an announcement made to the press that the music was 'deliberately intended to be (in the best sense) popular and for the secular stage'.²³ It seems for Elgar, then, Orientalism was simply a tool for communication and representation. He felt no need to experiment further with the sense of 'otherness' and never appears to have considered that it might be used to further his own musical language or convey India in its own terms. Instead, he simply slots in the oriental elements, and the resulting music is ultimately,

[the] music of the Raj—of the Englishman abroad—composed in a setting no more exotic than Elgar's Hampstead home. In the imperial counterpoint between centre and periphery, Elgar's work provided the

overwhelmingly dominant melodies.²⁴

The relationship between imperialism, Orientalism and the East-West power balance are familiar from the writings of the literary critic and cultural commentator Edward Said. In his book *Culture and Imperialism* he emphasizes that all Western discourse on the Orient, including art, is influenced by the power relationships of imperialist regimes. As a result, he suggests they should always be approached with reference to 'the imperial process of which they are manifestly and unconcealedly a part'.²⁵ To Said, Orientalism, defined as Western discourse on 'the Orient', is a regime of power inextricably linked to imperialism, and he seeks to demonstrate the centrality of culture in the rationalization, justification and transmission of imperialist values, stating that 'culture is a sort of theatre where various political and ideological causes engage each other'.²⁶ Since the publication of Said's books, however, there has been much debate about his writings, with many commentators arguing that he offers an overly radical and polemical view of Orientalism in the arts. John MacKenzie suggests such Orientalism can have functions other than the political; for instance, composers at the beginning of the twentieth century began to experiment with oriental ideas as a way of extending their musical language, a venture distinct from imperialist ideas.²⁷ In the case of music, it has been suggested that 'sometimes, a musicologist works at a level of musical detail that can make Said's thesis of a binary opposition of Self and Other seem too broad to account for what matters most: [the] music'.²⁸ When considering *The Crown of India*, however, Self and Other, or Them and Us, does not seem too broad a theory: there is nothing in the libretto or music that even begins to question this division or its legitimacy. In fact, the masque offers an almost simplistic demonstration of Said's theories. The imperial basis is explicit, and all the stereotypical Orientalist tropes are employed: the East is portrayed as ancient and unchanging, but most of all in need of Western intervention in order to progress. The central plot of the first tableau demonstrates the inability of India to organize and govern itself effectively as the cities squabble over who should be the capital, using churlish and puerile language, and being unable to resolve the problem themselves. It takes the intervention of Britain, represented by the Emperor, to restore order by making a decision which, interestingly, is neither questioned nor justified. Thus India, like the rest of 'the East', is portrayed as 'aberrant, underdeveloped, inferior and incapable of defining itself',²⁹ requiring 'the West' to civilize and order it. *The Crown of India* is imperialist propaganda on the simplest level, with no questioning undercurrent; and Elgar's music for the masque, with its dialectic of musical styles, displays the same simplicity of idea and ideology.

When viewed as part of the contemporary ideological matrix, Elgar's treatment of the Orientalist subject of *The Crown of India* reveals sympathy with the dominant imperialist tropes of the period. Musically, the East is portrayed as weak and indecisive, the West as bold and powerful, superseding the minor tonality of the Orient with a tonal stability that mirrors the power balance inherent in the masque's text. Elgar provides a musical depiction of the imperial doctrine of the time, portraying the 'foibles of Eastern people, their iniquities, their mindless autocracies, and their general inadequacy in the face of an easy Western superiority'.³⁰ The available evidence leaves no doubt as to Elgar's imperial ideals and beliefs; the discomfort surrounding this work, and others with imperialist or patriotic content, is entirely the result of later postcolonial generations attempting to relieve the guilt of what was revealed to be a morally questionable regime, motivated primarily by greed. This is where a crucial significance of the study of Elgar's involvement with *The Crown of India* lies: the discrepancies between the available historical facts and the presentation of the work by later writers provides a key example of the almost fictional 'story' of Elgar's career and his personal beliefs, affecting not only awareness of Elgar as an individual, but also the perception of the prevailing attitudes of the early twentieth century as seen through his biography. Imperialism is wrongly represented as an idea which was considered shameful or questionable, and although there were inevitably individuals who did not subscribe to the dominant ideology, the production and reception of imperial works was not subject to the sense of immorality felt by postcolonial generations. Exposed to a huge propagandist

effort in the years between the Boer War and the First World War, an 'imperial consciousness' was manufactured in the minds of the Edwardian public which extolled the virtues of Empire, both for coloniser and colonised, creating a sense of righteousness and pride it seems few thought to question.³¹ It was not until the First World War that this vision began to disintegrate.

By recapturing the innocent view of imperialism held by the majority of his contemporaries, a reading of Elgar's *The Crown of India* as a social text of the early twentieth century reveals and confirms many aspects of the mechanisms of English imperialist culture at that time. It becomes a constituent of the ideological web which 'supported and perhaps even impelled' imperialism, and includes the 'notions that certain territories and people *require* and beseech domination, as well as forms of knowledge affiliated with domination.'³² On a more local level, it also opens a window on Elgar's ideologies, allowing one to see behind the constructed image and providing a starting point for a more honest and historically accurate reassessment of Elgar's life, devoid of the effects of the embarrassment and discomfort provoked by England's imperialist past.

1. The term 'imperialism' requires some definition here, since its meaning has altered over time. In the nineteenth century, imperialism was understood in a political context, and concerned a clear, policy-driven agenda to expand the Empire and maintain control over its constituent parts. In the light of postcolonial writings, however, Edward Said has claimed the term has become almost indefinable, 'a word and an idea today so controversial, so fraught with all sorts of questions, doubts, polemics, and ideological premises as nearly to resist use altogether.' Here, the term is used in accordance with Said's definition to mean the 'practice, the theory, and the attitudes of a dominating metropolitan centre ruling a distant territory.' (Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (London, 1993), pp. 3 and 8). Thus it is ideologically rather than politically defined.
2. For other challenges see Bernard Porter, 'Elgar and the Empire: Music, Nationalism and the War', *Oh, My Horses! Elgar and the Great War*, edited by Lewis Foreman (Rickmansworth, 2001), pp. 133–74, and the chapter on Elgar in Jeffrey Richards, *Imperialism and Music: Britain 1876–1953* (Manchester and New York, 2001).
3. Sir Oswald Stoll owned and operated one of the biggest theatre chains in Britain, and is widely credited with transforming music-hall into a more socially acceptable entertainment of multi-class appeal. His insistence on scrupulously clean acts meant the standards found in his halls far exceeded that found elsewhere, and the London Coliseum, which he opened in 1904, became an attraction for the middle class rather than the working classes, who were further alienated by higher seat prices. See Felix Barker, *The House that Stoll Built: The Story of the Coliseum Theatre* (London, 1957), p. 72.
4. Henry Hamilton, a fairly elusive figure, wrote a series of melodramas in the later years of the nineteenth century. At the Theatre Royal, Drury Lane, he became one half of 'the Gilbert and Sullivan of melodrama' with his writing partner Cecil Raleigh. See W. J. MacQueen-Pope, *Theatre Royal, Drury Lane* (London, 1945), p. 292. Hamilton's libretto for the masque receives little or no attention in literature on the masque. In fact, the *Birmingham Daily Mail* (12 March 1912) explicitly states the 'book' is only of secondary importance to the production, while other reviews fail to mention the libretto at all.
5. Lawrence James, *Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India* (London, 1997), p. 4.
6. Letter from Lord Edward Lytton, Viceroy of India to Queen Victoria (21 April 1876), quoted in Bernard S. Cohn, 'Representing Authority in Victorian India', in *The Invention of Tradition*, edited by Eric Hobsbawm and Terence Ranger (1983; reprinted Cambridge, 1992), pp. 187–188.
7. Stephen Bottomore, "'Have You Seen the Gaekwar Bob?': Filming the 1911 Delhi Durbar', *Historical Journal of Film, Radio and Television*, 17 (1997), pp. 309–345.
8. In an attempt to win favour with their Indian subjects, it was announced at the 1911 Durbar that the state of Bengal, partitioned in 1905 by Lord Curzon in a ruling which caused much civil unrest and anti-British feeling, was to be reunited. However, the ensuing decision to move the capital from Calcutta—in Bengal—to Delhi proved to be just as unpopular with the Bengalis, and hampered reconciliation between the Indians and their rulers.
9. Ronald Taylor, 'Music in the Air: Elgar and the BBC', in *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*, edited by Raymond Monk (Aldershot, 1993), pp. 351–55.
10. John Gardiner, 'The Reception of Sir Edward Elgar 1918–c.1934: A Reassessment', *Twentieth-Century Music*, 9 (1998), p. 381. A cautionary note on these statistics, however: they are far from representative of the tastes of the general public, as records were still too expensive for the majority of the population at this time.
11. 20 January 1912; Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime* (Oxford, 1990), p. 241.
12. 8 January 1912; Moore, *Elgar & his Publishers: Letters of a Creative Life* (Oxford, 1987), ii, p. 760.
13. Moore, *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime*, p. 242.
14. Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar* (Oxford, 1987), p. 252.
15. Percy M. Young, *Elgar, O.M.*, p. 355.
16. Moore, *Edward Elgar: Letters of a Lifetime*, p. 242; Robert Anderson, *Elgar and Chivalry* (Rickmansworth, 2002), p. 311.
17. Those who offered him operatic or theatrical librettos included Thomas Hardy, Laurence Binyon, Sir W. H. Gilbert, the Duke of Argyll, and Harley Granville-Barker. See K. E. L. Simmons, 'Elgar and the Wonderful Stranger: Music for *The Starlight Express*', in *Elgar Studies*, edited by Raymond Monk (Aldershot, 1990), p. 143.
18. See Meirion Hughes, "'The Duc D'Elgar": Making a Composer Gentleman', in *Music and the Politics of*

- Culture*, edited by Christopher Norris (London, 1989), pp. 41–68; and Michael Kennedy, 'Elgar the Edwardian', in *Elgar Studies*, edited by Raymond Monk (Aldershot, 1990), pp. 107–117.
19. See especially John Gardiner and Jeremy Crump, 'The Identity of English Music: The Reception of Elgar 1898–1935', in *Englishness: Politics and Culture 1880–1920*, edited by Robert Colls and Philip Dodd (London, 1986), pp. 164–190. For evidence of the effect of this reformation on the music of Vaughan Williams, see Alain Frogley, "'Getting its History Wrong": English Nationalism and the Reception of Ralph Vaughan Williams', in *Music and Nationalism in Twentieth-Century Great Britain and Finland*, edited by Tomi Mäkelä (Hamburg, 1997), pp. 145–155.
 20. Matthew Head, *Orientalism, Masquerade and Mozart's Turkish Music* (London, 2000), p. 17.
 21. Andrew Lycett, *Rudyard Kipling* (London, 2000), p. 164.
 22. John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire: The Manipulation of British Public Opinion, 1880–1960* (Manchester, 1984), p. 54.
 23. *The Times*, 12 March 1912.
 24. Gardiner, 'The Reception of Sir Edward Elgar', p. 389.
 25. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xv.
 26. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xiv.
 27. John M. MacKenzie, *Orientalism: History, Theory and the Arts* (Manchester and New York, 1995), xiii–xix.
 28. Head, *Orientalism*, p. 21.
 29. Shelley Walia, *Postmodern Encounters: Edward Said and the Writing of History* (Cambridge, 2001), p. 38.
 30. John M. MacKenzie, *Propaganda and Empire*, p. 54.
 31. Lawrence James, *The Rise and Fall of the British Empire* (London, 1994; reprinted 2001), p. 327.
 32. Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, p. 8.

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Elgar's Visits to Aberdeen

Alison I. Shiel

In a third article inspired by the life and work of Charles Sanford Terry, the author documents Elgar's two visits to the city of Aberdeen, made at Terry's instigation, and the lasting effect both Elgar and Terry had on the musical life of the city and its university.

'How horrid of you to be in Cults when I am not!' wrote Elgar petulantly to Ivor Atkins on 28 July 1909. Atkins was on a visit to their mutual friend Charles Sanford Terry, who lived in a beautiful house in a suburb of Aberdeen. Terry was Professor of History at Aberdeen University, and an enthusiastic amateur musician. The Three Choirs Festivals had been the initial meeting place for the three friends, and Terry, who had found favour with Lady Elgar at an early stage, had become a regular member of the Elgars' festival house parties. A mutual love of the music of Bach, in which Terry was later to become a world-wide authority, was an important factor in his friendship with Ivor Atkins; they stayed at each other's homes on a number of occasions over many years.

Elgar himself had already visited Aberdeen on one previous occasion, and judging from his comment to Atkins, the experience had been to his liking. Terry and Elgar had quickly developed a warm friendship and mutual admiration, and at Terry's instigation Elgar had travelled to Aberdeen to receive the degree of honorary LL.D during the University's quatercentenary celebrations in September 1906. Terry was very much involved in music-making in Aberdeen, especially as conductor of the University Choral and Orchestral Society, and with typical foresight promoted Elgar's first visit to the city as a means of encouragement to local musicians.

Professor Terry was renowned for his administrative abilities, and so it comes as no surprise that the arrangements for Elgar's visit were made in meticulous detail. Elgar was to travel to Aberdeen from Manchester where he was conducting orchestral rehearsals for a performance of *The Apostles* and the première of *The Kingdom* (both to take place in Birmingham), and was to stay with the Terrys at their home, Westerton of Pitfodels. Significantly it was to Lady Elgar that Terry wrote with the details:

...apart altogether from the gratification of entertaining him, there are general reasons why I do most earnestly hope that he will be able to come. In the first place, the University is most anxious to confer the degree of LL.D. upon him... Sir Edward will be the first musician on whom we have conferred a degree...

In the second place his presence will gratify and encourage a large body of local enthusiasts. Music is having a hard struggle in the region—but at length we begin to mark progress... To have Sir Edward among us and to enable the University to laureate him will be of the highest stimulus...¹

The plans came to fruition, and Elgar arrived in Aberdeen on the appointed day. The lavish quatercentenary celebrations (in the organisation of which Terry played a major role) went according to plan, and were reported by Elgar to his wife in some detail, judging from her diary entries:

Wed 26 Sept 1906: E. arrived all safely with Cousins [his valet] at Aberdeen. Professor S. Terry met him & took

him home to Cults, then they returned to Aberdeen—E. had on his booful [beautiful] robes, & the Degree was conferred on him. He found all very pleasant & beautifully organised & arranged. Splendid spectacle & weather. Thurs 27 Sept 1906: E. at Aberdeen—Day of the King's visit [King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra opened the impressive New Buildings at Marischal College, at the time the largest granite building in the world]. Lovely weather and magnificent spectacle.

Fri 28 Sept 1906: E. travelling from Aberdeen [to Birmingham] all day with Cousins...

Elisabeth Christie Brown, organist of the University's historic King's College Chapel at the time (and probably the first female academic employee of the University) provides in her memoirs a delightful cameo from the event. Terry was extremely supportive of her work with the chapel choir, which had participated in the honorary graduation ceremony. She writes:

...I and my choir, gradually improving under [Terry's] influence, were forced into the limelight and had the luck to be included in all the events. I can see him, as we came into the quadrangle after the ceremony, calling me up to be introduced to Sir Edward Elgar and how encouragingly he spoke to me for a few minutes.²

This small gesture was typical of Terry, whose warmth and congeniality endeared him to all. And Elgar would surely, in the midst of much academic pomp and ceremony, have been equally pleased to meet and offer encouragement to a young musician.

Since his arrival in Aberdeen in 1898, Terry had been making his mark on the musical scene in the city. Under his leadership, the concerts of the University Choral and Orchestral Society (UCOS) had lost their reputation as 'The Students' Howl' and had become one of the highlights of Aberdeen's musical life. Being closely in touch with developments in contemporary British music, Terry was able to introduce a wide range of new music to his musicians and audiences, including several 'first performances in Aberdeen' of the works of Elgar and others. Elgar became Patron of the UCOS in 1908, no doubt to the quiet satisfaction of Professor Terry.

Elgar's second visit to Aberdeen was, as we shall see, of a more personal nature. In 1909 Terry's experience of visiting musical centres in England led him to another major enterprise—the foundation of the North East of Scotland Choral and Orchestral Competition Festival, the first of its kind in Scotland. The festival encouraged the formation of industrial and school choirs and orchestras throughout the region, and they, alongside church choirs, participated in competitive classes as well as massed-choir performances of large-scale choral works and a Church Choirs Festival Service in Aberdeen's Music Hall. The first festival, in 1909, earned such huge local support and was such a success it was decided to hold a banquet in honour of Professor Terry, its organising secretary. This took place in the Palace Hotel on 22 October 1909. It says a great deal about the friendship between Terry and Elgar that both Sir Edward and Lady Elgar went to Aberdeen for the occasion. Elgar had just undertaken a gruelling 'dreary procession' (as described to his friend Frank Schuster)³ of performances with the London Symphony Orchestra; no doubt the prospect of spending a few days in Terry's congenial company was an attractive proposition, and one which Lady Elgar welcomed on her husband's behalf as well as her own.

The banquet was chaired by Lord Aberdeen, Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, an enthusiastic champion of Terry's work. The company included representatives of the city, the University, and the local clergy, and there were some impressive speeches. Terry was greatly moved by the presence of the Elgars at the banquet, referring touchingly to Elgar as 'one who yet living has his niche among the immortals'. It was surely no coincidence that both Terry and Elgar spoke on the subject of municipal aid for musical events, and about the importance of educating audiences as well as musicians. These were issues about which Terry had been campaigning in Aberdeen for many years.

The *Aberdeen Free Press* reported Elgar's remarks that 'the future of music in this country seemed to

him if not in a crucial state, at least in a peculiar condition. He did not think the number of persons who were able to pay liberally for music had grown much during the last two years, but amongst those who were not able to pay for really good choral and orchestral music the love for it had increased by leaps and bounds. That was a source of the greatest gratification to all of them who liked to see the highest forms of art amongst the people in general.’⁴ The *Musical Times* correspondent reported that Elgar ‘gave utterance to some weighty words on the support of music by municipalities’, and quoted his remarks that ‘the choral movement in this country is not only educating choralists, but is doing very great work which is often overlooked—it is educating listeners. In this way it is a larger factor in the development of music than has ever before existed, and by its influence multitudes hitherto not in touch with music are led to appreciate it and to distinguish the good from the bad.’⁵ This was certainly the case in Aberdeen, where a large number of participants in the competition festival were taking part in musical activities for the first time in their lives.

The Elgars travelled to Aberdeen by train from Newcastle, where Elgar had been conducting. Lady Elgar’s diary again gives an illuminating account of events:

Thurs 22 Oct 1909: Arr. at Aberdeen about 7.30am. Slept splendidly. Prof. Terry met us & motored us out to Westerton. Breakfasted, bathed, etc. E. for walk after lunch—then the great banquet in evening. Prof. Terry spoke splendidly & said beautiful unforgettable things of E., & E. made a noble speech. Lord Aberdeen very nice—

Fri 23 Oct 1909: At Cults. Started, E & A & Prof. & Mrs Terry, about 11 in car for Ballater [on Deeside]. Cloudy but kept fine. Lovely drive. Petrol leaked & we walked about while it was mended, lunched at Ballater & then back. Very nice expedition.



The banquet at the Palace Hotel, Aberdeen, 22 October 1909 in honour of C. S. Terry. Among those seen standing at the top table are W. G. McNaught, Lady Elgar, CST, Lord Aberdeen and Elgar.

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(Terry is believed to have owned one of the first cars in the University, and to have 'stuck to it, square and high, long after other models had come in; and in his fatherly way he would give his favourite women students... lifts that were so conspicuous as to be beyond any emotion but a laughing gratitude.'⁶ Elgar, by contrast, did not own a car until 1920.)

Despite the pleasures of a journey through Royal Deeside, the day was alas not entirely perfect for Lady Elgar. Although Terry had the reputation of being a charming and thoughtful host, she writes in her diary that there were 'dull people at dinner'. Unfortunately they remain anonymous! The weather spoilt any plans which the Terrys may have had for Sunday 24 October, but the evening guests met with Lady Elgar's approval:

Very wet and wild all day. Nobody out for walk. Prof. & Mrs Bailey [Baillie] came to dinner—liked Prof. Bailey.

The Baillies may indeed have been more to Lady Elgar's taste than the uninspiring guests of the previous evening. They were neighbours of the Terrys, living in grand style at Norwood, Cults (now the imposing Norwood Hall Hotel). Professor (later Sir James) Baillie is believed to have been 'one of the few philosophers in Christendom to arrive for his lectures in a chauffeur-driven Rolls Royce; and many a student will recall the panic of being disrobed by the butler in the entrance hall of Norwood.'⁷

All in all the visit did much to strengthen the friendship between the Elgars and the Terrys. As Lady Elgar records here and in several other places in her diaries, the departure from Terry was a reluctant one:

Mon 25 Oct 1909: E & A left Cults about 9. Prof Terry motored them to station. Sad to part. Lovely journey to York all down coast. Splendid sea waves & spray on rocks. Over the wonderful Tay & Forth Bridges.

Thus ended Elgar's second visit to Aberdeen. Yet in 1909 his friendship with Charles Sanford Terry was in a sense just beginning. There was much still to come. As seen in a previous article in this series, Terry was to give significant and well-documented help to Elgar during the composition and publication of his Violin Concerto the following year; and by 1911 he had become involved 'unsparingly' with the English translation for the new Elgar-Atkins edition of Bach's *St Matthew Passion*, which was to have its first performance at the Three Choirs Festival that year.

Soon after that, Terry was to be influential in the formation of the Aberdeen Bach Society, and Aberdeen was to see some of the first fruits of his extensive and distinguished Bach researches in future years. Aberdeen Bach Choir, the society's successor, is now a major force in Aberdeen's musical life. The city's modern Competitive Music Festivals also owe their origin to Terry, and several of the societies which took part in Terry's own festivals now have a proud history on which to look back. Terry's work as conductor of the University Choral and Orchestral Society was remembered in a 'Terry Exhibition' and a tribute performance by the modern UCOS of *The Dream of Gerontius* in March 1999, marking the centenary of the University's history department and Terry's arrival in Aberdeen as its first lecturer. It was a matter of great pride to all concerned that Wulstan Atkins, Elgar's godson, visited Aberdeen to open the exhibition and attend the concert.

Terry gave unstintingly of his time and talents to the City of Aberdeen, and in his 1909 banquet speech expressed his gratitude 'that Providence should have directed my steps to a City where such generous instincts abound.' Through his friendship with Edward Elgar and his circle, and the inspiration he gathered from it, music in Aberdeen became, and remains, much the richer.

1. Hereford and Worcester Record Office
705:445:4014.
2. Elisabeth Christie Brown, *Personal Memoirs*
(Aberdeen, 1954).
3. HWRO 705:445:7003.
4. *Aberdeen Free Press*, 23 October 1909, p. 6.
5. *Musical Times*, 1 January 1910, p. 18.
6. *The Fusion of 1860: A Record of the Centenary*
7. *The Fusion of 1860*, p. 172.

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BOOK REVIEWS

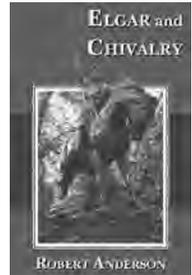
Elgar and Chivalry

by Robert Anderson

Chivalry is not an exact term. In the later nineteenth century it could denote anything from fighting honourably in a noble cause, to giving your seat up to a woman on an omnibus. It derived from a mediaeval convention that may have been more literary than real. All its popular impedimenta can be traced back to this time: the Arthurian legend, St George and the dragon, heraldry, damsels in distress. It underwent a notable revival in Victorian times, mainly as a reaction against what was perceived as the acquisitive and amoral commercialism of that period. Hence its attraction to anti-capitalist socialists, like William Morris and Bernard Shaw, who figure prominently in this book; to the aristocracy and public school-educated gentry, who liked to see themselves as the direct descendants of the knights of old; and to assorted old and young fogies like Elgar. ('Fogies' isn't meant to put him down.) In his case his life-long fascination with chivalry was also fed by his Catholic faith, his romantic temperament, and his mother's teaching when he was a boy.

Robert Anderson's third book on Elgar, inspired he tells us by the first performance of the Elgar/Payne symphony, which converted him from a non-completionist into an admiring advocate (the book is dedicated to Anthony Payne), is only partly about the place of chivalry in his music. It is both less and more than this. It was the 'Arthur' music in the third and fourth movements of Elgar/Payne that suggested this to Anderson as a theme. But he doesn't stick to it. There is little discussion of what Elgar may have understood by chivalry, or indeed of what it means to Anderson. Sometimes it seems to be conflated with militarism, or feudalism, or a general all-purpose mediaevalism. However vague the concept may have been in Elgar's time, or indeed earlier, it was always narrower than that. I found this disappointing. But there is plenty in the book to compensate. Most of it is taken up with an exploration of the literary and historical contexts of several of Elgar's works, and especially those with mediaeval or chivalric themes or tags. These include *Froissart* (obviously), *The Black Knight*, *Olaf*, the aborted 'Gordon' symphony, *The Banner of St George*, *Gerontius*, *The Apostles*, the Second Symphony, *The Crown of India* (with St George again), *Falstaff*, the *Severn Suite*, the incidental music for *Arthur*, and the Third Symphony sketches. There is also an excellent chapter—the second—on Elgar's mother's scrapbooks, a rich seam of information about the early influences on the young Edward; and about his future wife's early literary endeavours, including the narrative poem *Isabel Trevithoe* and the novel *Marchcroft Manor*. Serious Elgarians will be in Anderson's debt for this, if only because it saves having to read them for themselves.

This is because his method is to summarise the works at some length, with generous quotations. He does this too with the other literary sources he chooses to concentrate on: Froissart's *Chronicles*, Longfellow's *Hyperion*, the various versions of



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the Olaf and Tristan tales, William Morris's *The Earthly Paradise*, Edward Fitzgerald's *Euphranor*, Laurence Binyon's Arthur play, Matthew Arnold's *Empedocles on Etna*, and several others. As well as this literary background he also gives us much historical context, especially on the Gordon affair and the Boer War (chapters 8–9); and topographical descriptions of various places Elgar visited and gained inspiration from (Tintagel, the Rhineland, Rome... not the Malvern hills: that's been done to death!). The point of all this is to colour in the background against which some of Elgar's most characteristic music was composed. Because most of the music is not his best known, glorious though some of it is; and because many of the literary sources are unfamiliar and inaccessible to modern readers (who today has even heard of *Euphranor*?), this is of great value. All this makes it a highly original contribution to Elgar studies.

Of course it does not answer every question about Elgar's inspiration. There is an obvious problem with some of the literary sources treated here: which is that Elgar may not have read them. It is well known that he was sensitive about his lack of formal literary education, which may have led him to resort to 'bluff' in some instances. Brian Trowell has suggested—in Raymond Monk's *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature* (1993)—that he got many of his classical allusions, at any rate, from anthologies rather than from the originals, even in translation. That makes their impact on him indirect at best, and so qualitatively unpredictable. The same applies to the impact of contemporary events like the Boer War. Elgar himself gives no unambiguous clues as to how he felt about this. Anderson cites only three direct quotes: one wishing that the 'Enigma' Variations might be 'a harbinger of peace', and the other two commenting on the 'hateful [*sic*] spirits' of the notorious crowds that poured on to British streets on 18 May 1900 to celebrate the relief of Mafeking. All the rest comes from other sources. Alice was more jingo, but there is no reason to assume that Edward automatically took after her in these things. The music he composed and had performed during the war suggests otherwise. Anderson (quoting Alice) suggests *Gerontius* could have been intended as a 'consolation' for it. He also points out that at the 1900 Hereford Festival, for which Parry was commissioned to write a *Te Deum* 'to commemorate the noble achievements of the British Forces in South Africa', Elgar's main contribution was 'the wonderfully unwarlike Scene 3 of *Caractacus*'. If he was troubled by the war, he would not have been alone. More of his fellow Britons were, than appeared from those 'hateful' mafficking crowds.

This has a vital bearing on this matter of 'chivalry', properly defined. From a chivalric point of view, the South African war was deeply problematical. Chivalry stood for certain moral standards in warfare, which it was not at all clear it matched up to. The cause was not widely seen as a noble one, though some propaganda efforts were made to make it appear so. The overwhelming opinion was that it was fought for mere mercenary gain—the gold of the Witwatersrand; the opposite of what all true 'gentil and parfait knights' stood for. Britain's methods, too, became starkly unchivalric when she started burning Boer farms and imprisoning women and children in disease-ridden 'concentration camps'. Something like this had also happened shortly before, in 1898, when Kitchener's 'revenge' campaign against the Moslems who had slaughtered Gordon exhibited a brutality that admirers of Gordon for his 'Christian chivalry' (like Elgar) were deeply uneasy about. During the Boer War most of the obvious 'chivalry' was manifested on the other side, especially in the

persons of the Boer officers Joubert and de Wet, who as a result were greatly admired in Britain. Anderson mentions much of this, but not its effect on Elgar. If he is right (as I believe he is) about the importance of the chivalric ideal to him, it should have shocked him terribly. We cannot know from his surviving dicta; but did it make a difference to his treatment of the chivalry theme in his music? It seems to me unconvincing, less heart-felt, in his *Crown of India* music and Great War pieces than in earlier works. It is linked less with patriotism than with escapism. (Anderson tells us Elgar liked to paint heraldic shields in the billiard room of Severn House during the Great War, presumably to take his mind off the carnage.) It was a cardboard chivalry now. Or am I just reading this into what in any case was (apart from—I would say—the ‘For the Fallen’ movement of *The Spirit of England*) simply lesser music?

These are some of the thoughts that will occur to the historian on reading Robert Anderson’s new book. For the Elgar lover (I count myself as both) it is good to have all this background to some of his less celebrated works. It greatly enriches our knowledge of the general literary and historical context of Elgar’s time, which, even if we cannot be sure of its direct impact on the man himself, may well have affected the way his music was heard. It is full of fascinating snippets of information, quotes and insights. It should be mentioned also it is profusely illustrated, though a little muddily. Otherwise, it is handsomely produced.

Bernard Porter

Elgar’s Oratorios: The creation of an epic narrative.

by Charles Edward McGuire

Charles McGuire has written an ambitious book, which develops an argument about Elgar’s creative processes in the four sacred oratorios. It will undoubtedly serve as a marker in future criticism and research. Unfortunately it too often reveals its origin as a doctoral thesis (dated 1998 in the bibliography), a genre in which an author has to anticipate objections and footnote meticulously. Perhaps these are the qualities of all manner of scholarly discourse, but the care taken with examinable theses can lead to repetitiveness; the work could have been more concise. I would also have welcomed a more decisive authorial voice, willing to sacrifice detail in the interests of clarity in the argument. The author of a thesis does not expect the reader (examiner) to trust him; a book can usually benefit from an author who believes the reader is on his side.

From the point of view of a reader primarily interested in Elgar, the book gets off to a slow start. Certainly Elgar’s narrative methods can only be fully understood in the context of oratorio within England’s cultural life over the previous quarter-century or so. Nevertheless I remain unconvinced that we needed so much about tonic sol-fa, illustrated by a chunk of *Messiah* written in that notation; nor need much ink be spilled on the definition of ‘oratorio’, given that exactness is nearly impossible where generic boundaries are concerned. Debating whether *Gerontius* is or isn’t an oratorio seems futile, after a century of general assumption that it is one; what matters, and this is a large part of what McGuire goes on to discuss, is the kind of oratorio it is, and how it achieves its ends. The early chapters contain much information about the

festivals at which oratorios proliferated, and the lists of such works make interesting, and sometimes disturbing, reading: disturbing because either an awful lot of mediocre music was performed to some acclaim in nineteenth-century England, or we are missing a lot of good things by not reviving this repertoire.

McGuire includes a study of narrative theory, which serves as the basis for his discussion of the oratorios. This was more pertinent, although I found the terminology awkward, particularly the use of 'covert' narration for what, to an audience, must be its most overt form, since narration is entrusted to a singer outside the action (the 'third person' or 'omniscient' narrator) whose only function is to convey information, like the evangelist in Bach's Passions. Covert narration to me suggests the use of singers in character (for example Peter and John) doing the narration; but this is theoretically overt, presumably because the other characters understand it that way. The situation is confused when a single singer changes role, as happens in Elgar's late oratorios, but the forms of musical presentation leave few listeners, I imagine, in doubt, even if they do not have the libretto to hand; and while spelling out the layers of narrative communication is interesting, it occupies, to my mind, rather more of the book than is desirable. It was perhaps inevitable that much of the discussion focuses on librettos, rather than on the music. McGuire has done first-rate research in this field, as we know who heard his paper on *Caractacus* at the Surrey conference in April 2002. Even so, not every detail is accurately read: the friends of Gerontius do not pray to Old Testament figures, as is maintained in a note on p.154. I wish as much light had been shed on the way the music not only supports, but actively controls the sense of narrative. Narrative has been a major topic in recent musicology, and perhaps more could have been said about music's narrative potential, if necessary based on studies of instrumental music (Carolyn Abbate's influential *Unsung Voices* is mentioned in passing, on p. 68, but in connection with opera). Elgar's works are conceived with an orchestral background not unlike that of post-Wagnerian opera, and it is the semi-independent orchestral discourse that is the source of much of the originality and conviction of Elgar's narration.

McGuire does touch on these points in the chapters successively devoted to *The Light of Life*, *Gerontius*, *The Apostles*, and *The Kingdom*. Nevertheless I ended up unsure of his views on Elgar's debt to Wagner. On p.175 he suggests that *Gerontius* is the most Wagnerian of Elgar's oratorios; yet on his own showing, its many set-pieces make it only hardly more Wagnerian than *The Light of Life*. McGuire shows that, despite the use of recurring themes, the narrative modes of *Gerontius* are distinctly different from Wagner's; and by identifying the structure of *The Apostles* with Carl Dahlhaus's definition of 'leitmotiv' and its usage, he implies that, on the contrary (but in agreement, surely, with conventional opinion), *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* are more Wagnerian than the earlier works. Some possible leitmotiv connections are not made (even in *The Light of Life*) and I was surprised by the analysis of the Prelude to *The Kingdom* on both pages 257 and 259, where what is clearly the development of an 'unnamed' theme ('c') is identified as a different theme ('d') (the citation is labelled as 'cues 13–12'; it is actually 11–12). For readers without a full score the description of the instrumentation of this and other passages may be useful, but I would have preferred the space to be used for an assessment



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of what the significance of the unnamed theme might be; McGuire is rightly inclined to regard Jaeger's labelling, whether or not Elgar appeared to sanction it, as lacking in subtlety—like early analyses of *The Ring*—but he does little to revise or correct it, referring us to Christopher Grogan's earlier thesis without developing its useful insights.

Perhaps to show how Elgar's narrative techniques developed, McGuire seems to underrate the continuity of *The Light of Life*. Despite its clear division into numbers, it can sound remarkably continuous, and the web of leitmotifs is really quite sophisticated. Even *Gerontius* can be divided to some extent into numbers—for which reason I hope McGuire's terminology, by which the two Parts are called 'movements', does not catch on. McGuire is good on the extent to which forms and genres, such as recitative, are determined in *Gerontius* by Newman's poetry; he might have made an analogy with the poetic modes of Italian opera. The most valuable insights in the book, to my mind, come with the developing of Elgar's techniques in *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*, which justify his reference, in his title, to epic. There are many passages here of real insight into Elgar's intentions and achievement, and his skill in deployment of Old Testament texts in the New Testament context. The summary from p. 290 and the discussion of the ending of *The Kingdom* are exemplary. In his final paragraph McGuire accepts that his analysis is only a point of departure for further study. I agree that there is still a good deal to say about the musical forms of the last two oratorios, and their contribution to narrative and more importantly to interpretation. But this altogether new approach to Elgar's sacred choral works, within the limitations imposed by its length, its origins, and its theoretical framework, establishes a strong foundation for a more developed and musically-based investigation. As such it will need to be consulted by all future commentators on these magnificent works.

It is to be hoped that the value of the book will not be overshadowed by its many defects of presentation; it would, however, be dereliction of duty not to mention them. An author has to take some responsibility, particularly in these days when most publishers insist on receiving digital copy; but it is the publisher's job to make sure the work is presented to best advantage, and here McGuire has been badly let down. Rather than suggest that the copy-editing has been incompetent, I prefer more charitably to believe that there was none. A capable editor would have eliminated grammatical and other solecisms. I am emphatically not complaining that the book is written in the American English natural to its author (although English people allergic to the perfectly logical construction 'different than' should take antihistamine before reading it). But in no version of English should singular nouns take plural verbs, as in the phrase (p.106) 'the rhythmic figure of the second and third measures are broadened'—one example which must serve for many. Wrong words should have been detected: for instance Parsifal's 'prominently religious and mystical subject matter' should presumably read 'predominantly' (and perhaps 'subject-matter'). If the style is somewhat plodding, this may be a defect of the thesis genre; but if presented as a thesis in Britain, it would have been referred for numerous 'minor corrections' before the candidate could proceed to the degree. One should try not to mis-spell people's names. It is peculiarly irritating to find Arnold 'Whittal' in a footnote one centimetre from his correctly spelled wife Mary Whittall; 'Howard' for Harold Rosenthal is another unfortunate accident. Apostrophe-itis also strikes: on the publisher's blurb we learn McGuire has written on 'Vaughan William's

early connections with British music festivals'. A table on p. 206 is missing its Column A.

Unfortunately the many little accidents in the verbal text (almost one a page) are outdone by the music examples. I do not know whether permission to photocopy the published scores was sought and refused; and sometimes specially prepared music examples are useful, in that they can isolate significant musical points by a simplified layout. Unfortunately the examples appear to have been left at the draft stage, and are frankly a mess. This is not only a question of poor alignment and spacing, full score extracts too minuscule to read, or the many accidentals squashed over a preceding barline or mingled with the key-signature. So many essential accidentals are missing that if the music were performed as notated here, the result would be grotesque. In the Prelude to *Gerontius* the cautionary accidentals are missing—for instance those placed in the printed full and vocal scores on the G natural in the second bar. Without them, the opening motive, while correctly notated according to the computer programme, simply looks wrong; more unfortunately the indispensable C sharp in bar 10 is also missing; most unfortunately of all, this misrepresentation of one of Elgar's best-known passages appears much magnified on the cover of the book.

Julian Rushton

Edward Elgar und die deutsche symphonische Tradition

(Edward Elgar and the German symphonic tradition)

by Michael Gassmann

It comes as no surprise to find Elgar linked to the German symphonic tradition from Mozart to Brahms. In the irritating way that Brahms' First Symphony has been described as Beethoven's Tenth, so Elgar's First has received the dubious accolade of Brahms' Fifth. Michael Gassmann, whose CD of the complete organ music (Telos TLS 019) I reviewed in the JOURNAL (November 1999), has structured his book, the result of a doctoral thesis, into three parts. The first, entitled 'Early Years', describes Elgar's encounters with Beethoven and Mozart in 1873 and 1878 respectively. As a sixteen-year-old, Elgar wrote a Credo for SATB soloists, chorus and organ on themes from Beethoven's Fifth, Seventh and Ninth Symphonies. This was at a time when getting hold of scores of such works in provincial Worcester was not easy, and on the day he managed to obtain a copy of the 'Pastoral', he 'stuffed [his] pockets with bread and cheese and went out into the fields to study it'. Similarly, five years later, following a performance in which he played violin in the orchestra at the Three Choirs Festival at Worcester, he used Mozart as a model, this time the famous G minor Symphony K. 550, and 'following as far as possible the same outline in the themes and the same modulation [he] wrote a symphony'. It was hardly a complete symphony, just forty-three bars, but Elgar later acknowledged, 'I don't know any discipline from which I learned so much'. Both exercises are reproduced in full.

Part Two links *Froissart* to Wagner, the 'Enigma' Variations to Schumann, and *In the South* to Richard Strauss, while Part Three tackles Elgar's two completed symphonies with particular comparisons with Brahms' Third Symphony. In all instances music examples are abundantly included to illustrate influences and

similarities. An intermezzo on Elgar and Mahler (as far as it is possible to ascertain Elgar never heard a note of Mahler's music) is fascinating for its letter (19 July 1902) from Julius Butts to Elgar on the subject, but unfortunately no letters in the opposite direction are extant. Quite why the author chose not to cover Elgar's Third Symphony, even in the form in which the composer left it, is unclear, for it would have been interesting to write about his approach to symphonic writing after a twenty-year gap.

Regrettably there is no index and, apart from the cover, no illustrations, but an extensive bibliography concludes the book. Its style is fairly tough going unless you have very good German (Elgar's letters and other utterings have been left in their original English, 'wd's', 'cd's', '&s' and all) but the topic is a fascinating one, and it would be good to see this book translated into English. Herr Gassmann is clearly a devoted Elgarian.

Christopher Fifield

Charles Villiers Stanford: man and musician

by Jeremy Dibble

Charles Villiers Stanford

by Paul Rodmell

I guess one has to start a review of these two splendidly solid volumes with the obligatory Number 11 bus joke, so here goes—it seems quite remarkable that having waited for a detailed scholarly biography of Stanford for a lifetime, two come along together, literally within days of each other. Both are well done, wide-ranging in coverage, but both are expensive and have individual strengths which might steer you to one or the other. For example Dibble has no discography, whereas Rodmell has an extensive (though by no means comprehensive) sixteen-page compilation. For me, this is very useful, though by not including pre-CD recordings it omits Stanford's own recordings, together with most of the recorded extracts from Stanford's operas, few though they are. (In fact, neither author mentions Stanford's recording sessions at all.) On the other hand Dibble's catalogue of works is marginally more complete. Rodmell has ninety-nine musical examples, Dibble only twenty-six, though some of these have multiple extracts.

There was a time when it seemed that, church music and a few songs apart, Stanford's music was stone dead. Yet gradually various pioneers have explored it, and if we take the starting point as the BBC revival of Stanford's *Requiem* in October 1978, the Stanford revival has been quietly progressing for twenty-five years now, given added impetus by Vernon Handley's recordings of the symphonies and Irish rhapsodies for Chandos, and (more recently) recordings of the *Stabat Mater* and *Requiem*. The principal concertos have also been played and recorded. Among these is the Violin Concerto, until recently thought lost, but rediscovered hiding in the RCM Library all the time, in whose recording Dibble was actively involved, a glorious and highly personal work which Rodmell only briefly considers. Nevertheless I have some sympathy for Rodmell's view that the *Down Among the Dead Men* variations



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for piano and orchestra and the Clarinet Concerto are Stanford's most successful works for soloist and orchestra (p. 201).

The chamber music is also being explored, though the eight quartets have not yet been played again, and the Piano Quintet (op. 25), although Stanford's most successful chamber work in his day, has yet to be recorded. Rodmell feels that 'much of the Quintet is overly indebted to Teutonic composers... strongly redolent of Brahms' (pp. 117–8) noting that 'the slow movement too fails to cohere' (p. 118). Dibble, while finding it over-serious, does not agree, citing the last two movements for lifting the work 'into a lyrical world of euphony and optimism, attributes profusely essayed in the magnificent Adagio... carrying Stanford's melodic gifts onto a new plane of richness and fecundity' (p. 174). Having heard the recent revivals of this magnificent piece I must say my sympathies are with Dibble.

When we turn to Stanford's operas we find there is the longest way to go. The last time a Stanford opera was staged was a fringe production in 1985 of *Much Ado About Nothing*, and before that, student productions of *The Travelling Companion* in 1981 and 1971. The extracts from this opera broadcast by the BBC in 1995 went a long way to reminding us of the music's strengths. Here we have two academics writing from University music departments, and writing enthusiastically about the operas; surely one of them can persuade his institution to mount a Stanford opera, even if only a concert performance? I am looking forward one day soon to writing of, say, Dibble's *Shamus O'Brien* or Rodmell's *The Canterbury Pilgrims*.

With the choral music, too, we have a partial revival but still many question marks. Both authors discuss the *Elegiac Ode*, Stanford's pioneering settings of now very familiar words by Walt Whitman. As Dibble says, 'the *Elegiac Ode* remains one of Stanford's most imaginative choral works and merits revival not only as one of the composer's most fertile essays but also as the forerunner of so many British vocal works of the early twentieth century'. Rodmell is perhaps less enthusiastic than Dibble, but draws attention to the opening of the final chorus where 'Stanford created a masterly picture of the sea—the first of many'. As I have remarked previously in this JOURNAL (July 2002), the *Elegiac Ode* should certainly be high on any list of early Stanford revivals. This brings us to wonder about Stanford's longer oratorios, *Eden* and *The Three Holy Children*. Here both authors' eloquence makes one keen to experience the music of *Eden* for oneself, even though the ultimate verdict is of failure. Dibble feels: 'It is in the second part of *Eden* that the oratorio founders, even though it is in this part of the work that the finest music resides' (p. 226).

Both authors discuss the music in chronological sequence, and I was pleased to have some coverage of the both the earliest and last works, Dibble notably considering the early concertos for piano, violin and cello. The late concertos for violin (No. 2) and piano (No. 3) perhaps need more extensive discussion. Neither author mentions that the early Cello Concerto and the late Third Piano Concerto were recorded for Lyrita in 1994 but have not been issued. In fact, having attended those sessions and discussed the Third Concerto with Geoffrey Bush who orchestrated it, I am not sure I agree with Dibble that Stanford intended it to be in the same grand vein as the Second Concerto, a fact underlined by the small and notably reticent forces Bush decided to use in his orchestral version.

Both authors provide us with a detailed life and works, Dibble's approach familiar to all who have read his milestone volume on Parry, with a wide-ranging knowledge

of the period and the Stanford/Parry circle. Inevitable in two such substantial runs over much the same material, there are differing slants on different events. Rodmell gives us several pages on Stanford's spat in 1890 with Arthur Mann, the organist of King's College, over the latter's decision to run a large-scale choir for the purpose of giving oratorios in Cambridge. Dibble does not mention it, though it is certainly revealing of Stanford's combative nature which did him an increasing disservice as he grew older. Incidentally, Rodmell refers to Mann as Augustus, but in the 1901 issue of the *Roll of the Union of Graduates in Music* he is listed as Arthur Henry Mann.

Neither author mentions Frederic Cliffe, Stanford's colleague at the RCM, who had a notable success with his Symphony in C minor in 1889. Then there is Robert Finnie McEwen, who came to Stanford's financial rescue when he was embarrassed at the outbreak of the First World War. Dibble cites McEwen extensively, but he is barely mentioned by Rodmell. Those who have read Stanford's letters will know that his printed letterhead was '50 Holland Street, Kensington W', and I am not sure why Dibble gives it as 55 Holland Street. And so it goes on.

The illustrations are almost entirely complementary, and are well-reproduced in both books. Rodmell has a frontispiece portrait and twelve pages of plates of which four are given over to sculpture and paintings by George Frederick Watts, the source of Stanford's Sixth Symphony. Dibble has no pictures of Watts but sixteen pages of varied illustrations including such rare items as photographs of the violinist Sybil Eaton and of Robert Finnie McEwen. On the cover of last July's JOURNAL we printed the detail of Stanford looking daggers at Elgar, from a celebrated group photograph taken at Gloucester in 1922. Rodmell prints the previous shot of the same group with Stanford looking straight ahead! One would love to know what made him turn and look at Elgar in that way.

There is little to choose between two fascinating books; both are remarkable achievements, and both are very readable. Having to select only one may just turn on what special offers the publishers are making. Probably overall Dibble has more detail and more interesting pictures, yet Rodmell has the discography and more musical examples. Fortunately, I have both!

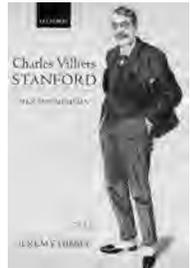
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CD REVIEWS

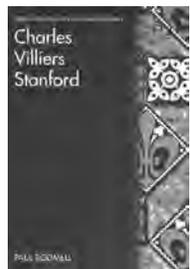
Introduction and Allegro, Op. 47; Symphony No. 1 in A flat major, Op. 55

Hallé Orchestra conducted by Sir John Barbirolli

As Michael Kennedy narrates in his fine essay which accompanies this invaluable disc, Sir John Barbirolli had said to him a few weeks before this concert, recorded live at the Kings Lynn Festival on 24 July 1970, 'You know, every concert now might be my last.' It was an eerily prescient remark, for Barbirolli died on 28 July, and this concert was his last with his beloved Hallé Orchestra and the last music by Elgar he



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ever conducted. The Kings Lynn Festival, with his friend Lady Ruth Fermoy at its epicentre, was an event to which he always gave priority in his diary of engagements, even if it meant coming back from foreign lands to conduct at it. The two works he directs here were both close to his heart, and remind us of Barbirolli the cellist in his early professional career, consummately at ease in an all-string environment. No grunts and groans here, as in the days of the vinyl recording titled *Barbirolli conducts English String Music*, but you sense every gesture, every impulse and every nuance which he invests in this stirring interpretation. He makes the *Introduction and Allegro* what it is, one of the classics of its genre in the twentieth century which Barbirolli recorded six times between 1927 and 1962. This account may not qualify as a 'recording' because it is a live performance, but I am convinced it is his finest. It is full-blooded from the start with its strikingly bare open-string Gs and Ds to the final immaculately placed pizzicato of joyous G major. True, those screamingly awkward rising passages leading to the dizzy heights of a top A which the poor *concertino* violins have to contend with two bars before figure 12 (marginally easier a tone lower at the corresponding place before figure 27) would have had to be recorded again (perhaps more than a few times, for the Hallé strings are not always pin-point accurate here and elsewhere), but in terms of spirit, élan and style, it would be a hard recording to beat.

The start of the symphony (to this reviewer its tread conjures up an image of its dedicatee and first interpreter, Hallé conductor Hans Richter, plodding down St Peter's Street to rehearse at the old Free Trade Hall in 1900) sets the tone of the performance. One has the distinct impression Barbirolli doesn't want any part of it to be over, neither its glorious melodies nor its glowing harmonies, and he lingers lovingly over every note of the motto theme whilst suffusing the rest of the work with the care for detail in his music-making for which he was always deservedly praised. In this performance the Hallé stops at naught. It may be the dog-end of the season, probably a tiring one if my memories of those golden days are accurate, and the prospect of a summer holiday may be imminent for the players (not for JB though, for he was planning to go off in a few days to Tokyo and Expo 70 with the New Philharmonia Orchestra before death intervened), yet somehow Elgar has taken over and their long-steeped tradition, from Richter to Barbirolli via Harty and occasional forays north by the composer himself, shines through. Martin Milner's solo violin is very distant in the first movement (better in the third), but apart from that it is a remarkable achievement in terms of recording, balance and ambience. There are climaxes in which the brass achieve terrifying intensity, and for a man who had had a heart seizure that morning as he entered the church for rehearsal, it must have taken an awful toll on Barbirolli's shaky health to exhort them to produce such sounds. One can only marvel that he survived for four more days. The scherzo is uncompromisingly fleet-footed, breathlessly so at the start but then it finds its equilibrium, with the pacing of the link into the Adagio finely judged. Listening to his interpretation of this great slow movement one can only mourn the passing of this unique conductor, for it is at its most affecting in its last two minutes—surely this is JB bidding us farewell. In the finale, sadness turns to gratitude for his musical legacy which it is still our privilege to enjoy, thanks to such discs as this one. The music from figure 130 to 134 (track 5: 6' 53" to 7' 53")—precisely one minute—says it all.

In the booklet there are three photographs which are highly evocative,

particularly the first, in which the diminutive conductor is being patiently led by the ever-gracious Lady Evelyn, who this year celebrated her ninetieth birthday. If only her husband could have been granted another twenty years. This may have been Barbirolli's last Elgar, but it ranks as his best.

Christopher Fifield

The Dream of Gerontius

Anthony Rolfe Johnson, Catherine Wyn-Rogers, Michael George
Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus
Huddersfield Choral Society conducted by Vernon Handley

Among the latest issues from the recently re-launched Classics for Pleasure label comes the re-release of Vernon Handley's 1994 account of *The Dream of Gerontius*, a reading that has lost nothing of its original appeal in the intervening years.

The RLPO is in fine form and can be heard to full effect from the start in a Prelude that can compare to any currently on CD. The pace is good, quicker than both Barbirolli and Elgar, but not as hasty as Boult who shows all three a clean pair of heels by some twenty seconds.

Anthony Rolfe Johnson's superb diction adds much to one's enjoyment of this recording. He differentiates between Gerontius and his Soul subtly, but totally in keeping with Handley's reading and the overall line of both the music and the text. Perhaps the singing could have been a little more forceful at 'Sanctus fortis', but here I was struck by how the rhythm in the voice, suggested by the 3/4 time signature, further develops the general line of the performance.

Michael George is my recorded Priest/Angel of the Agony of choice. To my ear he copes admirably with both roles, bringing character to each. He is particularly impressive when singing to the background of the outstanding choral forces (who, incidentally, are particularly good in their big show-pieces), helped by some fine balance from the engineers.

As the Angel, Catherine Wyn-Rogers takes a gentler approach than some, which can, at times, verge on the bland. However, at other points I found she was able to banish, even from my mind, the sound of Janet Baker's voice, arguably the greatest of all Angels.

From 'Praise to the Holiest' onwards, it is hard to find anything that is not done very well. Worthy of particular mention is the moment of judgement and 'That sooner I may rise'. This ebbs and flows with an elegance that is continued by the chorus and leads to 'The Angel's Farewell' and a final Amen that maintains the established line to perfection.

This budget two-CD set represents exceptional value, not least because of the added bonus of James Loughran's 1974 recording of *Belshazzar's Feast*. The pre-digital sound barely meets today's standards, but the performance has certainly stood the test of time. However, the lack of printed texts for both pieces may put off many a prospective buyer.

Stuart Freed

Elgar — A Naxos Musical Journey

The American company DVD International has produced a series of 'musical journeys' on the DVD format with high quality video and hi-fi sound. Whilst Elgar's music is not especially associated with the Scottish countryside, it seems to work, if you like this kind of thing. Excellent photography, some of it using a low-flying helicopter, is matched to four of Elgar's compositions, the Cello Concerto, the *Elegy* (op. 58), the *Introduction and Allegro* (op. 47), and the *Serenade for Strings* (op. 20). The music is all well played, and recorded by Naxos, whose budget-priced CDs seem to occupy more and more of our record shelves.

The recordings are not new. The three string works were made in 1989 by the British conductor Adrian Leaper with the Capella Istropolitana based in Bratislava, Slovakia. The Cello Concerto is performed by the excellent Russian cellist Karina Georgian, no stranger to the UK, with the Moscow Symphony Orchestra under Constantine Krimetz.

This is an unashamedly old-fashioned travelogue with varying degrees of success in matching the music to the beauties of Scotland. Even though the opening chords of the Cello Concerto have been described as 'ruminative', I was somewhat surprised to see a very hairy Scottish cow chewing the cud at the same time! Having said that, things improve, and by the time the string works are reached much creativity is evident. The film company is Swiss, from Zurich. The scenes shown whilst the *Elegy* is played are very beautiful indeed, mostly seascapes, much at sunset. Exteriors and interiors of famous Scottish castles abound, and the devilish fugal section of the *Introduction and Allegro* is played with some quite surreal shots of Talisker's whisky distillery! My favourite part was devoted to weaving on the Isle of Mull. Marvellous clanking old looms, fascinating patterns, and glorious colours were accompanied by the opening of the *Serenade for Strings*—pulsing viola rhythms pointing the movements of the machinery.

Most of us prefer solely to listen to music, and to allow our inner thoughts perhaps to create images as and when. Nevertheless, it is occasionally interesting to see how another image creator, in this case a film-maker, reacts to particular music. This DVD, within its limits, is enjoyably easy on eye and ear.

Jack Slater



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LETTERS

From: Paul A. Kampen

I was interested in Christopher Fifield's comments on Sir John Barbirolli (JOURNAL, November 2002, pp. 274–5). As I was also a student in Manchester in the late 60s, I would have been at the same performances, and well remember Sir John's renditions of the national anthem.

I am reminded of another feature of note—the exaggerated rendition of what was known to horn players of my generation as 'the falling seventh'. This involves the notes G, F sharp, F (concert pitch) played against the third bar from the end. A writer who did not like this once called it 'a signal of bovine distress'.

In the late 60s the two Manchester orchestras had five horn players (in the Hallé Arthur Bevan and the late Enid Roper; in the BBC Northern the late Sydney Coulston, Frank Taylor, and the late Robert Aspden) who had studied with Otto Paersch in the 30s and 40s. They termed this snatch the 'Moss Side ending'. Moss Side is an inner city area of Manchester, so the term could possibly mean 'it could be heard over at Moss Side' or more simply, it was 'rough' (which is how a lot of people would describe Moss Side). I wonder if the term originated with Otto Paersch, who was a noted wag. His father Franz Paersch would certainly have played first horn in the première (by the Hallé in December 1908) of Elgar's First Symphony—possibly with young Otto 'down the line'.

The ability to busk 'Queen in G' was still an important part of orchestral players' armory in the 60s and 70s. One regional orchestra played the national anthem 'military style'—in B flat, instead of G. Unwary young players who did not know their place (being at the head of the tea queue in the break with the section's order correctly memorised, or being generally too bumptious and free with opinions) would find their colleagues might 'forget' to give a warning of the different key for the anthem. Now we rarely have to play the national anthem at all; at a performance in Sheffield on the day the death of the Queen Mother was announced, it struck me it was the first time I had played it for several years.

From: Mr A. J. D. Edwards

Kevin Mitchell is mistaken in his review of Elgar and the English Choral Tradition (JOURNAL, November 2002, pp. 269–70). Havergal Brian's Psalm 23 has been recorded previously, by the Brighton Festival Chorus and Leicestershire Schools' Symphony Orchestra in a commercial recording (CBS Classics 61612) in 1975, which I possess. The tenor soloist on the recording is Paul Taylor, the conductor Laszlo Heltay, and the LP (produced by Robert Simpson) also includes Brian's Symphony No. 22 'Sinfonia Brevis' and his English Suite No. 5.

100 YEARS AGO...

Despite the challenge of completing his enormous *Apostles* project in time for its October première, the new year of 1903 found Elgar in buoyant mood. In her new diary Alice wrote: 'Today has been a very happy day, seeing dear Edo better & keen over his work'. He was of course still compiling the libretto for *The Apostles* and on 3 January ordered a book on the Old Testament, and read the *Britannica* article on Job. At this time Francis Cohen, a rabbi from south London, was advising him on the use of Jewish tunes in the work.

The first fortnight of the year saw visits from the Johnstones from Birmingham, and from Jaeger and Richter. On 13th the Elgars travelled to London to stay for a week with the Speyers at Ridgehurst, their home in Hertfordshire; other musical guests staying there included the pianist Leonard Borwick and the violinist Johann Kruse. Back home he posted the first section of *The Apostles* to Novello on 21st; but the publishers were anxious to see the whole libretto, which was still incomplete. A week later Edward Capel Cure came up from Dorset to try and sort things out, but in the short time available to them they were not able to complete the libretto. Elgar did send the words of Part I to Jaeger on 2 February, by which time he was working on the big chorus at the end of Scene 1, and had begun the Mary Magdalene section. Perhaps the spectre of 1900 and the *Gerontius* débâcle had reappeared, for he wrote to Jaeger on 5 February: 'I want something badly to encourage me, as my letters are dreary...' Five days later he posted off the completed Scene 1. When Dora Penny came to stay on 12th she found Edward composing Scene 2 ('By the Wayside'), which he sent off on the 20th. Work was interrupted by a Worcestershire Philharmonic concert on 24th which included a performance of the *Coronation Ode*.

'The work grows very large,' Elgar wrote to Schuster on 2 March. Yet he was often distracted by the need to deal with minor points for the printers, such as whether to preface characters' names with the word 'Saint'. The pressure was certainly affecting him: '[I] promise never to try and write anything else... when this is done,' he wrote to Jaeger on 9 March.

The Mary Magdalene scene was finally finished and sent off on 23 March, by which time Elgar had received the encouragement of two triumphant performances of *Gerontius*—at Manchester on 12th, conducted by Richter, and at Hanley under Elgar himself the following day. Ten days later came the successful American première in Chicago on 23rd; and at this time Elgar was also involved in arrangements for the first London performance at Westminster Cathedral in June.

He was now able to begin setting Part 2 of *The Apostles*, whose main section dealt with the betrayal of Christ by Judas. As Wulstan Atkins has pointed out, this section caused Elgar more bother than any other, and may have been the reason Elgar took himself off to Hereford to stay with G. R. Sinclair over the Easter weekend. During his stay he wrote the seventh 'Mood of Dan' in Sinclair's visitors' book—music used several years later as the opening of the *Crown of India* music. Back in Malvern on 14 April he was still depressed, writing to Ernest Newman: 'I am sadly tired out & this vast view from my window makes me feel too small to work: I used to feel that I "expanded" when I looked out over it all—now I seem to shrink & shrivel'. The following day Alice wrote: 'E. rather tired & worried over his work'. There were constant interruptions; the young Spanish violinist and composer Pedro Morales visited on 19th, and then came a visit to Middlesbrough to conduct *Gerontius* on 22nd with Nicholas Kilburn's choir.

Geoffrey Hodgkins

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