

The Society

Organ



JOURNAL



April 2012 Vol.17, No. 4



The Elgar Society Journal

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April 2012 Vol. 17, No. 4

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*The Editor does not necessarily agree with the views expressed by contributors,
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*Front Cover: Arthur Sullivan: specially engraved for Frederick Spark's and Joseph Bennett's
'History of the Leeds Musical Festivals', (Leeds: Fred. R. Spark & Son, 1892).*

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Books: Author, *Title* (Place of publication: Publisher, year of publication), page[s]. Thus: Robert Anderson, *Elgar* (London: Dent, 1993), 199.

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Titles that are 'generic' in Roman: e.g. Violin Concerto. Others in *italics* (e.g. *Sea Pictures*; the *Musical Times*). Units within a longer work in single quotes, e.g. 'Sanctus fortis' from *The Dream of Gerontius*.

Editorial

March saw the centenary of the opening night of Elgar's Masque *The Crown of India*, and that anniversary is celebrated in this issue by Andrew Neill, who has unearthed a fascinating series of photographs of the 1911 Durbar with which to illustrate it. His essay reached me just as Jeremy Paxman's new series about the British Empire started on BBC1. The first episode contained much about the Durbar: if you missed it then I urge you to look out for a repeat in the coming months. Come to think of it, if you missed Andrew Davis's pioneering recording of the complete *Crown of India* music in 2009 (Chandos CHAN19570(2)), take this opportunity to make amends: there really is some fine music here, not least the stirring song 'The Rule of England'. This was sung in the original production by Harry Dearth, who I was intrigued to discover had lived in the flat next to mine in Fulham, our residencies separated by a mere 60 years.

The sins of one's past have a habit of catching up with one! My review of Sullivan's *Ivanhoe* provoked some less than benevolent remarks from our friends in the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society; but it also encouraged Meinhard Sarembe from the Deutsche Sullivan-Gesellschaft (how splendid that Germany has its own Sullivan Society) to write a most interesting and in-depth article on Sullivan and Elgar. I fear I still can't bring myself to think *Ivanhoe* a good piece. Sullivan's close friend Sir George Grove wrote in 1895 '... I don't care for *Ivanhoe* – but I do like the Golden Legend', and I agree with his sentiments wholeheartedly. *The Golden Legend* was composed for the Leeds Festival of 1886, and those who fondly believe that it was Elgar who transformed English oratorio writing ten years later with *King Olaf* should beg, borrow or steal the Hyperion recording of Sullivan's masterpiece (CDA67280). If the Prologue, depicting a storm raging around Strasburg Cathedral as Lucifer and his spirits of the air try to tear down the cross from the spire, doesn't knock you flat as a piece of inspired and dramatic writing, imaginatively orchestrated, nothing will! Elgar played in the orchestra at the Worcester Festival performance in 1887, and led the orchestra for the performance by the Worcester Festival Choral Society in 1892, and its influence on his own music (and orchestration) is plain to hear.

One of the least known of the early champions of Elgar's music was the author Elizabeth Lynn Linton. She had moved to Malvern in 1895 for the sake of her health with, I sense, a certain foreboding as to the provincial social life she might find there. She certainly found Malvern much as she expected, but she also found an unexpected treasure in the form of Edward Elgar, busily engaged on *Lux Christi* and *Olaf*. My short essay on her time in Malvern reveals much of her delight in his genius, as well as some wry remarks on Malvern society in general.

Martin Bird

‘... unconnected with the schools’ – Edward Elgar and Arthur Sullivan

Meinhard Saremba

‘The English public is curious’, Hubert Parry said to Thomas Dunhill in 1918. ‘It can only recognise one composer at a time. Once it was Sullivan. Now it is Elgar.’¹ It is not at random that precisely these two names are mentioned by a major exponent of the then English music establishment: Modern English music history began in 1862 with Arthur Sullivan’s incidental music for Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, with which the composer created a link to Henry Purcell’s *Tempest* music of 1695. At the end of Sullivan’s career works such as *The Prodigal Son*, *The Light of the World*, *The Lost Chord*, *The Martyr of Antioch*, *The Golden Legend*, *Ivanhoe*, and *King Arthur* showed Elgar the way.

Elgar always had a positive attitude towards Sullivan who was 15 years his senior. This is proved not least by Elgar’s daughter Carice who wrote: ‘My father always spoke with great feeling and respect for Sullivan, and admired *The Golden Legend*. He was also very fond of the overture *Di Ballo*.’²

However, it was a quite unpleasant experience for Elgar when the two artists’ paths crossed in 1889. Sullivan was not even aware of the fact. Some works by the young Elgar were to be rehearsed by the Covent Garden orchestra (with the prospect of a performance in case it passed muster), among them his *Suite in D* and *Sevillana* op.7. Fifteen years later Elgar remembered:

The directors of the old Promenade Concerts at Covent Garden Theatre were good enough to write that they thought sufficiently of my things to devote a morning to rehearsing them. I went on the appointed day to London to conduct the rehearsal. When I arrived it was explained to me that a few songs had to be taken before I could begin.

Before the songs were finished Sir Arthur Sullivan unexpectedly arrived, bringing with him a selection from one of his operas. It was the only chance he had of going through it with the orchestra, so they determined to take advantage of the opportunity. He consumed all my time in rehearsing this, and when he had finished the director came out and said to me:

‘There will be no chance of your going through your music today.’

I went back to Worcester to my teaching ...³

1 Michael Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar* (Oxford University Press, 1968), 21.

2 Carice Elgar-Blake in a letter to Leslie Bailey; quoted in Leslie Bailey, *The Gilbert and Sullivan Book* (London: Cassell, 1952) 266.

3 Rudolf de Cordova, ‘Elgar at “Craeg Lea”’, *The Strand Magazine*, May 1904.

When Elgar’s new cantata *Caractacus* was performed at the Leeds Festival in 1898, Elgar told the chief conductor of the festival, none other than Sir Arthur Sullivan, what had happened nine years ago.

When we were introduced, he said, ‘I don’t think we have met before.’ ‘Not exactly’, I replied, ‘but very near it’, and I told him the circumstance. ‘But, my dear boy, I hadn’t the slightest idea of it’, he exclaimed, in his enthusiastic manner. ‘Why on earth didn’t you come and tell me? I’d have rehearsed it myself for you.’ They were not idle words. He would have done it, just as he said.⁴

Now the elder composer took a stand for ensuring the success of Elgar’s new piece. He refused to rest, attended the rehearsals, made notes of points which struck him and was very helpful in preparing the première. Elgar, whose real breakthrough with the song cycle *Sea Pictures* and the *Enigma Variations* of 1899 still lay ahead, could write self-confidently to his publisher, ‘I will alter no more of C. short of burning the whole thing.’⁵

In a letter from the Junior Conservative Club Edward Elgar told Sullivan:

Dear Sir Arthur Sullivan,

Forgive my troubling you with a note when you are very much occupied but I could not let the last day of the rehearsals go by without sending my thanks to you for making my ‘chance’ possible and pleasant – this is of course only what one knows you would do but it contrasts very much with what some people do to a person unconnected with the schools – friendless and alone, and I am always

Yours very gratefully,
Edward Elgar⁶

And on 30th December 1898 Elgar wrote to Sullivan from Malvern:

Here is the end of the year and with it inevitable reflections, but my sins, musical or otherwise, are not interesting and my virtues x – so I think of the happier things of ’98 – the chief and most pleasant of which was meeting you.

So I am moved to send a little note to wish you all good things in the New Year which we (my wife joins me in this) trust may be most happy and prosperous.⁷

He had to wait more than three weeks for a reply, written on 22 January 1899 from London, but eventually this was worth it since he was now regarded as a ‘brother musician’ by Britain’s greatest 19th century composer:

Dear Mr. Elgar,

Your kind letter is ever before me on my table, and every day, I put off answering it until tomorrow – that fatal tomorrow.

However, today has arrived at last, and so I take the opportunity to thank you most sincerely for your kind words & good wishes. I return them heartily to you and Mrs. Elgar. I gather from various

4 Ibid.

5 Letter from Elgar to Jaeger, 29 August 1898, Elgar Birthplace Museum letter 8317.

6 Letter from Elgar to Sullivan, 1 October 1898, EBM letter 9628.

7 Arthur Jacobs, *Arthur Sullivan* (Oxford University Press, 1984), 385.

sources that the Leeds Festival of '98 was a great success, but I have heard nothing officially from the Committee.

The Yorkshire people think that if they pay you for their service, that is enough – there is no necessity to say 'Thank you'. However, there is much in the Festival that gives me pleasure and satisfaction, and perhaps the greatest delight is in being able to help and forwards the interests of a brother musician no matter in how small a degree.

I am yours sincerely
Arthur Sullivan

P.S. A very scratchy pen.⁸

A month later Wilfred Bendall, who was Sullivan's secretary from 1895 up to the composer's death in November 1900, wrote to Elgar while – according to the diary – Sullivan was suffering heavily from toothache. Elgar had invited Sullivan to be an honorary member of his Worcestershire Philharmonic Society. 'Dear Mr. Elgar', Bendall replied for Sullivan on 18 February 1899, 'for years Sir Arthur has refused all requests to allow his name to appear in connection with musical societies but in your case he feels he must make an exception. He will therefore be happy that you should elect him Honorary member of your Philharmonic Society. Yours very truly, Wilfred Bendall.'

In Sullivan's diaries, which are often in note form, Elgar's name features briefly in an entry of Saturday, 17 August 1898. When Elgar worked at the *Enigma Variations* the following year, in which he portrays his and his wife's friends, he also planned to include Sullivan or Parry. However, as the corresponding variation could only have been a parody of their music, he dispensed with this idea.

Common experiences and differences

Although, unlike Elgar, Sullivan had a solid training in London and at the Leipzig Conservatoire, it was not only the newcomer in Britain's musical life who felt 'unconnected with the schools'. Sullivan, too, stayed away from the academic goings-on, intrigues, and rancour of the English Musical Renaissance movement.⁹ Both musicians were granted honorary doctorate degrees – Sullivan at the universities of Cambridge (1876) and Oxford (1879), Elgar at Cambridge (1900), Yale (1905) and Aberdeen (1906). Nevertheless both disliked teaching, even though they had both taught for a while – Sullivan as the founder of the National Training School for Music where he was a staff member Principal from 1876 until 1881, and Elgar as a piano and violin teacher in

8 The author would like to thank Martin Bird for providing him with a transcription of Sullivan's and Bendall's letter (in the Elgar Birthplace letter 10343 and letter 2846), Lady Elgar's diary entry, background information about the première of *The Prodigal Son* and Elgar's operatic contacts to Gilbert and Beecham.

9 See David Eden's talk 'The Unperson of British Music', presented in May 1992 at the Sir Arthur Sullivan Society Conference in Calver, published in a German translation in, *Sullivan-Journal* Nr. 1, June 2009, 29-45; Robert Stradling/Meirion Hughes, *The English Musical Renaissance 1860-1940*, London 1993; Meinhard Saremba, 'In the Purgatory of Tradition – Arthur Sullivan and the English Musical Renaissance', in Christa Brüstle/Guido Heldt (eds.), *Music as a Bridge – German-British Musical Relationships*, Hildesheim 2005, 33-71, and Meinhard Saremba, 'Das Problem Sullivan' in, Ulrich Tadday (ed.), *Arthur Sullivan* (München: edition text + kritik, 2011), 41-68.

Worcestershire (where his future wife Alice Roberts had been one of his pupils).

Both enjoyed much more being creative as an organist, Elgar from 1872 onwards when he started in his home town Worcester as the organist of the Catholic St George's Church in 1872, and Sullivan after his Leipzig studies at St. Michael's Church, Chester Square (from October 1861), and at St. Peter's Church, Kensington, from 1867 until 1872. However, only Elgar left compositions for organ for posterity, among them his impressive Organ Sonata; Sullivan at least integrated the organ into some substantial orchestral pieces and great choral works (*In Memoriam*, *The Prodigal Son*, *Festival Te Deum*, *The Light of the World*, *The Golden Legend*, *Te Deum Laudamus*); as later Elgar did with *Sea Pictures* and the oratorios.

The organ is not the only unusual orchestral colour in their compositions. Sullivan had deployed Arabian music in his cantata *On Shore and Sea* (1871) with a Moslem chorus, including Turkish bells, and singing 'Allahu akbar!' which at that time was as exceptional and daring as Elgar's use of the Jewish shofar in *The Apostles* thirty years later. In this genre there was no lack of publication. Several works for chorus and orchestra by Sullivan were published in the same year as the première: *The Prodigal Son* (1869 by Boosey), *The Light of the World* (1873 by Cramer), *Festival Te Deum* (1872 by Novello), *The Martyr of Antioch* (1880 by Chappell), *The Golden Legend* (1886 by Novello) and the so called *Boer War Te Deum* (premiered posthumously and published in 1902). As Sullivan was Britain's leading 19th century composer the young Elgar would have been keen to study the new scores from his father's music shop. Elgar's unconventional use of commonplace music in sophisticated genres such as the Dan and making-noise-on-the-organ episode in No. XI (G.R.S.) of the *Enigma Variations* (1899) or the Salvation Army's march in *Cockaigne* (1901) is pre-shadowed by Sullivan's orchestral imitation of bagpipe or banjo sounds in the operas *Haddon Hall* (1892) and in *Utopia Limited* (1896) respectively. If necessary, Sullivan even invented the means to express what he wanted. In 1898 he explained about his opera *The Beauty Stone* in an interview: '*The Beauty Stone* is written in an oriental vein. I have tried to give it an unconventional colour. The conventional oriental colour in music is gained by the use of certain intervals, such as the augmented second and the diminished fifth; but I have rather tried to give it an oriental colour by means of the languor of the music and by adopting a scale of my own after the Greek modes ... It is quite my own invention, that scale, but if you like, you can mention that it is a compromise between the Phrygian mode and the Hypomixolydian mode.'¹⁰ This new modal invention appears in Saida's scena in Act II ('Though she should dance till dawn of day'). No less daring was the Prologue to *The Golden Legend* twelve years earlier. When criticized about its alleged 'atonicity' the composer noted:

There are times to me when the music would be more beautiful and more complete without notes. I suppose it is that the diatonic and chromatic scales are so limited. How often I have longed to be free of fixed intervals. More especially in the prologue to the Golden Legend, I felt myself hampered by having to express all I wanted to say by voice and instruments of limited means, and definite unchangeable quality.¹¹

In *Falstaff* or the first symphony Elgar, as Sullivan, knew when he had to break rules in order to express what is needed.

10 'The New Musical Drama At The Savoy – What Sir Arthur Sullivan Says', *The Daily News*, 25 May 1898, 3.

11 Sullivan's letter to Thomas Helmore, 26 December 1889, quoted in H. Saxe Wyndham, *Arthur Seymour Sullivan* (London: Kegan, Paul, Trench, Trubner, 1926), 208.

Although Elgar often complained about his low social origin as the son of a music salesman who could not afford to send the boy to an academy, Sullivan as the offspring of a military bandmaster was on an even lower step of the social ladder. Sullivan, however, had the advantage of growing up in London, the centre of Britain's cultural life, whereas Elgar grew up in the comparatively provincial West Midlands in Worcester, which only every three years was the home of the well-established Three Choirs Festival. If he had not won the Mendelssohn scholarship in June 1856 the Sullivan family would not have been in a position to send their talented son to study at the Conservatoire in Leipzig. It can be assumed that individual temperament also played an important role in their development. Elgar was introspective and self-absorbed, Sullivan outgoing and at ease in his skin. This fundamental difference in outlook influenced their social behaviour and their work. A common feature was that at least both Sullivan and Elgar had been acquainted with music from their youth onwards. Arthur learned the repertoire from his father, the Chapel Royal and London's cultural life, while Elgar studied everything he could get hold of in his father's music shop, as an orchestral member in Worcester, or at visits to concerts which, thanks to the railway, led him as far as London.

Church Music – the penalty of the English environment

Elgar still was an adolescent when Sullivan's artistic career began. It is very likely that the twelve-year-old Edward attended the première of *The Prodigal Son* together with his relatives on 8 September 1869 in Worcester.¹² After all, his father (second violins) and his uncle Henry (violas) were playing in the Festival Orchestra under the composer's baton and the Festival programme, which is now at the Elgar Birthplace, is inscribed 'My first festival'. According to the *Worcester Herald* this concert was 'the most interesting of the entire Festival' because 'it contained the only absolute novelty; and also, marked the début of our most promising composer in the highest branch of his art'.

Tickets were unattainable for *The Prodigal Son*, and those who had early engaged seats congratulated themselves on their foresight. [...] By engaging Mr. Arthur Sullivan to write *The Prodigal Son*, the Stewards did well for the Festival, and something more;- they gave one of the very few chances open, now-a-days, to aspiring talent, and rendered a substantial service to English music. [...] We were hardly prepared for so satisfactory a rendering of music so unfamiliar. Doubtless much of the result must be attributed to the composer occupying the conductor's seat: but after making due allowance on that score, there remains a balance of special credit to be divided amongst singers and players.¹³

Charles Lee Williams ranked this première highly in his 1895 *Annals of the Three Choirs*: 'The music was considered to be a very great advance on anything that the composer had previously produced, the orchestration exhibiting great richness and originality'. It seems as if Sullivan's preface to the score lead the way for Elgar's later involvement with biblical subjects as he already suggests that the story should give the 'opportunity for the employment of "local colour"' and that it should be 'natural and pathetic', 'the characters ... perfectly contrasted' and that the 'knowledge of human nature' is essential for a convincing transformation of 'the Scripture' into 'a sacred musical composition'.¹⁴ Later Edward Elgar himself is known to have played in performances of

12 Elgar's brother-in-law, Charles Pipe, noted that to this music festival 'my uncle subscribed generously and gave tickets to his friends' (see *Memoirs in Berrow's Worcester Journal*, serialised in 1976).

13 *Worcester Herald*, 11 September 1869.

14 Arthur Sullivan: 'Preface to *The Prodigal Son*', in Robin Gordon-Powell (ed.), *Arthur Sullivan: The Prodigal Son – Full score*, London 2003, p. vii.

The Light of the World, *The Golden Legend* and *The Prodigal Son* in Worcester, Birmingham and Hereford. In addition, he would have almost certainly been acquainted with the operas Sullivan wrote on Gilbert's libretti, as eight of them were performed in Worcester in the 1880s.¹⁵

Later, among others, Elgar attended *The Yeomen of the Guard* in London on 7 May 1889 and *Ivanhoe* on 7 March 1891, and he especially appreciated the dramatic cantata *The Golden Legend* and the *Di ballo* overture. He was well acquainted with the achievements of Sullivan who had come to fame much earlier. While Sullivan created a great sensation as a nineteen-year-old with his first major composition, Elgar did not break through until he was in his early forties.

Germany became important for both artists. Sullivan had learned his trade in Leipzig and Elgar received international recognition when *The Dream of Gerontius* was performed at the Lower Rhine Festival in 1901. 'I cannot hope that my work will fare better than Sullivan's', Elgar wrote in a letter,¹⁶ bearing in mind that *Ivanhoe* and *The Golden Legend* had not received an open-armed welcome in Germany.¹⁷ However, Elgar had been much luckier to end up in the Rhineland than Sullivan in the capital, Berlin. The conductor Henry Wood reported about the Düsseldorf performance of *Der Traum des Gerontius*, he had 'never seen an audience so excited nor a composer so spontaneously acclaimed; certainly not an Englishman – unless, perhaps, Sullivan after the first performance of *The Golden Legend*'.¹⁸

Apart from the musical qualities of Elgar's oratorio and its production it must have been a major advantage for him in the Catholic Rhineland that he was a Catholic himself (even the first major Catholic composer since William Byrd 300 years ago) and *Der Traum des Gerontius* a piece deeply rooted in the Catholic tradition. After all, the source is Cardinal Henry Newman, a former Anglican clergyman who converted to the Catholic belief in 1845 at the age of 44 and was able to make a career in the Catholic Church. While the work was praised in Germany, acceptance of Elgar's *Dream of Gerontius* had a long time in the coming within the Anglican world. The people in charge of the 'Three Choirs Festival' in Elgar's home town still insisted in 1902 that for presenting the work in an Anglican cathedral words like 'Maria' had to be substituted with 'Jesus', 'Lord' with 'Saviour' or to sing about 'souls' instead of 'souls in Purgatory'. The idea of a purgatory, a place for the purification of the soul after death is common in the Catholic belief, not in the Anglican. Nevertheless today the Anglican cathedral in Worcester takes pride in having the 'Elgar window', which was installed a year after the composer's death. It features several scenes from *The Dream of Gerontius*. Elgar, to whom some years before had been suggested to change a projected title like *Lux Christi* to *The Light of Life* and to stay away from a Latin text, hardly seems to have bothered about theological quibbles. Already at the time of the première of this oratorio he no longer attended mass regularly. Arthur Sullivan, too, was far from far from standing out due to a deep religiousness. Lucifer and his spirits in the prologue of *The Golden Legend* might easily have been a model for Elgar's depiction of the demons which harass the soul of Gerontius. Already at the beginning of *The Dream of Gerontius* Elgar takes a reference to Sullivan's *chef d'œuvre*, when the

15 Martin Bird: 'Music in Worcester, 1860-1890', in *Elgar Society Journal*, Vol.16, No. 3 (November 2009), 25 ff. The operas were *HMS Pinafore*, *Iolanthe*, *The Mikado*, *The Pirates of Penzance*, *Princess Ida*, *Ruddigore* and *The Sorcerer*.

16 Letter from Elgar to Jaeger, 26 July 1901, EBM letter 9533.

17 About the background see Meinhard Saremba, 'The Crusader in Context', in David Eden (ed.), *Sullivan's Ivanhoe*, Saffron Walden 2007.

18 Henry Wood, *My Life of Music* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1938), 324 ff.

lament of the dying Gerontius reminds of the sufferings of Prince Henry (see music example 1).¹⁹

In spite of their indifference to institutionalised religion both composers, Sullivan as well as

Andante.
PRINCE HENRY. RECIT.
I can - not sleep! my fe-ver'd brain Calls up the van-ish'd Past a-gain,
Andante.
sempre pp
Ped.

Music example 1a: Sullivan, *The Golden Legend*

Allegro moderato. ♩ = 100.
GERONTIUS (TENOR). 22 Quasi Recit. espress.
Je - su, Ma - ri - a--
Piu lento. ♩ = 69.
I am near to death... And Thou, Thou art calling me; I
colla parte.
ppp
ppp
colla parte.
pp espress.
largamente.

Music example 1b: Elgar, *The Dream of Gerontius*

19 More examples in Richard Silverman, 'Stilelemente von Sullivans Musik und deren Interpretation', in Ulrich Tadday (ed.) *Arthur Sullivan* (München: edition text + kritik, 2011), 97.

Elgar, had a sense of moments of spiritual fulfilment. In a way Elgar concludes twenty years later what Sullivan had already conceived on a smaller scale with his song 'The Lost Chord', published in 1877, the most successful, best-selling solo song of the 19th century. It is about an almost mystical experience and the dilemma of creative man, the longing for an ideal. 'The Lost Chord' (with a text by Adelaide Anne Procter) tells about someone who, while improvising at the organ, suddenly hears unexpectedly a perfect chord. All his life he chases after this marvellous sound and wants to resuscitate this moment of fulfilment and perfection. In the end he anticipates that he will probably listen to this lost, perfect chord not until his life has come to an end. In Sullivan's composition the decisive phrase which leads to the insight 'It may be that only in heaven I shall hear that Great Amen!' is set fortissimo and asks for a moment to be sung 'con gran forza', with great strength, by the soloist. A comparable run-up to an explosive climax can be discovered in Elgar's music when the soul of Gerontius – before it can be admitted to the righteous – is judged and confronted with the holy face of God. In his score Elgar instructs that 'for one moment, must every instrument exert its fullest force'. Elgar does not relate directly to Sullivan's musical depiction of a similar moment, but continues to lead the underlying idea of Sullivan's song to perfection (see music example 2).

Sullivan not only acknowledged the dramatic potential of *Caractacus* (1898) but also noticed with satisfaction that Elgar admittedly shines a light on a different period of British history, and indeed continues the basic thematic approaches of *Ivanhoe* and *King Arthur*. *Caractacus* is about a British military leader who opposed the Roman intruders in the first century. Unfortunately he was not successful: the Romans defeated Caractacus in 51 A.D. It stands to reason that several of

Music Example 2

Sullivan: The Lost Chord (1877)
Elgar: The Dream of Gerontius

Elgar's works for soloists, choir and orchestra were a substitute for 'grand' opera, just as they had been for Berlioz or Sullivan. Examples might be *King Olaf* (1896) – about the first Christian King of Norway (968 – 1000), who brought his faith to the Orkney Islands and married Gyda of Ireland – and *Caractacus*, as well as the first two parts of the unfinished trilogy about the rise of Christianity (*The Apostles*, 1903 and *The Kingdom*, 1906) which not only had been modelled after Wagner's tetralogy *Der Ring des Nibelungen* but more than likely also Sullivan's most comprehensive oratorio *The Light of the World* (1873) had been a driving force behind them.²⁰

Under the influence of this complex work Elgar's first oratorio *The Light of Life* (1896) emerged which is an anticipation of the planned trilogy because some themes are not dissimilar to those in *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*. As with Sullivan's *The Light of the World* just as with many others of Sullivan's compositions, Elgar not only had the opportunity to study the work in his father's music shop soon after its immediate publication but he also played in performances in 1886. The rather similar titles of the oratorios are not only related to a quotation from the gospel of St. John (ch.9, v. 5) but also to the painting by the pre-Raphaelite artist Holman Hunt, inspired by the scriptural passage and completed between 1853 and 1856, which shows Christ with a burning lantern. While 'The Light of the World' is a very Protestant image of Jesus's appeal to the Christian conscience, Elgar's 'Light' immediately depicts a single episode from the gospel of St. John. Elgar focuses on the healing of a blind man through Jesus (John; ch. 9 and 10); Sullivan's oratorio is more than twice as long and depicts different stages from the life of Jesus (Bethlehem, Nazareth, Lazarus, Jerusalem, sepulchre), wherewith the elder composer could certainly have influenced the daring project of an oratorio trilogy conceptually.

Even if Sullivan's orchestral introduction to *The Light of the World* is shorter, its solemn, meditative character might have had its impact on Elgar's introductory 'meditation' for orchestra. If nothing else, Sullivan's Jesus, like Elgar's many years later, is a baritone role. After the première critics praised Sullivan's instrumentation. In the review of *The Observer* it is mentioned that 'the orchestra is handled throughout in a manner which only one who is fully acquainted with each instrument, its individual capabilities, and its effect in combination, is able to appreciate. The instrumentation is never obtrusive, but is always delicate and expressive, while many orchestral passages are notable for the beauty of the scoring.'²¹ While Sullivan was also praised for his vocal writing, Elgar impressed the listeners with his writing for the orchestra. A reviewer remarked that 'one still feels that the composer has more sympathy with his instruments than with his voices'.²²

Sullivan's oratorio ends with the fugal chorus 'Him hath God exalted' and Elgar, too, cannot do without a fugue after the man born blind has received his eyesight. 'I thought a fugue would be expected of me', Elgar mentioned in an interview. 'The British public would hardly tolerate oratorio without a fugue. So I tried to give them one. Not a 'barn-door' fugue, but one with an

independent accompaniment. There's a bit of a canon, too, and in short, I hope there's enough counterpoint to give the real British religious respectability!'²³

Sullivan's affiliation to the Church of England made many things easier for him. As Sullivan's family came from the far west of Ireland one might expect him to be as Catholic as Elgar. However, Sullivan's grandmother, Mary Sullivan, came from Bandon, County Cork, which was then a severely Protestant town surrounded by a Catholic countryside. If Mary Sullivan came from Bandon she would certainly have been a Protestant, i.e. Anglican, and she would equally certainly have married another Protestant, meaning that the Sullivans were Protestants all along.²⁴ At the beginning of his career Arthur Sullivan made concessions to expectations with *The Prodigal Son* and *The Light of the World*. However, his big works for chorus and orchestra such as *The Martyr of Antioch* (1880) and *The Golden Legend* (1886) comprise an increasingly secular bias. While it is possible to regard *The Golden Legend* – concerning its duration and conception as dramatic cantata – as a formal model for *King Olaf* (1896) and *Caractacus* (1898), Elgar steadily tried to adapt to his Anglican surroundings and complained to Delius a year before his death that writing oratorios had been 'the penalty of my English environment'.²⁵

However, personally Sullivan and Elgar stood apart from (organised) religion. After all, as baptised Christians they had no problems in creating grand musical portraits of Jewish people like Rebecca in *Ivanhoe* or Mary Magdalene and (sometimes) Judas who appear in Sullivan's *The Light of the World* as well as Elgar's *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom*. According to the eminent Sullivan biographer Arthur Jacobs there is absolutely no clue for Sullivan's religious orientation. 'He conformed to the normal practice of someone who was brought up in the Chapel Royal and was brought up in a conventional home', Jacobs said in an interview. 'He would have considered it to be very odd as not to have been able as someone who mixed in royal and official circles to take part in official church celebrations and so on. He set biblical texts and so on. But there is no evidence that he had any personal fervour. It is rather odd that even towards the end of his life and even when he knew he was dying or about to do that he did not seek what we would call spiritual or church consolation. I think that is probably quite common in Victorian times again. You are expected to conform, not to rock the boat but you were not expected necessarily to have, if you could not have, a deep conviction of your own.'²⁶ Elgar, too, kept aloof from religion in his later years. 'I always said God was against art and I still believe it', he stated briefly after the disastrous première of *The Dream of Gerontius* in October 1900 in Birmingham. 'I have allowed my heart to open once – it is now shut against every religious feeling and every soft, gentle impulse for ever.'²⁷

20 In 1891 Elgar did not have the artistic potential to write a contribution for the Royal English Opera House and when he was able to do it Carte had already withdrawn from the project because of its unprofitability. However, in 1906 W.S. Gilbert proposed writing an opera with Elgar, and in 1909 Thomas Beecham asked him to write an opera for the English Opera Season. Neither proposal came to anything and Beecham revived *Ivanhoe* in 1910, then conducted by Percy Pitt.

21 Arthur Lawrence, *Sir Arthur Sullivan* (London: James Bowden, 1899), 103 f.

22 Michael Kennedy, 'Elgar's *The Light of Life*', Chandos CHAN 9208, p. 5. That in the late 19th century Sullivan was the only imaginable comparative example is revealed in the 1899 review of *The Guardian* which claimed Elgar as 'the most eminent master of orchestral effect which our country has produced, with the possible exception of Sir Arthur Sullivan'. (quoted after Julian Rushton, *Elgar: Enigma Variations* (Cambridge University Press: 1999) 79 f.

23 Robert John Buckley, *Sir Edward Elgar* (London: The Bodley Head, 1904), 31.

24 The author would like to thank David Eden for drawing his attention to this significant aspect of Sullivan's background.

25 Eric Fenby, *Delius as I Knew Him* (London: George Bell & Sons, 1936), 124.

26 BBC interview, broadcast in 1992 at the 150th anniversary of Sullivan's birth. In addition see David Eden, 'Sullivan's Christianity' in *Sir Arthur Sullivan Society Magazine*, No. 41, autumn 1995, 22–28, and the contributions by William Parry and Ian Bradley on Sullivan's sacred music in the forthcoming book *Sullivan-Perspektiven* (edited by Albert Gier/Meinhard Saremba/Benedict Taylor; Essen: Oldib-Verlag, 2012).

27 Letter from Elgar to Jaeger, 9 October 1900, EBM letter 9528.

Humour, chivalry and the art of characterising

Despite their musical imprinting, Sullivan and Elgar revealed a remarkable versatility. Sullivan had profited from an academic education but he had no reservations at all about writing works compatible with the taste of the masses. As a composer Elgar had been largely self-taught, however, he proved more than once that he was able to write learned, sometimes rather unusual fugues as in the demons' chorus in *Gerontius* or the impressive choral fugue 'Is not this he that sat and begged?' in *The Light of Life* with its independent orchestral accompaniment.

When Sullivan and Elgar died both left unfinished works behind which might be regarded as representative for their main genres, Sullivan's opera *The Emerald Isle* was premiered posthumously in 1901 – with the instrumentation completed by Edward German – and Elgar's third symphony, which was delivered to posterity much more sketchy than Sullivan's last opera, was premiered in 1998, completed by Anthony Payne. In the 1930s Elgar half-heartedly tried his hand at opera with *The Spanish Lady* after the play *The Devil is an Ass* by Ben Jonson from 1616. This work, however, remained unfinished and even the attempt by Percy Young, a prominent Sullivan and Elgar biographer, to complete the work based on its sketches only proved that by then Elgar had been lacking in experience with this genre – an experience which Sullivan had acquired after hard work in the 1860s and early 1870s (and it was Sullivan who had brought the devil back to Britain's musical stage with the dramatic cantata *The Golden Legend* in 1886 and the opera *The Beauty Stone* in 1898). Despite some contacts to Gilbert and Beecham, Elgar had merely toyed with the idea of several operatic projects before World War I. Although he was in touch with Thomas Hardy, he could not agree on a topic with him because as a possible subject the established writer had one of his novels in mind, but Elgar demanded something nobler and heroic.

Sullivan's pioneering work and fundamental achievements for the appreciation of British composers paved the way for Elgar. The elder composer realised that his commitment on a broad scale – responsibility for the Leeds Festival for eighteen years, writing orchestral works and dramatic cantatas (inspired by Liszt and Berlioz) and composing operas from one-act pieces to those on a grand scale – was vital to create the basis of a high-quality English music repertoire.²⁸ Elgar had revealed more than once that he possessed the necessary dramatic potential for the stage. If he had not been a late bloomer he might have written something like *King Olaf* or *Caractacus* for the Royal English Opera House as a successor to *Ivanhoe* in the early 1890s. Due to circumstances, his development took another direction towards choral and orchestral music.

Sullivan has absolutely given evidence of his ability as an orchestral composer. He had written an outstanding symphony and a solo concerto for cello, produced at a time when spadework was required for English orchestral and stage music. Elgar, without doubt, is the more important English symphonist, albeit he lingered over such a substantial contribution to the genre until he was fifty years old because he felt the pressure to succeed all preceding attempts. Sullivan stopped writing symphonies as they were financially irrelevant. That Elgar, too, followed economic necessities is shown by the fact that later he withdrew from more symphonic contributions as he stopped writing oratorios. It simply was not profitable for Sullivan or Elgar: as the latter said, '... I cannot afford for the sake of others to waste any time on it. Alas!'²⁹

28 See Meinhard Saremba, 'Popular misconceptions of Gilbert and Sullivan' in *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan* (Cambridge University Press: 2009), 59 f. and Saremba, 'Das Problem Sullivan' in *Musik-Konzepte*, Munich 2011, 42 f. and David Eden, 'Sullivan und seine Librettisten' in *ibid*, 22-40.

29 Letter from Elgar to Jaeger, 3 June 1906, quoted in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar and his Publishers* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1987), 697.

In spite of the great differences sound-wise, the symphonies by Sullivan and Elgar are indebted to traditional form models, with Elgar composing personal emotions to a much greater degree. Sullivan's cello concerto, as Elgar's concertos later, already features rhapsodic traits. While as a song composer Sullivan was much more important than Elgar, both made valuable contributions to the part song. Elgar's creative work for small singing ensembles and choirs is much more substantial because his occupation took place at a time when choral singing boomed again.

How important Sullivan's life work was for Elgar is shown to some extent by James Brooks Kuykendall's study about the 'ceremonial style' in English music.³⁰ Based on examples from the ballet *Victoria and Merrie England* (1897) and the finale of *Caractacus*, Kuykendall shows that Sullivan prefigures a style which Elgar pursues in his musical language. To speak in a general way it might be said that Sullivan's marches, for instance, are laid out much more ponderously than Elgar's, however, they are also much more inventive melodically. Elgar's marches are more lyrical, as in the less often played pieces of *Pomp and Circumstance*. Both Sullivan and Elgar wrote an *Imperial March* – Sullivan for the Imperial Institute in Kensington which opened in 1893, Elgar four years later for Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee. However, the attitude toward the Empire was different. While Sullivan always kept his distance, as is shown in operas like *HMS Pinafore*, *Iolanthe* or *Utopia Limited*, Elgar was much more involved in a Conservative surrounding as he had married into the same section of community. With works such as the ballet *Victoria and Merry England* (Sullivan 1897) or the masque *The Crown of India* (Elgar 1912) both acquiesced in the demands made of the country's leading composers.³¹

An important common point of reference is William Shakespeare. In Sullivan's oeuvre this can be traced obviously in his incidental music (for *The Tempest*, *The Merchant of Venice*, *Henry VIII*, *The Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Macbeth*) and several songs; in Elgar's works it is less in the songs, but rather in his lectures³² and especially in the 'symphonic study' *Falstaff* where the instrumentalists act like players on an imaginary stage.

Regarding the fact that a 'serious' composer could also write music full of wit and humour, Elgar followed Sullivan and not the representatives of the 'schools' like Parry or Stanford. Just as Sullivan had written comic operas, Elgar's humour is revealed works such as *Falstaff*, *Cockaigne*, *The Wand of Youth*, *The Starlight Express*, the *Smoking Cantata* and last but not least in the *Enigma Variations* where we can detect musical characterisation and jest of Sullivan-esque proportions. If nothing else, these works prove that Elgar, under different premises, might have become a brilliant composer for the (operatic) stage.

In the event he composed incidental music for only a few pieces. In 1923 at the request of the writer Laurence Binyon he set his wits to a play about King Arthur – the same collective national myth Purcell (1691 with Dryden's text) and Sullivan (1895 for Carr) had already dealt with (and after them Britten in 1937 for Bridson's BBC version). Even if Elgar had not seen the play in

30 Brooks Kuykendall, *The English Ceremonial Style circa 1887–1937 and its Aftermath*, Cornell University 2005 (unpublished dissertation). See also James Brooks Kuykendall's essay 'Sullivan, *Victoria and Merrie England*, and the national tableau' in the forthcoming book *Sullivan-Perspektiven* (edited by Albert Gier/Meinhard Saremba/Benedict Taylor; Essen: Oldib-Verlag, 2012).

31 See Selwyn Tillett, *The Ballets of Arthur Sullivan* (Sir Arthur Sullivan Society: Coventry 1997), David Eden 'Sullivan and Imperialism' in the forthcoming book *Sullivan-Perspektiven* (edited by Albert Gier/Meinhard Saremba/Benedict Taylor; Essen: Oldib-Verlag, 2012) and Corissa Gould, 'Edward Elgar, *The Crown of India*, and the Image of the Empire', in *The Elgar Society Journal*, vol. 13, No. 1, March 2003, 25-35.

32 See Percy Young (ed.); *A Future for English Music* (Dobson: London, 1968).

London with Henry Irving in the lead, he would have been able to gain insight into the music as it was published posthumously in 1903 by Sullivan's secretary Wilfred Bendall. 'Chivalry', which is all too often associated with Elgar's music³³, is already preformed in its entirety in Sullivan's compositions. The introduction to *Ivanhoe* or a motive from the *Imperial March*, which Sullivan included into the introduction to the first act of *King Arthur*, offer chivalrous motives which might have been very inspiring for corresponding passages in Elgar's *Froissart*, *The Banner of St. George* or *Arthur* (see music example 3).³⁴

Music example 3

Sullivan: *Imperial March* (1893); also *King Arthur* (1895)



Elgar: *Arthur* (1923) (I) *King Arthur and Sir Lancelot*

Allegro moderato ♩ = 92

33 See Robert Anderson, *Elgar and Chivalry* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2002).

34 It is worth analysing in what way in the genre of concert overtures Sullivan's *Marmion* and *Macbeth* overtures influenced Elgar's first major orchestral piece *Froissart*.

Although both composers had gone to Bayreuth to see, among other operas, *Götterdämmerung*, their heroes sing different songs. When in *King Arthur* (Carr) and *Arthur* (Binyon) the ruler is transferred to his final resting place in Avalon, Elgar's music is much closer to Sullivan's than to Wagner's pompous funeral march (as there is altogether less Wagner in Elgar's music than is generally assumed). (See music example 4 overleaf).³⁵

Moments of crisis

Elgar and Sullivan reacted to different wars during their lifetime in a similar way. While Elgar experienced air raids during World War I (1914-1918) when he was in London, Sullivan only had second-hand knowledge of the Boer War in South Africa (1899-1902). Shortly after the Boer War had begun, Sullivan accepted the commission to set the song 'The Absent-Minded Beggar' by Rudyard Kipling to music.³⁶ The piece was intended for charity shows to raise money for the families whose fathers and sons had conscripted to battle. Sullivan composed his second *Te Deum*, the so-called *Boer War Te Deum*, for the anticipated end of the war. For the most part the war was decided militarily in favour of the British in March 1900 after the capitals of the Boer provinces had been conquered. But combat operations delayed the end of the war until 1902 because the Boers switched over to guerrilla tactics. As Sullivan had died in November 1900, his *Te Deum Laudamus* was not premiered until 1902. With his decision to set a religious standard text, Sullivan referred to a historic model, Händel's *Dettingen Te Deum*, written in 1743 after the victorious battle of King George II against the French army near Dettingen in Bavaria. Although both composers use the same text, Sullivan's setting not only differs deeply from the conceptual model but also from his own first so-called *Festival Te Deum*, written in 1872 for the recovery of the Prince of Wales after a severe illness. The *Te Deum Laudamus* from 1900 is a very restrained piece of only 15 minutes (Händel's rejoicing *Te Deum* is more than twice as long). After the first third subsequent to a fanfare with baroque gestures, Sullivan's music acquires the character of a funeral march (at 'When thou tookest upon thee to deliver man'). With a self-quotation which can be heard at the very beginning and in the last third of the *Te Deum*, the composer even refers to both warring parties: The main tune of 'Onward, Christian soldiers'³⁷ addresses both the Boers and the British, as both are Christians. Considering the seemingly martial style of the text one has to keep in mind that the second line is '... marching *as* to war' and not '*off* to war'.³⁸ The melody of the hymn steals in towards the end of the *Te Deum*, subdued, first after '... and we worship Thy Name, ever world without end'. After the eulogy 'Vouchsafe, O Lord, to keep us this day without sin' it gradually becomes clearer with the plea for God's mercy.

35 For using the music examples from Elgar's *Arthur* in No. 3 and 4 and for some information the author would like to thank Robert Kay, the editor of the Suite from *Arthur*, published in 2010 by Acuta Music, Hambrook [(c) 2010 Acuta Music (R.H. and E.C.Kay)].

36 See Stephen Turnbull, 'The Gestation of *The Absent-Minded Beggar*', in *Sir Arthur Sullivan Society Magazine*, No. 75, spring 2011, 6-11.

37 The lyrics for 'Onward Christian Soldier' were written in 1865 by the priest Sabine Baring-Gould (1834-1924). They refer to the second letter to Timothy (ch. 2, 3), 'Thou shalt endure hardness, as a good soldier of Jesus Christ'. Baring-Gould's text was written in the same years when William Booth founded the Salvation Army in London for which it became one of the most popular songs. Elgar sympathised with the Salvation Army and alludes to its music making in *Cockaigne*.

38 See Benedict Taylor, 'Musical aspects of Sullivan's Boer War *Te Deum*', in *Sir Arthur Sullivan Society Magazine*, No. 75, spring 2001, 11-16.

Sullivan: *King Arthur* (1895), Funeral March

Elgar: *Arthur* (1923)
(VI) The Death of Arthur

Lento

Music example 4

Elgar reacted with several works inspired by the Great War³⁹; most incisively in his op 80, *The Spirit of England*. The work might be thoroughly described as a Requiem for a 'lost generation' – on a par with Britten's *War Requiem* after World War II. The text for *The Spirit of England* by Laurence Binyon (1869-1943) was written independently from a musical setting.⁴⁰ Rudyard Kipling was enthusiastic about the third part, 'For the Fallen', for which Elgar had sometimes chosen dark musical colours. Kipling, who had lost a son in World War I, expressed the quintessence thus, 'If any question why we died / Tell them, because our fathers lied.'

Elgar's war music follows Sullivan's as he composed works for charity (*Carillon, Polonia*), music to keep up the morale at home (*The Fringes of the Fleet*) and to reflect the effects of the war (especially in 'Submarines' and 'For the Fallen'). It would be unrealistic to expect anti-war songs from them which were virtually unknown before 1939 and did not gain currency until the Vietnam War.⁴¹ Even so, neither Sullivan nor Elgar were jingoists who inspired people to go to war with flying colours (if anything, this upbraiding might apply to some early Verdi operas and at any rate to the World War I propaganda). The gloomy colours of Elgar's 'Submarines' or 'For the Fallen' speak for themselves.

Bards and optimists

Sullivan and Elgar are frequently regarded as two English composers who apparently succeeded each other without any relation. However, a closer look reveals that it was Sullivan who is the link between Purcell and the new rise of British music. Arthur Sullivan set the revival of English music going from the 1860s onwards and it was he who set new standards in quality of English orchestral music, vocal, choral and stage compositions which popularised high-quality music among a wider audience. Edward Elgar was one of those who developed this further. That soon after the turn of the century music criticism tattered Sullivan's fame⁴² enraged Elgar who was always aware of Sullivan's importance for the musical life in Britain and the refinement of comic and romantic

39 See Lewis Foreman (ed.), *Oh, My Horses! – Elgar and the Great War* (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2001), and Andrew Neill, 'The Great War (1914-1919): Elgar and the Creative Challenge', in *The Elgar Society Journal*, Vol. 11, No. 1, March 1999, 11-40.

40 Binyon sent his verses to Rudyard Kipling in 1915 shortly after Kipling's son had died in the war. Kipling told Binyon that he had first thought the verses would have been something 'old, very classical' – only later he discovered that they were new and highly topical.

41 What comes closest to it is the first act aria of the Major-General in *The Pirates of Penzance* (1879). Given the sophisticated elaborateness of Sullivan's score it would be naive to assume that this song is nothing more than a jolly 'Anything-you-can-sing-I-can-sing-faster'. Sullivan's setting is eminently anticipatory: As the words in the Major-General's song are fired by a military man like bullets from a machine gun (especially obvious in the 1915 recording by Herbert Workman) it is important to take into consideration that precursors of modern machine guns had already been in use during the American Civil War and that a lot of effort was put into the improvement and mass production of the new weapon which was also used by the British. The Major-General sings that he has 'learnt what progress has been made in modern gunnery'. With the machine gun-like way of projecting the words Sullivan characterises the hubris of superiors who have the modern means of warfare at their disposal but are blessed with the tactical sublimity of Neanderthals. This mental disposition can be found in military leaders from the Crimean War until the 20th century wars who rushed their soldiers into the muzzle flashes of their enemies. This Major-General is not a senile geezer but dynamite, the 19th century equivalent of a General Schwarzkopf.

42 See the literature mentioned in footnote 9.



Fig.5 Both composers cross their legs nonchalantly: Elgar posing for a photograph just as Sullivan for the portrait by Millais (here in a copy, printed in the frontispiece of the first Sullivan biography published in 1899).

opera and cantata. In his Birmingham talks he denounced this ‘shady side of musical criticism’.⁴³

Both artists fostered intensive relationships towards Germany.⁴⁴ Nevertheless they developed their individual styles which turned them into Britain’s most established composers of their time. If nothing else, their importance is proved by the fact that their voices have been kept for posterity in historic recording documents.⁴⁵ Elgar himself even conducted many recordings; Sullivan had unfortunately died before it was possible to record symphony orchestras in an acceptable quality. As Elgar mainly conducted his own works it is hardly probable that he had conducted music by Sullivan. However, almost two months after the senior composer had passed away, Elgar added Stanford’s cantata *The Last Post* (in memory of Sullivan) to the programme of the Worcestershire Philharmonic Society concert on 17 January 1901 and in addition Sullivan’s last two songs – ‘O swallow, swallow’ and ‘Tears, Idle Tears’ (both from Tennyson’s *The Princess*) – , which were sung by Charles Philips and, according to the papers, attached ‘a pathetic interest’. On the day of Sullivan’s funeral on 27 November 1900, Lady Elgar’s diary read: ‘Splendid Philc. Practise E. made little speech about Sir A. Sullivan.’ And when the Sheffield Choir, the then leading British amateur choir, went on its ‘Coronation year tour’ in 1911, Edward Elgar conducted *The Dream of Gerontius* in the USA and the other work representative of British music was Sullivan’s *The Golden Legend*, conducted by the longstanding director of the chorus, Elgar’s friend Henry Coward. Coward knew Sullivan well and tried to recruit him as conductor of the Sheffield Festival after he resigned at Leeds.

With their compositions and their commitment to the dissemination of high-quality music Sullivan and Elgar influenced significantly the taste and the aesthetic perception of broad levels of the population. Sullivan’s empathy in his musical treatment (*Ivanhoe*, *The Yeomen of the Guard*, *The Rose of Persia*)⁴⁶ is also an essential feature of Elgar’s music, for example in the *Enigma Variations*, the *Severn Suite*, *The Starlight Express* or *Cockaigne*, where he pays tribute to the common people, the sublimity and the benefaction of London. The output of both composers is characterised by a juxtaposition of seriousness and humour, both turn the concert hall into an imaginary operatic stage and champion the idea that artists should deliberately choose inspiration from the country’s own sources. Elgar’s aesthetics, which were revealed to the public in interviews and in *The Music Makers* (based on a text by Arthur William Edgar O’Shaughnessy), correspond

43 Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar - A Creative Life* (Oxford University Press, 1987). 479. See Elgar’s lecture on ‘Critics’ in Percy Young (ed.), *A Future for English Music* (London: Dobson, 1968).

44 Sullivan had studied in Leipzig, spoke German fluently and visited the country very often (see *Sullivan-Journal* No. 1). He composed songs with German texts and *The Golden Legend* basically goes back to a medieval text by Hartmann von Aue. Elgar had many German friends and spent his holidays in Germany quite often (see Peter Greaves, *In the Bavarian Highlands, Edward Elgar’s German Holidays in the 1890s*, (Rickmansworth: Elgar Editions, 2000). For his cantata *The Black Knight* he used Longfellow’s translation of a poem by Ludwig Uhland and he also composed *Songs from the Bavarian Highlands*.

45 On 5 October 1888 George E. Gouraud recorded Sullivan’s voice on an Edison phonograph. When Elgar recorded his second symphony with the London Symphony Orchestra on 15 July 1927 parts of the rehearsal were recorded.

46 See David Eden, ‘Die Humanität von *Ivanhoe*’, in *Sullivan-Journal* Nr. 3, July 2010, 14-18, and Meinhard Saremba, ‘Warum vertonte Sullivan *The Mikado* und *The Rose of Persia*’, in *Sullivan-Journal* Nr. 4, December 2010, 7-26.

to Sullivan's, who in his programmatic 1888 Birmingham speech 'About Music'⁴⁷ had already spoken about 'the boundless influence of music on human feeling', 'the mighty power it exercises over human passions' and 'the dynamical force which it has exerted in history'. Two years before the Great War, Elgar still seemed to be convinced of the important roles of artists for the Society and the profound impact of music, when he sets the following words to music in his cantata *The Music Makers* (1912):

We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamer of dreams, [...]
Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties,
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory,
One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample an empire down.

In this ode he makes clear how closely the works around the turn of the century are interwoven for him. He quotes from the *Enigma Variations*, *Gerontius* and *Sea Pictures*. According to him musicians, these 'dreamers of dreams' embrace the great motives of human existence – friendship, love and death – as 'movers and shakers'. In Elgar's view, artists, and especially musicians, have an important role in Society. Pieces of art can wring 'flame in another man's heart', as the text says. 'I have written out my soul in the concerto, Sym. II & the Ode & you know it', Elgar wrote to Alice Stuart-Wortley in 1912, 'in these three works I have shewn myself.'⁴⁸

In Sullivan's musical works we cannot find any comparable document of artistic self-depiction. Elgar, however, if not bothered by depression, shared the optimism of the 19th century that we can find in Sullivan. About the finale of his first symphony Elgar said he wanted to express a 'massive hope for the future'.

Like Sullivan Elgar had an appreciation of practicality and feasibility. Elgar's understanding of a composer's job, expressed in an interview four years after Sullivan's death, had its equivalent in Sullivan's remark about the bardic tradition of British music in his 1888 speech. 'I like to look on the composer's vocation as the old troubadours or bards did', Elgar emphasised in the *Strand Magazine* in 1904. 'I know that there are a lot of people who like to celebrate events with music. To these people I have given tunes. Is that wrong? Why should I write a fugue or something that won't appeal to any one, when the people yearn for things which can stir them.'

Both Sullivan and Elgar have proved that music which can stir people can also be on an immensely high level. To what extent Sullivan's progressiveness concerning his musical

47 This speech reveals how close some of Elgar's attitudes are to Sullivan's. The full text can be found in Arthur Lawrence's Sullivan biography (1899), 261 – 287, and in Meinhard Saremba, *Arthur Sullivan*, Wilhelmshaven 1993, and *Sullivan-Journal* Nr. 1.

48 Letter from Elgar to Alice Stuart-Wortley, 29 August, 1912, EBM letter 7806.

intertextuality and metatextuality or his compositional technique – for example in the subtlety of his instrumentation, the naturalness of his vocal writing or the avant-garde style of the prologue to *The Golden Legend*⁴⁹ – have inspired the transparency and the modern aspects of Elgar's music⁵⁰ merits further research and analysis.

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49 See Benedict Taylor, 'Die musikalische Struktur von *The Golden Legend*' in *Sullivan-Journal* Nr. 5, July 2011, 24-50, and his contributions on Sullivan's orchestral music and *The Golden Legend* in English in the forthcoming book *Sullivan-Perspektiven* (edited by Albert Gier/Meinhard Saremba/Benedict Taylor; Essen: Oldib-Verlag, 2012), James Brooks Kuykendall, 'Sullivan, der Musikdramatiker', in Ulrich Tadday (ed.), *Arthur Sullivan* (München: edition text + kritik, 2011), 69-84, and especially the contributions by Richard Silverman, James Brooks Kuykendall and Martin Yates in David Eden/Meinhard Saremba (eds.), *The Cambridge Companion to Gilbert and Sullivan* (Cambridge University Press, 2009).

50 See J.P.E. Harper-Scott, *Edward Elgar, Modernist* (Cambridge University Press: 2006).

The Empire Bites Back: Reflections on Elgar's Imperial Masque of 1912

Andrew Neill

In 1957, my school celebrated the independence of the Gold Coast that became at 'midnight's hour' the new republic of Ghana. Young as I was I felt unable to understand why we (my country) were giving away something we 'owned' and which seemed so valuable. The passage of time has shone light on my ignorance and fifty-five years later most British colonies have followed Ghana which itself was preceded by India ten years before. Contemporary attitudes to Empire vary whether or not one would have been a coloniser or colonised but in my lifetime I have seen pride in a map of the world with large areas painted pink change to a general embarrassment that our little country acquired an Empire at all. We have I hope by now settled into a position where we can rationalise about this period of history with a degree of objectivity. This is essential if we are to listen to works such as Elgar's *Caractacus* and *The Crown of India*. It is not necessary to believe that Empire was either 'a good thing' or a 'bad thing' but it is necessary to accept that most of our predecessors believed in the Empire and in the concept of 'Empire'.

In an important commentary from 2007 Dr. Nalini Ghuman wrote: 'The masque is a fascinating work of imperialism: historically illuminating and often musically rich, it is nevertheless a profoundly embarrassing piece – a significant contribution to the orientalised India of the English imagination.'¹ Earlier in the same paragraph Miss Ghuman rightly links *The Crown of India* with the great novel of the Raj, Rudyard Kipling's *Kim* of 1901 pointing out that both 'can be understood to be central to the high point of the Raj and in some ways to represent it.'²

No doubt it depends on who you are and the view you take of an 'imperial work' such as *The Crown of India* and whether or not you agree with the assertion that the piece is 'profoundly embarrassing'. As Jerrold Northrop Moore puts it, *The Crown of India* is 'the most "occasional" of larger works – on a subject whose once popular appeal has suffered a sea-change in the ensuing century'. It is this sea-change that explains that lack of interest in the music that Miss Ghuman rightly calls rich. For many years since the independence of Ghana in 1957 the negatives of 'Empire' alongside slavery have been taught in schools without much balance. True 'one man's freedom fighter is another's terrorist' but the complexity of empire should have prevented such a one-sided picture becoming the accepted version of truth which, to some extent, it has. No doubt this compensated for the 'Boy's Own' and paternalistic images with which I grew up, but the art of Empire should not only be examined in context but on its merits too. The centenary of the music

1 Nalini Ghuman, *Elgar and the British Raj: Can the Mughals March?* in Byron Adams (ed.), *Edward Elgar and his world* (Princeton University Press, 2007), 276.

2 Nalini Ghuman, *ibid*, 276.

enables us all to take a step back and consider its place within the canon of Elgar's music and either reassure ourselves that the music is worthy of our interest or pass it by as an awkward reminder of a time which is in itself 'profoundly embarrassing'.

As we know, Elgar could work quickly and effectively if it was necessary; and this was the case early in January 1912 when he received the commission to compose music that would form part of an entertainment in the Coliseum Theatre in St. Martin's Lane. In circumstances such as these raiding old sketch books and even other music was essential, as is clear by his use of a phrase from *In Smyrna* of 1905 and its transposition into the one big piece for soprano in *The Crown of India*, 'Hail, Immemorial Ind!'. Smyrna, modern day Izmir, was the farthest east Elgar travelled and his memories of camel trains, dervishes, mosques and new smells no doubt caused him to think back to the work he composed immediately after his 1905 Mediterranean cruise and his visit to Turkey: it would *do* for India! A sketch, entitled 'The sinful youth of Dan' was used for the opening of the Masque. So the ghost of a bulldog who lived beside the River Wye found itself representing a distant exotic land and even the mighty Ganges itself!

It is easy to imagine Elgar, 100 years ago, absorbed by the new commission from Sir Oswald Stoll to compose what turned out to be a substantial score. This was one of his less complicated commissions; one that paid well and which was largely put aside once the run of shows at the Coliseum finished. This may be so but, as is so often the case with lesser-known music by Elgar, it turns out to be of greater interest and quality than many might have realised. Of course Elgar treated the music in a somewhat off-hand way; '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 and old bookshops...'. Nevertheless, that he took some of the music and turned it into an orchestral suite, which he recorded in 1930, shows that he was not as disinterested as might have been imagined. There was also sufficient enthusiasm for the music at the time for The Black Diamonds Band to record *The Crown of India March* in 1912 and the baritone Harry Dearth (St. George in the production) 'The Rule of England' the same year. The recording was never issued.

In a letter to Alfred Littleton of Novello on 8 January Elgar told him that 'The Masque is going to be very gorgeous & patriotic – Indian Durbar – & will last only 30 mins'. This timing was optimistic; the music alone on the Chandos recording lasts 45 minutes. However, before looking at *The Crown of India* production in any detail it is necessary to look at the cultural, political and royal issues which formed the background not only to Stoll's commission but to the Royal visit to India at the end of 1911.

Imperial Britain and its hold over the Raj may seem anomalous to us today as it certainly does to most Indians (if indeed they consider it at all). The three Durbars organised by the British over 34 years were, a means of demonstrating power as well as the close interwoven relationship that existed between the Raj and much of the Indian elite. Already, by the time, of the royal visit in 1911 the cracks were beginning to show in the British hold over India. That these cracks were not apparent to the British public is demonstrated by the latter's fascination with the royal visit to India of November 1911. This encouraged Stoll to try and find a means of celebrating the event through a representation of Britain's view of what it thought India was.

A Durbar is or was a public audience given by a native prince. No prince, though, could have imagined the scale of the Durbars organised by their British masters that would have astonished most of the citizens of this country, too. The first British Durbar was held in 1877 to celebrate the proclamation, the previous year, of Queen Victoria as Empress. The event was presided over by the Viceroy, the Earl of Lytton.

By the time King Edward VII became Emperor in 1901 Lord Curzon, a natural showman, was Viceroy and it was he who arranged in every detail the second Durbar which celebrated the new Emperor's accession. This, in many ways the most lavish of the three Durbars, took place in 1903 the climax being the arrival of Curzon with his American wife seated upon an elephant. There was wide disappointment that the new Emperor did not attend. King Edward, who had little interest in the Empire, was represented by the Duke of Connaught.

Two years later, plans were made for the visit of the new Prince and Princess of Wales (the future King George and Queen Mary) to India; again much to the disappointment of many Indians who had hoped the King-Emperor would have made the journey himself. The Royal couple arrived in Bombay on 9 November 1905 and were met by Curzon, who had resigned as Viceroy a few months earlier as a result of his inability to see eye-to-eye with Kitchener, the new C-in-C India, and because of his disastrous partitioning of Bengal; a gift to Indian Nationalists. Curzon's greatest legacy was his devotion 'to Indian archaeology, neglected then by Indians and Britons alike. [It was Curzon] who restored the Taj Mahal [in Agra] to its original perfection, cherished the half-buried glories of Fatehpur Sikri and the exquisite Pearl Mosque in the fort at Lahore.' It was Curzon who laid down the structure for the future management of Indian antiquities and 'gave to the British Raj in India, just in time, a scholarly distinction that would remain among the more honourable imperial legacies.'³

The tour of India undertaken by the Prince and Princess was thorough and they stayed until 19 March 1906 visiting cities as far apart as Lahore and Madras as well as travelling to Burma. The trip gave the future king a knowledge and understanding of India and prepared him for the Imperial visit seven years later, an event which was driven by the new King himself who initially wanted to crown himself Emperor in Delhi. After much discussion and exchanges between Lord Hardinge, the Viceroy, and the Asquith Government the terms of the visit was agreed with the proviso that the King would *not* crown himself but 'appear wearing his crown and receive the homage of the Princes and rulers seated upon his throne.' It was then pointed out that 'no man was entitled in law to remove the crown from out of the kingdom'.⁴ A new crown, the Imperial Crown, was then made specifically for this event.

We can obtain an idea of the scale of the 1911 Durbar from a recently published book *A Glimpse of Empire* by Jessica Douglas-Home (now Lady Leach). This describes the visit of Lady Leach's grandmother, Lilah Wingfield, to the Durbar who kept detailed notes of her visit. Arriving in Delhi after a journey across the country from Bombay Miss Wingfield was housed in the Tented City that had been built on the plain a few miles north of Delhi.

'The [Tented] City had been assembled with unparalleled speed. Much of the site was on the grounds of the 1877 and 1903 Durbars but it was only in July that the survey had been completed and the twenty-five square miles staked out for the encampment to occupy. The rough swamp marshland, which in summer had been parched and barren desert, had been levelled and seeded to create a smooth grassed plain. ... The narrow gauge railway, with its six-platformed terminal and its eighteen little satellite stations, had opened as recently as 10 November. Along this, engines borrowed from military reserves ferried the encampments' passengers on tracks laid by Sappers. [By the end of] November, water pipes and electric light lines, farms, grain stores, a hospital, a post office and numerous shops were in place. Nine miles of metalled roads and thirty miles of tracks had been laid on foundation stones carried to the site on their heads by native women. ...

3 James Morris, *Farewell the Trumpets* (London, The Folio Society, 1992), 85.

4 Harold Nicolson, *King George the Fifth* (London, Constable & Co Ltd, 1952), 169.

No less than a quarter of a million people would be housed under canvas and provided with all the necessities, as well as most of the luxuries of modern life in the largest and most sophisticated encampment ever assembled.⁵

The camp was 'a carefully designed canvas town, intersected by broad smooth roads with familiar signposts such as "The Mall", "Princes Road" and "King's Way", where all the principalities and powers of India were assembled into a single place – the Viceroy and his council, lieutenant-governors and chief commissioners, Hindi and Muslim princes, ruling chiefs, men from the plains, men from across the border, from Bombay to Calcutta from Peshawar to Madras, Sultans from Arabia and the regions near Aden – all with their own retinues and troops.'⁶

Another witness, 18 year-old Joyce Hooper, described what she saw in a letter to her aunt: 'There was this huge amphitheatre filled with roughly 100,000 people of which 50,000 were troops, but in spite of this mass of people the two central figures were the King and Queen sitting in their robes and the King in his crown in the shamiana (a pavilion), while all the ruling chiefs of India, the Governors of the Provinces made their obeisance to him. The colours were glorious, the Chiefs were dressed in gold and jewels, nearly every man in the place wore uniform, the troops were a mass of red. While in the background as a sort of setting to the whole thing was the native populace, in different coloured turbans so that they looked like great beds of flowers.'⁷

The Emperor and Empress travelled by train from Bombay to Delhi and were met at Sha Jihan's Red Fort by Lord Hardinge and three of the grandest princes including the elderly Maharana of Udaipur who refused to participate in the Durbar ceremony. He felt unable to pay homage to a foreigner and quietly returned home following his meeting with the King. After the ceremonies at and in The Red Fort the royal procession left by the Delhi Gate – the King riding a small rather insignificant horse which had been selected because of the king's uncertainty with the animals. Via the Chandni Chauk the procession wound its way to the ridge over-looking the Tented City.

The Durbar ceremony took place on 12 December; distinguished guests such as Lilah Wingfield being escorted to the semi-circular grandstand with a good view of the arena. 'At 11.30 am the sound of booming guns in the distance signalled that the King had left his camp. First to enter the arena were heralds and trumpeters on white horses, and massed bands playing Handel's "See, the Conquering Hero Comes"'. These were followed by 800 elderly men of significant bearing – veterans of the Indian Mutiny, greeted by a burst of cheering as they took their seats.⁸ The Viceroy and his retinue arrived next and the Emperor and Empress arrived to a 101 gun salute. Both wore their coronation robes from the Westminster Abbey ceremony seven months earlier. Escorted by ten young princes the Imperial couple made their way to the shamiana. First the Colonial officials paid homage and then 'the Durbar sprang into life, as one by one the princes and ruling chiefs, resplendent in gorgeous clothing and priceless jewels, made obeisance to their Emperor'.⁹ It began well with the Nizam of Hyderabad but, following him, the Gaekwar of Baroda turned his back on the royal couple after a cursory bow rather than walking backwards the regulation seven steps.

After the homage of the princes, the Emperor and Empress made their way to the platform built within the Durbar pavilion from which Herald proclaimed in English and Urdu the Coronation

5 Jessica Douglas-Home, *A Glimpse of Empire* (Wilby, Michael Russell, 2011), 29.

6 Douglas-Home, *ibid*, 33.

7 Joyce Hooper: letter to her Aunt, Sybil Montefiore-Bruce (private collection).

8 Douglas-Home, *ibid*, 58.

9 Douglas-Home, *ibid*, 60.

of the Emperor. Returning to the shamiana the King announced the annulment of the partition of Bengal and the return of the capital from Calcutta to Delhi. The next day the royal party attended a fête and garden party at the Red Fort. At one stage they changed back into their coronation robes and, accompanied by pages, they seated themselves on a marble Balcony, where the Moghul emperors of old had received the acclamation of their subjects. A vast crowd acclaimed the royal couple as a procession passed below.¹⁰

On 14 December there was a military review and an interminable investiture in the evening and on 15th the Emperor laid the foundation stone for the new Capital before leaving Delhi on 16 December. This Durbar was an enormous event. It may have lacked the glamour of Curzon's Durbar but was considerably larger and a tribute to detailed planning and organisation. The London press was full of it and it is not surprising that the event attracted the attention of Oswald Stoll. Never one to hesitate about going to the top, Stoll wrote to Elgar early in January 1912 inviting the composer to write the music for an 'Imperial Masque'. Stoll's timing was spot-on for the Elgars had only moved into the large and expensive to run Severn House on 1 January.

Elgar was challenged from the outset by the overt imperial sentiments and structure proposed by the librettist Henry Hamilton, a playwright of little distinction. Bernard Shaw, as a critic, mercilessly lampooned Hamilton's work and from what he proposed for *The Crown of India* we can see why. As Robert Anderson points out Hamilton 'concentrated on the King-Emperor's pronouncement that the Indian capital should henceforth be Delhi, rather than Calcutta [whilst Elgar noted] '... There is *far too much* of this political business.'¹¹

The production was an enormous success, the *Daily Telegraph's* headline telling of a 'Gorgeous Spectacle' and going on to state that 'the warmest praises must go to Mr. Percy Anderson, who has designed the costumes and scenery – the latter painted by Mr. Philip Howden – and contrived for the two tableaux of the masque a colour-scheme of rare opulence and splendour.'¹² How tastes have changed! The *Daily Telegraph's* critic referred to Hamilton's 'smoothly-flowing verse'!

Elgar insisted on cutting much of the text and after the first performance he travelled to see Oswald Stoll at his home in Putney to arrange further cuts. Nevertheless Elgar and we are forced to live with Hamilton and his idea of the invented argument between the Cities of Calcutta and Delhi as they made their case to mother India as to which should be the new Capital. Actresses represented the two Cities and the distinguished actress Nancy Price took the central role of India. Price, who married a grand-son of Jenny Lind, was born in Kinver, Worcestershire, in 1880. She joined the Theatre Royal Birmingham, coincidentally on the same day as Henry Ainley who would record *Carillon* with Elgar in 1915. Other actors and actresses represented Agra, Benares (Varanasi), Mogul Emperors, John Company (the colloquial name for the East India Company), St. George, The King-Emperor, The Queen-Empress and Lotus, a Herald. The first rehearsal was on 26 February. Elgar had worked quickly and his substantial score was ready for the first performance on 11 March, Elgar conducting twice a day for the first two weeks before handing over to the Music Director of the Coliseum, Alfred Dove.

The Crown of India was positioned within a series of variety acts and never has the word 'variety' been more apt! The show began with an orchestral overture and there followed 'gymnastic

10 A series of photographs of the Durbar, some previously unpublished, is to be found at the conclusion of this essay.

11 Robert Anderson, Foreword to *The Crown of India* (London, Elgar Society Complete Edition, 2004), p. vii.

12 The Daily Telegraph, Tuesday March 12 1912.

equilibrists', 'Dramatic and Burlesque impressions', a ventriloquist, a comedian, a solo harpist, a one-act play by J M Barrie, *The Twelve Pound Note* and a 'Neapolitan Chanteuse' who began the second half just before *The Crown of India*. During the interval Wagner's Overture to *Tannhäuser* was played and, after Elgar's masque, a one-act pantomime took the stage before, in what was the highlight of the evening for many, the Bioscope showed film of current events.

Understandably there are no diary entries from either Alice or Edward during January but on 1 February Alice records a visit of Edward to Cambridge to conduct a concert during which, as she put it, he 'had to conduct Stanford's Symphony'! She notes that Edward was 'deep in his music for the Masque' the following day. At this time Elgar met with Hugh Blair, who arranged the piano score, and travelled to Leeds to conduct another concert. Alice and Edward visited Oswald Stoll at his home in Putney on 10 February and rehearsed and conducted a Brahms and Schumann concert with the LSO at Queen's Hall the following day.

Over the next few days Elgar was deep in his music before attending the first rehearsal at the Coliseum, although it is clear he had not yet completed the finale. As he was working on the score, Elgar met frequently with good friends such as the Speyers as well as Hugh Blair and Percy Anderson, the set designer. Hans Richter and his wife were in London for the wedding of their daughter, and Elgar travelled to Bournemouth to conduct another concert only two days before the Masque's first night on 11 March. His health was frail too, Nancy Price recalling that 'he gave too generously of himself and made too heavy a demand on his physical strength. Once, when he was utterly exhausted during a rehearsal he allowed me to take his place and conduct a rehearsal.' It would have seemed worthwhile to Elgar from the reaction of the audience and the press which was largely enthusiastic, the *Daily Telegraph's* critic summarising the scenes in detail and praising Elgar's sympathetic music under the general title 'Gorgeous Spectacle'.

'The Throne' on 'Their' way to the Durbar



On 13 March the Elgars took the Orchestra to lunch at Gatti's restaurant accompanied by May Grafton and the Musical Director of the Coliseum, Alfred Dove, and his wife. Toasts were drunk, Alice noting the comment 'We are the proudest orchestra in London.' Elgar was pre-occupied with the need to agree further cuts to the text over the next few days but continued to conduct twice daily until 23 March. Alice records that last day: 'E rather tired – Most enthusiastic reception of him & Masque – Very crowded – Alice took him there & back in afternoon.¹³ Could not get in herself. E. A. C & May in Evening. Beautiful – Tremendous enthusiasm & recalls. At last E. appeared alone – Roars of delight – a beautiful memory.' Both Alice and Edward Elgar attended one further performance on 26 March (as members of the audience) and then it was back to a form of normality with Elgar conducting his Second Symphony the following evening and becoming pre-occupied, once more, with his health.

So what did this Masque say to the British for whom it was written? The average man and woman in the street still believed in the philosophy espoused by Arnold White in *Efficiency and Empire* of 1900, even if the war in South Africa had exposed its essential flaws:

The British Empire is the greatest the world has ever seen, and being free from militarism is safe against decay.
The British Army, though small, can do anything and go anywhere.
One Englishman can beat two foreigners.
We are the most enlightened people on the face of the earth.

This reinforced the British view of the world which included a paternalistic control over India, their understanding that the King-Emperor really did rule over a quarter of the globe and that, on the whole, this rule was benign and appreciated by most of the King's subjects. In India this control was sustained through the careful management of the Princes, most of whom seemed to revel in British awards and titles which were given in return for a large amount of autonomy.¹⁴ Britain's control over India would not have worked without this relationship being nurtured and developed. It was largely the middle class and intellectuals who articulated the case for independence and, twenty years after the Coliseum performances, Gandhi was in London and in 1947 'the jewel in the Crown' was handed to the Indians.

It is Hamilton's script and the tenor of the production that inhabit a different world to ours. However, this does not justify relinquishing Elgar's music to a hidden shelf at the back of a cupboard. We are, surely, mature enough now to accept the fact that the Empire existed whether or not we care to consider it beyond a cursory thought. Although the Empire may have come about largely through trade and war (often against the French) rather than a deliberate policy of acquisition, by the time Queen Victoria became Empress attitudes had changed, as personified by Acworth's words at the end of *Caractacus*. It is not difficult to believe that these summarise how the average Briton felt about Empire in 1898 and what they felt to be its inherent philanthropy:

And ever your dominion
From age to age shall grow
O'er peoples undiscover'd
In lands we cannot know;

13 This was almost certainly Alice Stuart-Wortley, who attended a number of performances.

14 The brilliant film *The Chess Players* (1977) directed by Satyajit Ray gives an Indian view of the annexation of the Oudh in 1856 by British forces led by General Outram (played by Richard Attenborough). Outram is, of course, mentioned in Hamilton's script.

And where the flag of Britain
Its triple crosses rears,
No slave shall be for subject
No trophy wet with tears;
But folk shall bless the banner,
And bless the crosses twin'd
That bear the gift of freedom
On every blowing wind;

In Hamilton's hands, notably in 'The Rule of England', these sentiments become more aggressive and assertive, perhaps even reflecting an unsaid insecurity. Elgar's music is certainly better than the words deserve. The philanthropy is also lost:

Wherever England flies her flag
O'er what her sword hath won,
Her claim to keep, to rule, to reap,
She rests on duty done.
Her title strong, no tyrant brag
Of frowning fort, nor fleet,
But Right upheld and rancour quelled,
And Wrong beneath her feet.

Hamilton tries for a loftier image when he writes the argument between Calcutta and Delhi. The latter is made to invoke the support of four of the greatest Moghul Emperors from the past (Akbar, Jehangir, Sha Jihan and Aurangzeb) as she makes her case for becoming the nation's capital. It is Elgar who makes something of this in the 'March of the Mogul Emperors' follows. As Dr. Ghuman points out this is really a polonaise that seems to add to the image we have of these great men as they take centre stage. The March includes some of Elgar's most extravagant orchestration.

In many ways *The Crown of India* reflected the events in Delhi. The rule of the King-Emperor is celebrated and everyone involved seems to be happy in kneeling before him. It was colourful and exotic and, as in Delhi, drew the crowds. If it was all an illusion then it was a harmless one. Elgar manages to succeed in doing what he was asked to do. He avoids clichés and provides, perhaps surprisingly, music of subtlety in contrast to the three or four set pieces. This quality was not good enough to survive the re-appraisal of Empire after World War II most particularly the perceived need to find a means of apologising for an accident of history. *The Crown of India* was therefore assigned, with much of our imperial history, to the bottom drawer. Perhaps Elgar was not surprised, for in May 1912 he began serious work on *The Music Makers*, setting two verses, one ending 'And three with a new song's measure can trample a kingdom down' and the other 'For each age is a dream that is dying, or one that is coming to birth.' Gandhi would have agreed!

It must be hoped that sufficient time has now elapsed to enable us to look back objectively to events that occurred long ago in our name. If this is so then it is to the good for *The Crown of India* supports the contention of Raymond Williams who suggests that 'from at least the mid-nineteenth century, and with important instances earlier, there was this larger context [the relationship between England and the colonies, whose effects on the English imagination 'have gone deeper than can easily be traced'] within which every idea and every image was consciously and unconsciously affected'.¹⁵ If we forget that then the Empire was nothing more than a vehicle for exploitation of

15 Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (New York; Oxford University Press 1973) 165. Quoted by Edward W. Said in his *Culture and Imperialism* (London, Vintage), 98.

people and resources. In his own way Elgar shows us another side to the short-lived edifice.

Postscript

In a charming Indian way some of the Imperial statues in the centre of Delhi were not destroyed after Independence but moved to a field adjacent to the Coronation site. The statues include a magnificent representation of King George – truly an Imperial figure! A plaque on a column records the events and the column commemorates the place where King George V proclaimed himself Emperor.

When in India last year I asked three or four what they felt was the legacy of the Raj. Their replies can be summarised as: democracy, the rule of law, the concept of ‘India’ rather than a continent of disparate states, ‘the finest collection of Government Buildings in the world’ (those designed by Lutyens and Baker), respect for another’s religion, the railways and, of course, cricket.

Andrew Neill is a Vice-President and former Chairman of the Elgar Society.



The King and Queen arrive in Delhi



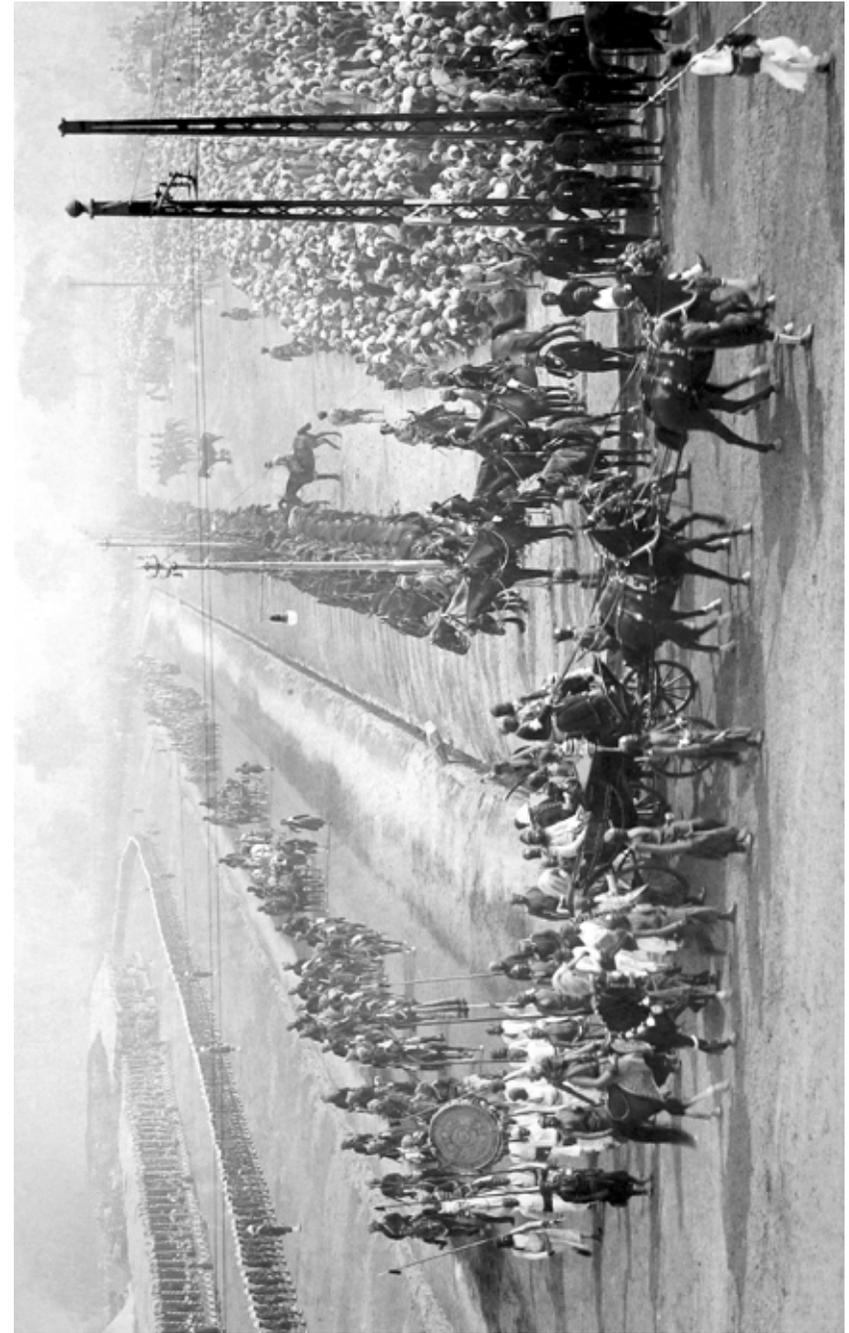
Above: The Tented City



Left: A triumphal arch in the tented city



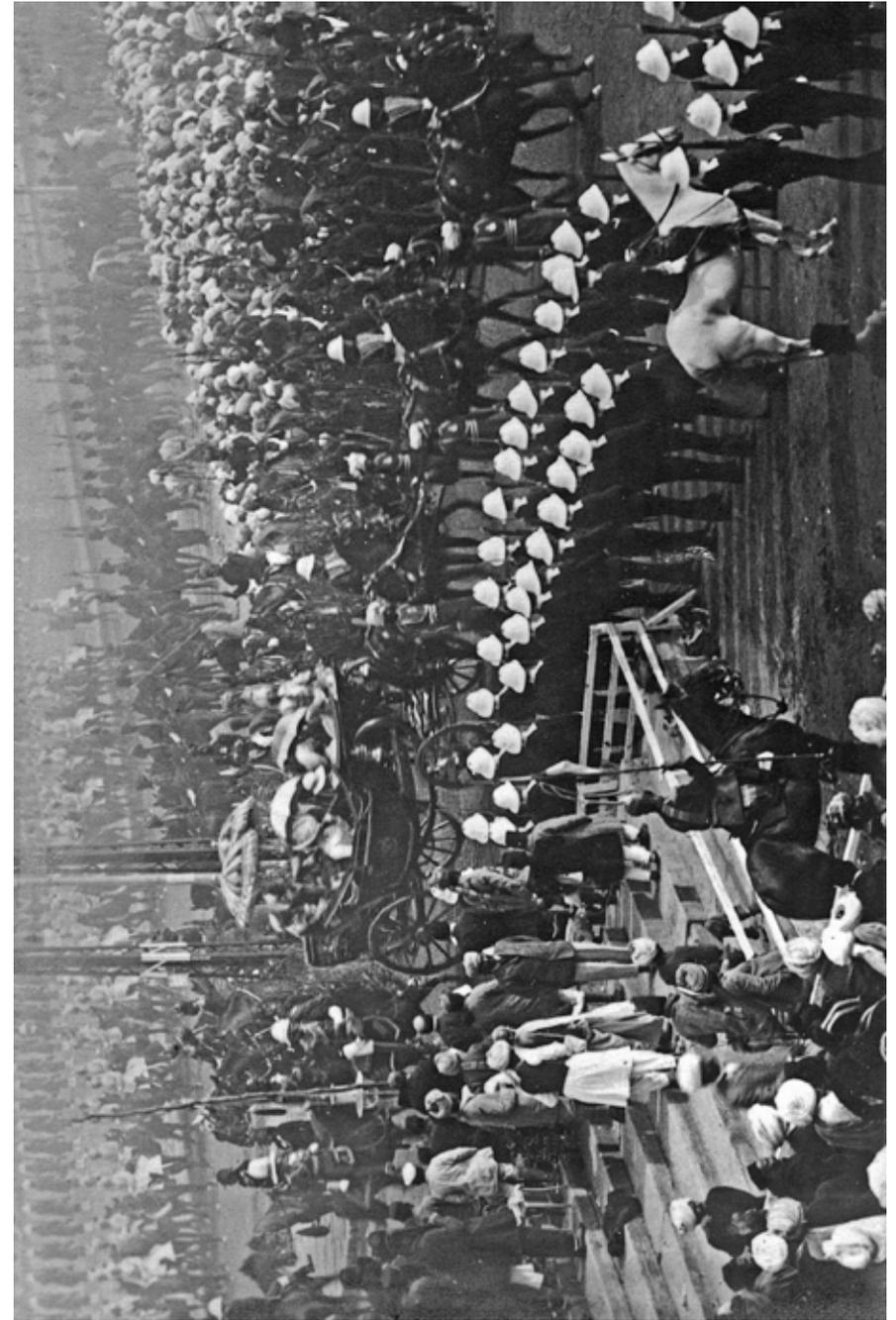
Above: Awaiting the King and Queen outside the Red Fort
Below: A Maharajah's carriage



Maharajahs arrive at the Durbar



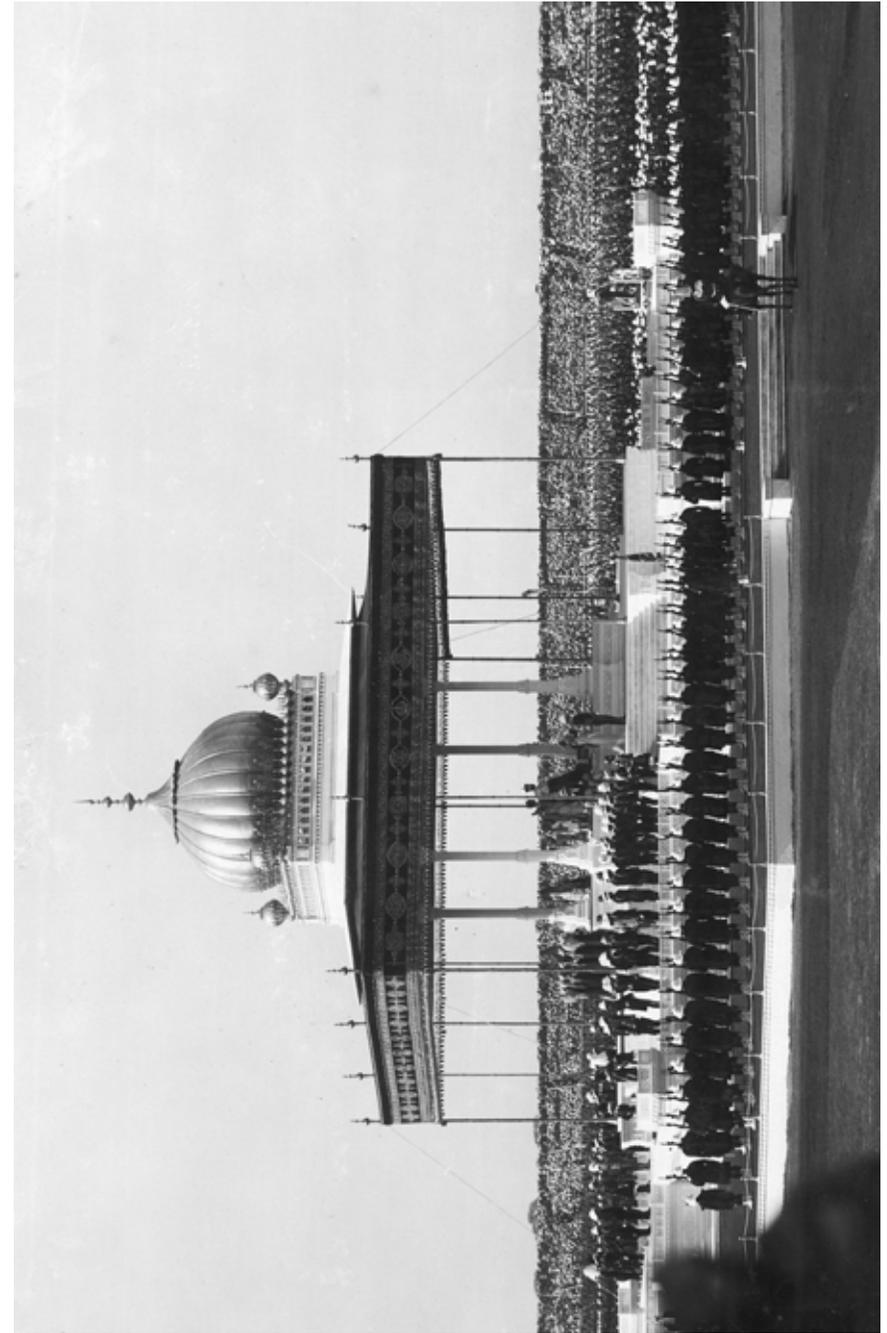
The King leaves the Red Fort



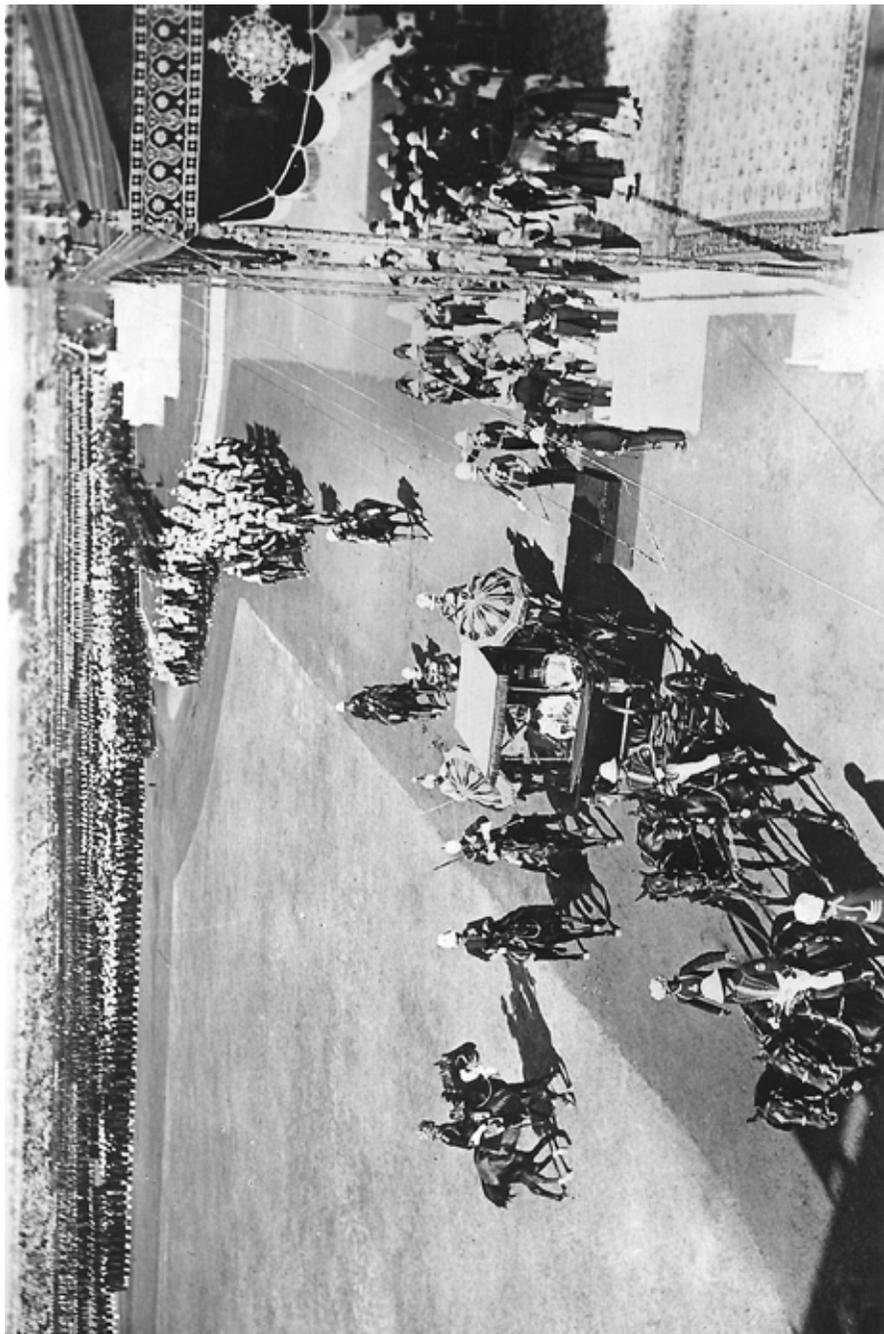
The Queen arrives at the Durbar



The King-Emperor and Queen-Empress beneath the shamiana



The King and Queen beneath the canopy of the pavilion



The King-Emperor and Queen-Empress leave the Durbār



Top left: The King-Emperor and Queen-Empress on the marble balcony of the Red Fort. Top right: 100 years later: the statue of the King-Emperor removed from the centre of Delhi. Below: 100 years later: the column marking the site of the 'crowning' of the King-Emperor.



‘... you are on the Golden Stair’: Elgar and Elizabeth Lynn Linton

Martin Bird

The writer Elizabeth (Eliza) Lynn Linton was born in 1822, the youngest child of the Rev. James Lynn, vicar of Crosthwaite, and his first wife, Charlotte, daughter of the Bishop of Carlisle. Hers is not the first name to spring to mind when asked to list early enthusiasts for Elgar and his music, but her belief in his genius had a fervency that, in the 1890s, was perhaps exceeded only by that of Alice. That she would have heard of him at all was unlikely, and their coming together the result of an unexpected twist of fate.

Eliza Lynn had been determined to achieve fame as a writer, and at the age of 23 had moved to London in pursuance of that aim. Her first novel was published in 1847, and in 1848 she joined the staff of the *Morning Chronicle* as the first salaried woman journalist in England. She also wrote for the *Queen*, and the *Saturday Review*. She counted Thomas Hardy and Charles Dickens among her many and diverse friends and admirers, and was an early pioneer of women’s suffrage.

In 1858 she married the engraver, poet, and political reformer William James Linton (1812-1897), a widower. The marriage was a disaster and the couple separated in 1864, though never divorced. In 1867 William moved to the United States.

Despite her concern to succeed as a novelist, it was Linton’s sensational articles in the conservative and prestigious *Saturday Review* in the late 1860s and the 1870s that made her reputation in Victorian England. Taking on the role of critic of women, the once-impassioned defender of women’s rights became its most ardent opponent. She damned the ‘shrieking sisterhood’ (*Saturday Review*, 12 May 1870) who sought the right to vote, even as she criticized the ‘modern mother’ (*Saturday Review*, 29 Feb 1868) whose aspirations for ladyhood caused her to neglect her maternal duties. Her most controversial article was ‘The girl of the period’, published on 14 March 1868, in which Linton shockingly accused young women who flirted and wore make-up of envying and imitating the *demi-monde*. Called ‘perhaps the most sensational middle article the *Saturday Review* ever published’, this anonymous essay was soon identified as authored by Linton, and thereafter she was usually described with reference to it.¹

Move to Malvern

Eliza lived in London in a flat in Queen Anne’s Mansions – the same block in which the Elgars had a flat in 1910/11 – but in the winter of 1894/5 was taken ill with a ‘severe and almost fatal attack of

1 Nancy Fix Anderson, ‘Linton, Elizabeth Lynn (1822-1898)’, *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography*, Oxford University Press, 2004 [http://www.oxforddnb.com/view/article/16742, accessed 8 Feb 2012].

bronchitis’², and decided to move to the country for the sake of her health.

Mrs. Lynn Linton desires to express her regret at not being able to see her friends before leaving London for the spring and summer. She is changing her residence, and is no longer to be found at Queen Anne’s-mansions.³

Her chosen place of convalescence was Malvern, possibly because a London friend, the barrister and author George Somes Layard, had moved there recently.

Mrs. Lynn Linton has given up her house in Queen Anne’s-mansions, and for the present is to be heard of at Malvern House, Great Malvern.⁴

Malvern House was in Abbey Road, a few hundred yards from the Layards. In the late summer of 1895 she was in Cornwall and in the autumn in Lincolnshire, but by the end of the year she was permanently established back in Malvern at Brougham House, St. James’s Road.

I have taken a pretty little house, which I have furnished and made home, and here I am with my books, two servants, a garden, a greenhouse, a vine, a table for the birds, domestic worries of coals and oil that go as if they were snow that melts or water that runs away, and good health in this lovely air and perfect quiet ... I can speak of Malvern air as of a tonic that works wonders for the debilitated ... I am as well as I ever was in my life, and have not had one single gliff of cold, and I do not always wear a respirator. ‘Senile cough’ and ‘chronic bronchitis’ are unknown here ...⁵

She described her new life in a letter to her friend Lady Elizabeth Wardle.

Time passes with me like a silent, swiftly running stream – not sluggish and not stagnant, but making no great stir. Each day full of something, but each day the very twin of its brother ... I live here the quietest life you can imagine. On the fine days I go out for a walk, and if I have calls to make, I make them and find the ladies out too. A great many people have called on me, and I see them; but it is a case of Taffy went to my house, and I went to Taffy’s, and neither was at home. There are several whom I have not seen, and I do not know when I shall. The society here seems mainly given up to afternoons. There are very few dinners and no luncheons, but afternoon teas answer all the purposes of hospitality, and make a meeting-place for friends. I like my life here very much. It is not exactly an indolent one, yet I shrink from disturbing its smooth and even tenor.⁶

Meeting the Elgars

Brougham House was within easy reach of the Elgars at Forli, and the presence of a famous author in their midst did not go unnoticed: indeed it is safe to assume that Alice had learned of Mrs.

2 George Somes Layard, *Mrs. Lynn Linton, Her Life, Letters, and Opinions* (London: Methuen & Co., 1901, 316).

3 *Morning Post*, 24 April 1895.

4 *Evening Telegraph*, 6 May 1895.

5 Letter from Elizabeth Lynn Linton to the Hon. Mrs. Nash, 1 January 1896, published in George Somes Layard, *Mrs. Lynn Linton, Her Life, Letters, and Opinions* (London: Methuen & Co., 1901, 318).

6 Letter from Elizabeth Lynn Linton to Lady Elizabeth Wardle, 9 February 1896 (*ibid.*, 320-321).

Linton's arrival from the Layards. The Elgars had got to know George and Eleanor Layard in 1895 when meetings of Malvern's Singing Society were held at their home in Orchard Road, Malvern. Alice was a great one for 'afternoonities', and an old hand at playing 'Taffy', and she had invited Mrs. Linton to visit only a few days before the above letter was written. Elizabeth replied:

Dear Mrs Elgar,
Your invitation is exceedingly kind & just as tempting: but I am not sure that I can take advantage of it. If I can (I have a friend in Malvern who leaves tomorrow & may claim me) I will, & if I do not appear you will understand that I am due elsewhere. I think it very sweet & kind of you to ask me. I love music, as an ignoramus whose taste has been a little wee bit educated, but I am as ignorant as an owl of all that makes a musician – only Love is not always necessarily the product of knowledge!

With kind regards most sincerely yours
E. Lynn Linton⁷

But at least contact had been made, and on the 14th: 'A. to call on Mrs. L. Linton.'⁸; and the following day: 'Mrs. L. Linton came here, E. & A. took her home.'⁹ The friendship began to flourish, and in April Eliza wrote again:

Dear Mrs Elgar
Will you & Mr Elgar give us the pleasure of your company to dinner on Thursday the 16th at ¼ to 8 o'clock? I hope so.

Very sincerely yours
E: Lynn Linton¹⁰

They did, as Alice's diary records: 'E. & A. dined at Mrs. Lynn Linton's'.¹¹ From this point on visits became more frequent – the diary records them on 19 April, 18 June, 15 July and 6 August.

'The Light of Life' and 'King Olaf'

Somehow, in a relatively short time, Mrs. Linton had become convinced of Elgar's genius. She was, therefore, all too delighted to read Robert Buckley's article in the *Birmingham Daily Gazette* about *The Light of Life*, shortly to receive its première at the Worcester Festival.

My dear Mrs Elgar
That notice will do you quite as much good as if it had been a critique after performance – this is Lovely & I am as glad of it as you are, dear, – I am bothered to know where I can send your paper with a good chance of attracting valuable attention – to Mrs. Freeman? She is the grandest person I know – I would do you any 'Good turn' that came in any possible way – for love of what I see in you both – his 'Genius', in which one word you express so much, & your dear devoted love. I feel such a strong desire that he should be able to make himself clear from any galling fetter or uncongenial

- 7 Letter from Elizabeth Lynn Linton to Alice Elgar, 5 February 1896, Elgar Birthplace Museum letter 9226.
- 8 Alice Elgar diary, 14 February 1896.
- 9 Ibid., 15 February 1896.
- 10 Letter from Elizabeth Lynn Linton to Alice Elgar, 11 April 1896, EBM letter 9224.
- 11 Alice Elgar diary, 16 April 1896.

work & should devote himself to his Art, which is not work – when Pegasus soared through the air he did not draw a dust cart on the ground ...

Love to you all three
Affectly your dear
E. Lynn Linton¹²

She was in Keswick, her birthplace, in September and so was unable to hear the first performance on 8 September. She sent good wishes from the Keswick Hotel.

Dear, Tomorrow my heart will be with you. May you have the most brilliant success of the Festival! – I cannot tell you how anxious I am to know that your husband's Genius has received its reward – So many friends are waiting on the same hope – but none more anxiously, none more lovingly than I. – My love to you both & the dear little one –

Good be with you, & Glory & Honour!

Affy. Yours
E. Lynn Linton¹³

She was, however, able to see some reviews: indicative by their geographical diversity of the importance of the English musical festivals of the time ...

There was not nearly such a large attendance this evening, and it is said that the booking of seats was the smallest of the week. This is a matter of regret, as the composition of a local musician ought surely to be received with respectful interest. Those who stayed away were losers, for there is much that is not only melodious, but impressive, in Mr. Elgar's musical version of the Gospel story of the healing of the blind man, as recorded in the ninth chapter of St. John ... Mr. Elgar has not adopted any special style of composition, and he seems to be able to write fluently and freshly in any way he chooses. The vocal part-writing should be agreeable to the singers, and the orchestration is masterly without being too ambitious. In short, *The Light of Life* is a work of great merit. It was conducted by the composer, and there were no reasonable grounds for much complaint with the performance, though the choir was at times rather feeble in attack. Full justice was rendered to the principal parts by Miss Anna Williams, Miss Jessie King (who is improving her position as a mezzo-soprano vocalist in a satisfactory manner), Mr. Edward Lloyd, and Mr. Watkin Mills.¹⁴

- 12 Letter from Elizabeth Lynn Linton to Alice Elgar, 14 August 1896, EBM letter 9227.
- 13 Letter from Elizabeth Lynn Linton to Alice Elgar, 7 September 1896, EBM letter 9228.
- 14 *The Standard*, 9 September 1896.



At this evening's concert, which also took place in the Cathedral, there was performed the chief novelty of the festival scheme, Mr. Edward Elgar's short oratorio "The Light of Life". The commission to write this work was no doubt the result of the favourable impression created by Mr. Elgar's overture, "Froissart", at the last Worcester festival; and as the composer is a local man (he is a violin teacher residing at Malvern), the further success which he gained this evening is a matter for distinct congratulation. "The Light of Life" treats, in more or less dramatic fashion, the story of the man who was born blind, as related in the 9th chapter of St. John, the text being neatly arranged by the Rev. E. Capel Cure, M.A. It gives fair opportunity for contrast, as well as for the expression of deep religious feeling, and in both respects the musician may be said to have satisfactorily utilised his chance. The number in question impressed all who heard it this evening. The composer conducted a capital performance of his oratorio, keeping the choir under thorough control, and bringing out all the salient features of his very interesting orchestration. The solos, although less attractive, were finely rendered by Miss Anna Williams, Miss Jessie King, Mr. Edward Lloyd, and Mr. Watkin Mills.¹⁵

... and was quick to send her congratulations.

Dear I know what the success was by the 'Standard' & the 'Scotsman' – My warmest & most loving congratulations – I will not take up your time with more than this, but oh! I am glad! – most sincerely glad! – Now for the Saga – & then – the practical fruits of success!

God help you all thru!
Your friend
E: Lynn Linton¹⁶

Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf was to receive its first performance at the North Staffordshire Musical Festival in Hanley on 30 October and Mrs. Linton had every intention of being present. It was not to be:

My dear friends, I have waited until I thought you were at home before writing you my mingled yarn of congratulations & regret – I had such a strong wish to send you a loving telegram by 11 am on Friday and I thought it might startle you to have a telegram in the Hall so I did not. I don't know when I was more disappointed about my failure of pleasure than towards last week. I had prepared everything – even I was in pretty new order!! – new shoes – my new bonnet – & as I had looked forward to the great enjoyment of hearing the Saga & seeing what I felt sure wd. be the triumph – & then I was an invalid instead, spending my money on medicines & doctors' bills! Somehow, cause quite unknown to me – I got a chill on Friday week – & was taken violently ill in the night – had to call out the servants at 4 in the morning, & was altogether very ill & in agonies of pain. So the doctor kept me in bed nine days, & when I proposed to come down stairs there was no kind of possibility of my going out of doors or taking a journey. I went out on Monday in a closed carriage & yesterday I walked out, but I am only a poor limp fellow being yet!

I send you a paper wh. you may not have seen. I Rejoice with all my whole full heart. I am glad beyond words that you have scored such an undoubted & glorious success – this an assured fact now & I feel that you are on the Golden Stair firm & fast.

God bless you both from your very sincere & sympathetic friend
E. Lynn Linton¹⁷

15 *The Scotsman*, 9 September 1896.

16 Letter from Elizabeth Lynn Linton to Elgar, 10 September 1896, EBM letter 9229.

17 Letter from Elizabeth Lynn Linton to Elgar and Alice, 4 November 1896, EBM letter 9225.

The final years

The Elgars and Mrs. Linton continued to meet for the rest of 1896, for example, attending a violin recital by Pablo Sarasate and Otto Neitzel on 7 December. Curiously, though, there is no further contact recorded in the 1897 or 1898 diaries, and no known correspondence other than a brief greeting written on Christmas Eve 1897.

She continued to live at Brougham House, where she kept up a lively and forthright correspondence with her friends, including this gem to Canon Raymond Pelly, Vicar of the Priory Church, Great Malvern from 1896 to 1909.

... All religions are so unjust to others, and so partial to their own. Why, even the genial Greek gave the best place in his melancholy Hades to the initiated – and see what Mohammed preached, and the Roman Catholics, and the Calvinists, and the Plymouth Brethren! It is all so human – so 'made on earth' – like this proposed beatification of Cardinal Newman, whom the papacy neglected for his lifetime, and now wants to make one of the blessed.¹⁸

In May 1898 she went to London for the Royal Academy Soirée and the Authors' Dinner, at which she was the chief lady guest. Shortly afterwards she was taken ill with bronchial pneumonia, and died on 14 July at the age of 76.

When we grow old the imperiousness of passion and our own individuality burns low and sinks, and then the others are the first consideration. To live in others and for others – to be eager to utilise the fast-fleeting time for all good that may come in our way – to feel that 'he prayeth best who loveth best' – that to me is the one great law and rule of life. Social and even literary ambitions have fallen from me – but not the love of my kind – not the desire to help, to solace, to brighten the lives of others. In doing so one finds one's own happiness ...¹⁹

Elgar can count himself fortunate to have found such a staunch, if unlikely, supporter at a critical time in his development as a composer.

18 Letter from Elizabeth Lynn Linton to Canon Raymond Pelly, 1 March 1898, published in George Somes Layard, *Mrs. Lynn Linton, Her Life, Letters, and Opinions* (London: Methuen & Co., 1901, 359).

19 Letter from Elizabeth Lynn Linton to Lucy Gedge, 3 January 1896 (*ibid.*, 341).



341 pp + xxii
ISBN
978-0-8108-5750-2

BOOK REVIEWS

Charles McGuire and Steven E. Plank:
Historical Dictionary of English Music ca. 1400-1958
Lanham, Maryland: The Scarecrow Press Inc., 2011

The ongoing Scarecrow series of historical dictionaries of literature currently runs to some 50 plus volumes and covers many specialised subjects ranging from Hong Kong cinema to post-war German literature and Animation and cartoons to modern Chinese Literature. Various national aspects of cinema are a feature, and musical titles include *Sacred music*, the *Broadway Musical* and *Choral music*. I must say I have not come across them before in British libraries, but assume they are widely disseminated in the USA. The example under review is not illustrated.

The dictionary presents some 600 cross-referenced entries on people, venues, repertoire, genre and sources. In their Preface the authors tell us they are seeking 'to identify and briefly annotate a wide range of subjects relating to English musical culture, largely from the early 15th century through 1958', so taking the death of Vaughan Williams as the cut-off point. In this they are successful; amazing that no one has done it before. First comes a six-page chronology which starts with the Robertsbridge Codex ca 1325 and extends to the death of Vaughan Williams on 26 August 1958. Of necessity with the limited space available this chronology is highly selective and therefore very much a beginner's guide, which raises more questions than it answers. Why the first performance of Tippett's *The Child of Our Time* but no first performance of Britten's *Peter Grimes*? or why RVW's *Tallis Fantasia* but no *Sea Symphony* or *A London Symphony*? The opening of St James's Hall (1858) and the Royal Festival Hall (1951) are chosen but not of Queen's Hall or the Wigmore Hall. To some extent the whole book suffers from such comparisons – the limitations of trying to cover the subject representatively in the space available, though overall the authors' achievement is remarkable. I can imagine in a second edition quite a bit more detail could be added without significantly affecting the book's total length – for example under Rebecca Clarke there surely should be mention of her husband James Friskin, composer and professor at the Juilliard School, who had also been a favourite pupil of Stanford.

The excellent and thoughtful historical introduction covers some dozen pages and usefully surveys the concept and development of English music – or music in England – and the interplay of a succession of foreign-born musicians over some five hundred years into the always active British musical scene. The actual coverage is remarkably good although the entries are short. For Elgar, E.E. himself gets a page with additional entries on the *Enigma Variations*, *Pomp and Circumstance* and *Land of Hope and Glory* – there are

also entries on oratorios and cantatas, music festivals, the London Symphony Orchestra, the BBC and Master of the King's Music. Conductors include Boult, Barbirolli, Beecham, Sargent and Wood. While this is a reference book for the general listener rather than the specialist it can be very useful in some of the detailed background and certainly deserves a place on the shelves.

The book is completed by a 20-page 'Select Bibliography'. With its three page introduction but only very selective entries when we get on to individual composers, it could be a valuable first source for someone starting out to research in the field, but it quickly reveals its limitations. Nevertheless the occasional appearance of theses in preference to more familiar published sources in even very short listings is very useful to me but probably not to the book's target audience who I can imagine would well prefer something more easily accessible.

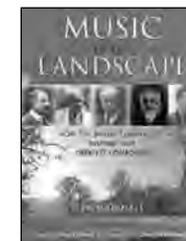
The authors must be kicking themselves at the one howler – Delius was never *Sir* Frederick, it looks very odd (p. 106); and I noted *Stephane* George (p. 266; my German edition of his poetry has Stefan), and Leighton Lucas has become Leighton *Lewis* (p. 85). In the bibliography (p. 333) Benoliel has become *Beloliel*. Spots on the sun! – otherwise it is very clean and nicely produced, though, because perfectly bound, maddeningly it will not remain flat without a weight when lying open.

Lewis Foreman

Em Marshall: *Music in the Landscape: How the British Countryside Inspired our Greatest Composers.*
London: Robert Hale, 2011.

Em Marshall-Luck is a one-woman power house of English music. Founder and director of the prestigious English Music Festival, proprietor of Em Records, chairman of the Vaughan Williams Society, co-chair of the Bantock Society, which she revived, and publisher of *Spirited*, the best English music magazine in existence; the list seems endless and exhausting. Moreover she is a former member of the Elgar Council and the latest issue of *Spirited* contains almost as much on Elgar as the Society Journal, presented in a more up-market fashion. If all this were not enough she has now launched herself as an author with this sumptuous production, foreword by Jeremy Irons and introduced by Jonathan Dimbleby.

The essays forming this work are well-written in the meticulous style one expects from a classicist. Some are works of art in themselves, the one on Bax is especially notable, and the author's ability to make every sentence carry information is admirable. The book is beautifully illustrated with occasionally unusual photographs of the subjects and superb landscape photography (though the view on page 266 labelled 'Delius's Yorkshire' looks as if it was taken in the heart of Sinai). The essays cover 40 plus composers and it is good to see underweighted figures like McEwen, Farrar, Wallace, and Somervell included. However the coverage is strangely uneven. Vaughan Williams gets 39 pages, Elgar 36, Walton five lines, and Coleridge Taylor and



296 pp
ISBN
978-0-7090-8468-6

Scott a passing mention each. Hurlstone, Baines, Rootham, Foulds, Lloyd, Macmillan are not in at all; presumably these are not 'great' composers but are Hadley, Gray, and Lane who are included?

There is a brief general introduction but no serious analysis of landscape as an element in British art or any attempt to explain why and how it became an icon of national culture. This is clearly seen as a 'popular' work. Statements such as '...landscape was a reason for their [British Composers] music's nature and existence...' are thrown out without any attempt at justification. It must also be said that none of the essays contains any new data on their subject; they are essentially elegant compilations from standard biographies. The account of Elgar is a good introduction for the uninitiated, though it does repeat some of the challengeable myths. There is a great deal about fishing, cycling, and potato growing. The author's claim that *Carillon* and *Le Drapeau Belge* are under-regarded masterpieces may raise eyebrows, not to mention the statement that Vaughan Williams saw himself as a rival to Elgar, some of his works being written in a spirit of 'Me Too'. On the whole, however, there are no controversial judgments.

The main problem is the same as that which always occurs with this genre, witness James Day's *Englishness in Music*. Day failed to define English music beyond saying it was music written by Englishmen, and the reviewed work seems equally tautologous in that the included British composers apparently owe their inspiration to landscape and the rest are omitted because they do not. This can cause some contorted argument. For example Sullivan, whose music is not normally associated with English landscape, is included because the author regards his peregrinations from country house to country house as indicating the importance of landscape to him. This may surprise those of us who see him as more at home in West End theatres or Paris bordellos. In truth the English are the only people in the world who have made landscape a political issue. Germans do not claim uniqueness because of their forests nor Russians on account of their steppes. Swiss mountains are drooled over by tourists – the locals regard them as a nuisance. The English (Celts do not seem to share the perception) claim that because they live in a beautiful country they must be a significant people. What really made rural landscape a factor in the arts was the Romantic Movement, mediated through Ruskinian objections to urban society and liberal economics. It is noteworthy that none of the composers described here was born before 1842.

English rural landscape worship is essentially middle class: Arts and Crafts, Liberty, Folksong, and The National Trust are all examples of middle class countryside obsession (though the last is beginning to wake up to the fact). If landscape is really crucial in creativity surely the urban version must be equally important? Landscape is merely one part of a rich historical mix, creating a cultural paste smeared in varying thickness on those born in a politico-geographic area. It may be a motivation or a model but is incidental not fundamental. Dwellers near the Malverns do not automatically produce symphonies, the inhabitants of Haworth novels, or East Anglia paintings. Elgar would have written music wherever he was born assuming the same

opportunities. But if he had been born in Worcester in 1757 or 1957 it would have been different. It is not landscape which determines creative effort – it is time.

Carl Newton

Lewis Foreman (editor): *The John Ireland Companion*

Woodbridge: The Boydell Press 2011

Published to coincide with the 50th anniversary of his death, *The John Ireland Companion* presents new articles on Ireland and his music, together with reprints of a selection of the major earlier articles on the composer, including his own writings, transcriptions of his broadcast talks and transcriptions of interviews. The book was commissioned by the John Ireland Trust and is edited with his usual thoroughness and efficiency by Lewis Foreman, who has drawn on his many years of research into Ireland's life and music to produce a well constructed and more than comprehensive volume.

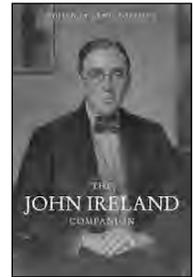
The first section of the book is essentially biographical, dealing the 'The Man, his Circle and his Times'. The second concentrates on the music, with essays by, among others Eric Parkin, Roderick Williams and Jeremy Dibble, as well as by Lewis Foreman. The latter parts of the book are, perhaps, even more fascinating, comprising writings by the likes of Britten, Moeran, Searle and Norah Kirkby, his companion in later life, and by Ireland himself on Elgar, Stanford, Vaughan Williams and Ravel.

The whole is completed by a catalogue of Ireland's music, a discography, and a CD of historical recordings including broadcast talks and performances by Ireland himself.

The book is beautifully produced and copiously illustrated, with particular care taken over the quality of photographic reproduction.

It is not a book to read at one sitting, but as a compendium to dip into it is highly recommended and a credit to all concerned.

Richard Wiley



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MUSIC REVIEWS



ISBN
978-1-873690-14-7.
27 pp + 11.

Elgar, *Beau Brummel*: Minuet. Stage Version; Concert Version.
Hambrook, Ledbury: Acuta Music, 2011

The history of incidental music for the theatre is fraught with difficulty. With its natural offspring, music in talking films, the composer's efforts are recorded and available even if the written music is lost. With the theatre, loss of the written music means total loss. No doubt Elgar's contribution to Bertram P. Matthews's *Beau Brummel* did much to gain a following for a play not of the highest importance; nevertheless most of the music has disappeared. As Robert Kay has deduced, *Beau Brummel* was a substantial score, and apart from the Minuet, its fate is a matter for speculation.¹ There survives only the Minuet, which, it seems, was used 'throughout' (Elgar's word) the play. It survived initially because Elgar decided to record it in 1928, and again the following year. The LSO (used for the 1928 recording) was not a theatre band, and Elgar had to prepare a new score in a version for full orchestra. Perhaps he detached the Minuet from the remaining theatre band material at this stage, leaving the theatrical troupe with a copy. (It is unfortunate that the practice of opera houses, using not the autograph but copies made from it ready for the first performance, was not routine in other theatres.)

Robert Kay has now added both versions of the Minuet to the Acuta Music publications of Elgar's late work (earlier publications have been reviewed in this Journal). The edition contains a summary of the work's history, and carefully edited versions of both scores. The 'stage version' uses five woodwind, four brass, a single percussionist (the staff marked 'drums' but playing a range of instruments) and a small string group. The 'concert version' adds optional woodwind, a pair of horns, and a third trombone. This edition prints timpani and percussion on separate staves, but the instruments required are the same and the parts could, I think, be managed by a single player. (As printed here, the timpani in the band version are allotted three separate pitches (G, B, D) but in the orchestral version only two (no B). Did the theatre have pedal timpani? It's possible; and there would be no time to re-tune a conventional kettledrum from B to D ready for the splendid fortissimo in bar 44. It seems unlikely that a theatre pit would accommodate three such space-consuming instruments.)

Another difference is that in the orchestral version, the trombone parts are much reduced; they play in only eight bars (mainly at a climax that could have been marked 'nobilmente'). In the absence of horns, they, and the cornets, have far more work in the band version. The editor draws attention to notes in the orchestral version that are played on Elgar's first recording and omitted

1 See Robert Kay's fascinating article, 'Gerald Lawrence, Elgar and the missing *Beau Brummel* Music', this Journal, 17/3 (December 2011), 4–28.

from the second, but we are not told how these notes appear in the MS. Bars 45–6 in the band version are marked 'allarg[ando]' (broadening); this direction is absent in the orchestral version but might have been inserted as an editorial suggestion, given the considerable breadth Elgar allows himself at that point on both recordings. He also slows down markedly at the principal cadence (bar 61), ahead of the 'poco rit.' of the band version. As an indication of changing taste in performance one could contrast these flexible readings with that of Lawrance Collingwood, who recorded the Minuet in 1964. Collingwood plays it relatively 'straight' (and noticeably slower), despite his close involvement with Elgar in the recording studio at the relevant period.²

The Acuta Music edition presents the two scores within a single binding (comparison would be easier if they were separately bound). The Minuet is an object-lesson for Elgar's professionalism and adaptability. It would be interesting to hear the band version; the scoring for full orchestra is typical of the mature Elgar, whereas the theatre band, I suppose, harks back to the less refined sound-world of his music for the Powick asylum. Besides minor differences between the versions, and the inclusion of a repeat in the orchestral version, there is a marked change of expression at the close. The band version ends loudly, energized at the last by brass and tremolo strings; apparently this was to end an act. The orchestral version, after a brief swelling of sound, ends quietly, but with serenity. Was this perhaps the music used for the peaceful death of Brummel?

Julian Rushton

2 *The Lighter Elgar*, EMI (CDM 5 65593 2), 1996 reissue of 1964 recording with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra under Lawrance Collingwood. On his involvement from 1926, see Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar on Record* (Oxford University Press, 1974).

DVD REVIEWS



Christopher Nupen
Films

A14CND

Elgar: Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85
Beethoven: Piano Trio No. 5 in D major, Op. 70 No. 1 'The Ghost'
 Jacqueline du Pré (‘cello), Pinchas Zukerman (violin), Daniel Barenboim (piano); New Philharmonia Orchestra conducted by Daniel Barenboim

This is a re-issue, in an improved version, of a DVD of two of Christopher Nupen’s films previously released available on the Opus Arte label. The performance of *The Ghost*, filmed rather on the spur of the moment in May 1970, is outstanding in every way.

But it is that of the Elgar concerto that is of more interest here, which follows the well-known ‘Portrait of Jacqueline du Pré’. Coming back to these – and, indeed, to any Jacqueline du Pré performance of the Elgar – after more years than I care to admit makes me appreciate just how much we owe to her musicianship, humanity, and insight. Somehow when she is playing we have access to Elgar’s soul: it requires far more than a great ‘cellist to give us that. If you haven’t seen these films for some time, now is the moment to reacquaint yourself with them.

The new reincarnation includes a fascinating introduction by Christopher Nupen on the background to the making of the films, which further enhances the experience.

Unmissable viewing.

Richard Wiley

CD REVIEWS

The Dream of Gerontius, op. 38
Cello Concerto, op. 85

Jian Wang (‘cello)
 Lilli Paaskivi (mezzo-soprano), Mark Tucker (tenor), David Wilson-Johnson (bass-baritone)
 Sydney Philharmonia Choirs, TSO Chorus, Sydney Symphony conducted by Vladimir Ashkenazy



ABC Classics

476 4297 (2 CDs)

In November 2010 Robin Moore gave an enthusiastic welcome in these pages to three CDs from the Sydney Symphony’s 2008 Elgar Festival under their conductor, Vladimir Ashkenazy. Those CDs are now joined by this pair, containing the Cello Concerto and *The Dream of Gerontius* recorded at the same festival.

If my welcome is not quite as enthusiastic, it is born out of frustration for what might have been, for Ashkenazy directs a performance of *Gerontius* which in spirit goes right to the heart of the music, yet succumbs somewhat to physical frailties.

Regular readers will be accustomed to my banging on about choral sound, and I make no apology for doing so again here. There can be no quibbles about intonation or internal balance, or about the quality of the sound at *mezzo-forte* and below. The semi-chorus of 35 voices (twice the number specified by Elgar, but no matter) drawn from the Sydney choirs sings superbly throughout. The names of the choir members are given in the booklet, and one can see that there are more than 150 of them: but in the louder passages it certainly doesn’t sound like it. ‘Praise to the Holiest’ loses much of its impact, and the ‘Demons’ are terribly polite – apologetic even. I am not advocating a return to the ‘Birmingham sound’ of 1900, where a member of the Festival Chorus felt ‘grossly insulted’ when Elgar told them they were singing the chorus of Demons ‘like a drawing-room ballad’ – ‘and that’, added the singer, ‘after we had fairly shouted ourselves hoarse’. I do, however, know that with adequate breath control, voice placement and projection an amateur chorus of this size can knock you off your feet! But it takes constant and consistent effort and concentration. Terry Edwards, one time chorus-master at Covent Garden and now working miracles with amateur choirs, has a simple mantra for when things start to flag: ‘renew your enthusiasm’. I fear that is sometimes lacking here.

While I am venting my frustrations, I must admit that my other major one concerns the *Gerontius* of Mark Tucker. It is not mere frippery on my part to say that he sings better once he has died. His own blurb declares him to be a ‘remarkable interpreter of the Baroque repertoire’ and lists his many successes in that field. His voice, well-suited indeed to the Baroque repertoire,

is also quite at home as the Soul of Gerontius in Part II. His lyrical and gentle delivery of Elgar's vocal line is quite captivating and, well, other worldly. But in Part I Elgar's model is more Verdi and Wagner than Bach and Monteverdi. We should never forget what he wrote to Jaeger about the music:

Look here: I imagined Gerontius to be a man like us, not a Priest or a Saint, but a sinner, a repentant one of course but still no end of a worldly man in his life, & now brought to book. Therefore I've not filled his part with Church tunes & rubbish but a good, healthy full-blooded romantic, remembered worldliness, so to speak. It is, I imagine, much more difficult to tear one's self away from a well to do world than from a cloister.¹

Sadly, on this evidence, Mark Tucker does not possess the vocal equipment to do full justice to Elgar's view of the part. In Part I the voice sounds under strain, and he copes with the demands for sustained 'good, healthy full-blooded' singing by, at times, breathing every bar. A tradition has grown up over the years of a more contemplative – dare I say pious, even – view of the part with such singers as Ludwig Wüllner, Gervase Elwes and Stuart Wilson, as opposed the more operatic exponents such as John Coates, Richard Lewis and Jon Vickers, and Tucker has no option but to join the ranks of the former. However, I do think that with this approach we are in danger of losing sight of Elgar's original concept of the part.

Lilli Paasikivi's Angel is quite another matter. Here we have a mezzo-soprano more often to be found singing Wagner and Verdi turning her attention to Elgar. She makes a superb job of it. She sings with the utmost intelligence throughout, and her full and fabulous voice makes the most of Elgar's writing. It's a shame that her performance of *Sea Pictures* at the Festival has yet to appear on CD: let us hope that it does before too long.

David Wilson-Johnson is, as one might expect, equally fine in the baritone roles. While I long for the part to be shared between two singers, as on the old Sargent recording, I must admit that I don't have Elgar on my side here: there were two basses available at Birmingham (Andrew Black, as well as Harry Plunket Greene), but he chose to use only one.

Perhaps the real heroes of this performance are the Sydney Symphony and Vladimir Ashkenazy. The playing is first-rate, and players and conductor work together to get a fine balance of sound. Ashkenazy certainly knows his Elgar, and by the simple expedient of following the instructions in the score – particularly with regard to tempi – produces a performance that has far more drive and life than many I have heard. Just once, in the chorus 'Be merciful', does his tempo go significantly against Elgar's markings, resulting in a jaunty trot through the music that made me wish for a percussionist to add an accompaniment of coconut shells. Overall, though, it is a stunning piece of conducting.

Ashkenazy brings the same qualities to the Cello Concerto. He has an

¹ Letter from Elgar to August Jaeger, 28th August 1900, Elgar Birthplace letter 8401.

acute ear, and can 'voice' an orchestral chord to perfection, bringing out in sound what Elgar has put on the page. He is also perfectly aware of the various passages in which the solo 'cello provides a secondary, inner, voice to a wind solo, and makes one realise that rarely, if ever, have we heard the Concerto sound quite like this. Much has been written of Elgar's ability to enable the soloist to be heard by keeping the orchestra away from the pitch of the solo line: I had not realised before how many opportunities Elgar gives for the piece to be played as chamber music, with the solo 'cellist taking a role as *primus inter pares*.

It is high time that I mentioned that solo 'cellist, Jian Wang, who I hadn't encountered before. He is a very fine player, and has a view of the concerto seemingly untainted by some more famous interpretations. It makes total sense musically, and manages to bring out the many and varied qualities of the piece without wallowing in the detail.

Finally, let me join Robin Moore in hailing the very considerable achievement of Ashkenazy and his cohorts in producing such a feast of Elgar in the Sydney Opera House. They really did him proud, and on a scale that I can't recall for many years – conceivably since the Festival of 1904 in the Opera House, Covent Garden!

Martin Bird

As I was listening to Ashkenazy's performance from Sydney, Daniel Barenboim was conducting three performances of 'The Dream of Gerontius' in Berlin. The second, on 14 January, may be experienced on 'Digital Concert Hall', the Berlin Philharmonic's website, available on subscription to anyone with internet access. The address is: <http://www.digitalconcerthall.com/en/concerts>. Brief excerpts are available at no charge, so prospective purchasers may 'try before they buy', as is a fifteen minute talk by the chorus master, Simon Halsey. The intrepid Barry Collett took the plunge on behalf of the Elgar Society!

The Dream of Gerontius, op. 38

Anna Larsson (mezzo-soprano), Ian Storey (tenor), Kwangchul Youn (bass)
Rundfunkchor Berlin, Berlin Philharmoniker conducted by Daniel Barenboim

It should not be forgotten that Barenboim conducted a wide range of Elgar's orchestral music across Europe and America in the 1970s and '80s. In fact he was probably the first foreign musician, along with Georg Solti, to treat Elgar as a serious international composer in recent years. I'm surprised the Elgar Society has not considered such a high profile musician for the Elgar Medal. I've always been a staunch admirer of Barenboim's Elgar, although his obvious passionate involvement with the music leads to interpretation that doesn't always coincide with my own beliefs (or prejudices). Such is the case here. The Prelude begins very slowly, but the warmth of the playing

is immediately apparent – listen to the perfectly judged soft woodwind chords that punctuate the opening viola melody. Also that first awesome and chilling stroke on the gong is beautifully prepared and judged. The choir sings wonderfully well, and especially telling is the semi-chorus, often emerging from the full texture in a magically ethereal way. But I have to say that the main stumbling block for me is the tenor – Gerontius himself – who has a vibrato so wide one could drive a bus through it. I didn't know Ian Storey, who otherwise sings intelligently, but I do not like the quality of his voice. How often in recorded performances has the all-important tenor role been the big disappointment. (Of recent-ish recordings I enjoy Paul Groves on Mark Elder's performance, and Nicolai Gedda on Boult's, but of course it is a very personal issue.). The Swedish mezzo Anna Larsson takes her part well, singing with obvious sincerity. The South Korean bass Kwangchul Youn I was again less sure about. His cavernous voice and stentorian manner seemed to me to be better suited to the Angel of the Agony in Part II than the Priest in Part I.

Barenboim obviously belongs to the Furtwangler, rather than the Toscanini, school of conducting. He favours extreme rubato, which can, for me, disrupt the onward rhythmic flow. For example, *Proficiscere anima Christiana* is very slow, and then the tempo is whipped up for the chorus (admittedly marked *accel.*) to a speed which loses some of the grandeur of the choral writing. Again in the Demons' and the Angelicals' great choruses there are some strange unmarked surges of rhythm, and the final Angel's Farewell is very elastic, not settling for long at any one consistent tempo. Now, Barenboim is no fool, and this rubato is not the result of an inability to control his rhythms, but is obviously a deeply felt sympathetic response to the text and the music, and in the context of a live performance (which, after all, this was) it could make a considerable emotional appeal.

The important thing was that it was performed, in Berlin, before enthusiastic audiences, and the real heroes of the occasion were the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, playing with a sureness of touch and style that is staggering. It has performed a mini-Elgar Festival recently, with the First Symphony just before Christmas and the *Enigma Variations* to come (with Rattle – and how often has one despaired of him ever doing any Elgar with his great orchestra!).

I listened to this performance the day after listening to the recording of Elgar's *In the South*, with Riccardo Muti conducting La Scala Philharmonic Orchestra of Milan – full of red blooded Italian warmth and sunshine. Whoever said that Elgar's music doesn't travel?!

Simon Halsey gives an interesting talk about *Gerontius*, with particular insight into German performances. But there are a few alarming inaccuracies: Elgar did not holiday in Germany all the time (they had five Bavarian holidays in the 1890s); Elgar certainly did not study in Leipzig; he did not meet Wagner; Hans Richter was Hungarian, not German, and did not conduct the Düsseldorf performances of *Gerontius* (that was Julius Butts).

Barry Collett

**Bach (orchestrated Elgar) Fantasia and Fugue in C minor, BWV537
Bach (orchestrated Respighi) Three Chorale Preludes; Sonata in E minor, BWV 1023; Prelude and Fugue in D, BWV 532; Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor, BWV 582**

Ilkka Talvi, violin

Seattle Symphony conducted by Gerard Schwarz



Naxos

8.572741

On 17 April 1921 Carice noted in her diary:

Very wet day - rain & snow - To church at 11. Father not very well - rested in bed most of morning. No day to take dogs out - Meg very well - Busy quiet day - no one came. Father playing Bach fugues -

Two days later he was 'busy orchestrating Bach Fugue in C minor', and by the 24th it was complete. It was first performed by Eugène Goossens on 27 October, Elgar noting, somewhat tersely: 'Goossens Concert. Fugue encored'. Carice added more detail:

Went down to Queen's Hall at 8.15 - met Father - & heard first performance of Bach Fugue - great enthusiasm - had to be repeated & Father called down to platform to bow - Thrilling evening - sounded quite wonderful.

In February 1922 Ivor Atkins spoke to Herbert Brewer about the possibility of Elgar orchestrating the Fantasia for the Hereford Festival, 'and he was very keen about it. No doubt you have it all arranged now.' In May Elgar wrote to Carice, saying:

I can't tell you my plans. The hot weather is too much for me. I am working writing very hard at the argrt of the Bach prelude & orchg that thing of poor dear old Parry's for Leeds festival not an easy thing to do well.¹

Curiously enough, the gap of a year between the orchestration of the two parts matches the gap between their recording by Gerard Schwarz and the Seattle Symphony in 1990 and 1991. They perform the Fantasia supremely well, with lovely individual and ensemble playing (and divided first and second violins), but seem rather to shirk the Fugue, missing the essential *joie de vivre* of Elgar's transcription. Elgar had told Windflower: 'I think it is brilliant – a word I wanted in connection with Bach, who, in arrangements, is made "pretty" etc etc.'

'Pretty' is a word I would happily apply to Respighi's transcriptions. I am a great fan of Bach and Handel re-orchestrations, but would not particularly want to hear these particular ones again. The Violin Sonata is converted into a Concerto, but I kept wishing that Schwarz had cut down on the continuo: far better to stick with the original Bach in this particular case. The D major Prelude and Fugue has the incidental interest of having identical passages to the Handel Overture in D minor that Elgar orchestrated, which confused my mind somewhat, and the Passacaglia and Fugue in C minor has been

1 Letter to Carice, 23 May 1922, Elgar Birthplace Museum letter 217.

done better by both Stokowski and Ormandy. Their recordings, too, show the benefit of no holds barred luscious orchestral playing by the Philadelphia Orchestra rather than the well-behaved Seattle Symphony.

Very much a mixed bag, but interesting, none the less.

Martin Bird



**Cockaigne, Pomp and Circumstance Marches 1-5,
Variations for orchestra (Enigma)**

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Barry Wordsworth

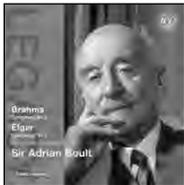
Royal Philharmonic
Orchestra

RPO SP 035

Just as this issue was closing for press those nice people at the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra sent this CD, recorded in June last year at Cadogan Hall, for review. On all counts it is a most attractive production which should have wide appeal. The performances are all very good, without being exceptional, and Barry Wordsworth doesn't hang around, the marches in particular being presented with considerable zip and verve. The gentler of the Variations are the more successful, with some lovely phrasing, especially in 'C.A.E.'. The string sound is equally lovely, with an especially good viola section, and the playing is the principal viola and 'cello in their solos is absolutely outstanding. The recorded sound is fine, with a slight bias towards the first violins and the horn section – in the latter case very welcome. The double basses, nicely balanced in the Variations, are all but inaudible in the marches. The second march is, for some unfathomable reason, shorn of its *da capo*, which means that we get only half as much music as Elgar intended. There is certainly space on the CD for it to have been presented complete and it is sad that such a good performance should come to a premature end.

The accompanying booklet has comprehensive notes, though as someone who doesn't buy Elgar's story of '***' being Lady Mary Lygon, I wish she hadn't been identified with such absolute certainty by the unnamed writer. The booklet photos are almost worth the modest price of this CD by themselves, with some wonderfully evocative and artistic Victorian studies of Tower Bridge, Parliament Square, and St. Paul's Cathedral.

Martin Bird



**Elgar: Symphony No. 1
Brahms: Symphony No. 3**

BBC Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult

ICA Classics

ICAC 5063

ICA Classics follow up their previous Boult issue of the *Enigma Variations* and Brahms's First Symphony with these Proms recordings of Elgar's First and Brahms's Third.

Brahms's Third may have been Elgar's favourite symphony: he conducted it more than a dozen times and it was also the subject of one of his Birmingham

lectures. Its close could have been the model for that of Elgar's Second. This Boult performance was recorded on 6 August 1977. Comparison with his 1971 recording with the LSO shows just how much more Boult could bring to a 'live' performance. The basic performance in the studio is much the same, and the playing marginally better. But there is not that frisson that the live occasion (and the lively and appreciative Promenade audience) brings.

In the First Symphony Boult brought off one of his truly great Elgar performances. Recorded on 28 July 1976, it has tremendous vitality and sense of purpose. I looked back at Barry Collett's useful timings of other recorded performances and found they varied between 55 minutes (Sinopoli) and 46½ (Elgar). Boult is the fastest of the lot at a mere 45 minutes, and that includes the ovation at the end: at this rate people might even suspect that the hand of Sir Thomas had been at work. Never fear, it hasn't, and in the words of Martin Cotton, writer of the booklet notes, who was present at the performance: 'it was one of the greatest musical experiences of my life, relived every time I hear it again'.

Prospective purchasers should note that this performance was included in the 1995 2CD Proms Centenary issue on IMP DMCD98. A comparison of the two issues shows no marked differences in the recorded sound which is, as one would expect from the BBC, full, well-rounded and well-balanced. There is a relatively high level of background hiss, more than I would have expected in a recording from the mid 1970s, but the mind swiftly adjusts to that. If you have never heard this performance, then without doubt you should take this opportunity.

Richard Wiley

All these CDs are available now from the Elgar Birthplace Museum. Remember that buying from the Birthplace is a way of contributing directly towards its finances at this difficult economic time. You may shop online at:

www.elgarfoundation.org/index.php/the-elgar-shop/cds

LETTERS

Reviews of Elgar CDs

From Meinhard Saremba

One might say it is a matter of personal taste when the reviewer of Roger Norrington's Elgar recording (*Elgar Society Journal*, December 2011, 52-53) dislikes the interpretation of the RSO Stuttgart because it lacks the 'warmth and sonority [of] Elgar's opulent string textures'. It is also possible to argue that in many recordings and performances the attempt to grasp these aspects lead to a thick and blurred orchestral sound. Norrington's approach includes a subtle phrasing instead of a rich vibrato and sometimes a slight vibrato (it's not always 'without'). All this leads to a clarity which is admirable in variation VIII and XIII, for example, where even the meticulous dynamic instructions of the score get attention. In addition he and the orchestra achieve a transparency even in the heavily orchestrated passages where I am not sure whether, as the reviewer states, 'Elgar would not recognise' his score. At least he would have recognised more details than elsewhere.

However, the main problem of the review is the statement: 'If you want the same programme ... go to the wonderful performances by the Vienna Philharmonic Orchestra and John Eliot Gardiner.' Apart from the point that I think Norrington was able to convey the mood of the *Enigma Variations* to his orchestra and Gardiner just got some beautiful but indifferent playing from the Vienna Philharmonic – which is a subjective aspect – there is a fact where Norrington is right and where Gardiner is wrong: the seating of the orchestra. According to photos with Elgar and orchestras and according to Adrian Boult's statements and his books on conducting, it is essential for the balance of the strings that the first violins sit on the left and the second violins on the right side of the conductor.¹ Variation No. II is the easiest way to test this in recordings. This is the effect intended by the composer and, according to Boult, 'the give-and-take answering passages, which occur in all music from Mozart to the present day, sound completely ineffective when the answer comes as a pale reflection from behind the First Violins instead of sounding up bravely from the opposite side of the platform' (quoted after: M. Kennedy: Adrian Boult, London 1987, 315). Photos and seating plans in Reginald Nettel's book *The Orchestra in England* (London 1946) and Daniel J. Koury's detailed study *Orchestral Performance Practices in the Nineteenth Century* (UMI Research Press, Ann Arbor, Michigan, 1986) reveals that this is not Norrington's or Boult's seating but the platform arrangement that orchestras were used to during the 19th century and in many cases up to the middle of the 20th century. Conductors like Bruno Walter, Monteux, Klemperer, Toscanini and others knew what the composers had expected.

For Boult, Henry Wood was one of the instigators of the ignorance against the classical platform planning. In his introduction to Adam Carse's book *The Orchestra* (New York 1949) Boult wrote: 'Until 1910 it was the custom all over the world to have the "layout" of the orchestra as far as possible on a principle of balance, by which the high instruments (e.g., violins) were not all placed to the left of the platform, but were distributed, firsts on the left and seconds on the right. Violas and cellos were opposed to each other in the same way. When Sir Henry Wood changed this, and placed

¹ Elgar's seating of the London Symphony Orchestra in 1912, with violins divided left and right, may be seen in the April 2011 edition of the *Journal*, p.31.

all his violins together, I remember an old friend of mine, who had always sat in the middle of the Queen's Hall circle, saying that he couldn't sit there any longer: all the bass came into his right ear and all the treble to his left, and he had to sit round at the side to get a blend.'

In the *Musical Times* of March 1911 Henry Wood acknowledged that his arrangement of the Queen's Hall Orchestra was unusual in that all the violins were on the left. According to him 'this arrangement is explained by the desirability of grouping the instruments that generally work together in an ensemble, and, besides, it facilitates the giving of cues and economizes time at rehearsals'. The change was mainly due to conductors seeking comfort but ignoring the intentions of the composers. According to Toscanini 'the first and second violins are like a pair of shoulders, and like shoulders they must be strong and equal'. Unfortunately 'the trouble with some conductors is they conduct by eye instead of by ear'. (Quoted after Koudry, 302 and 319). Concerning the objection that 'the Second Violins are so far turned away from the audience that they can't be heard', Adrian Boult contradicted that 'it is not so, unless the outside players turn inwards and put their shoulders in between their instruments and their audiences. If they do this it can easily be stopped'. Another argument, 'that the First and Seconds often play in octaves or unison, and bow together, and therefore should sit together' was irrelevant to him because: 'If the Leader of the Seconds is any use at all he will secure a perfect ensemble.' (Quoted after Kennedy, Boult, 315)

In the review mentioned above it was unnecessary to mock the 'so-called authentic performing style'. If we can learn something from the historically informed musical practice the easiest thing is getting the seating of the orchestra right. It is a shame that an artist like Gardiner who has got a certain reputation with authentic performances is completely ignorant when Elgar is concerned and even changes the traditional seating of the Vienna Philharmonic. Gardiner cannot be the alternative to Norrington (who, by the way, did not 'step down from his post with the Stuttgart Radio Symphony Orchestra' because he is 'notorious' – as the review seems to suggest – but because he wanted to do something else after 13 very successful years in Stuttgart where he was very popular and did a great job for Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Tippett and others). Concerning the *Enigma Variations* and Elgar in general, to me the only acceptable alternatives would be Monteux, Boult and Elder.

I would suggest that the seating of the orchestra should play a role in future reviews. Since even Elgar was not always accurate to his own indications and metronome marks, this is the only objective indicator for the accuracy of an Elgar performance.

Coleridge-Taylor

From David Bury

I was amused to read the editor's pretty unfavourable review of Jeffrey Green's book on Coleridge-Taylor. It is a shame that Martin Bird could not be more enthusiastic since I suspect there are many Elgarians interested in the Croydon-born composer.

In February Croydon hosted the 'world première' of a 'rediscovered' opera by Coleridge-Taylor entitled 'Thelma'. In over 50 years' avid opera going I had never heard of it.

When Elgar's 'The Spanish Lady' was staged in a realisation by Dr. Percy Young much was known, since Dr. Young had told us in lecture and writing about his researched. The same applied when the 3rd Symphony was realised by Anthony Payne. Little, however, seems to be known about the Coleridge-Taylor opera. I trust that eventually – better late than never – we shall learn about the work gone into establishing a performing edition and, thus, the 'authenticity' of the opera.

A response from Martin Bird

I, too, had never heard of *Thelma* until I received this letter (I didn't get that far in Jeffrey Green's book). It was composed between 1907 and 1909, and was assumed lost. Fortuitously, it was discovered lurking in the British Library by Dr. Catherine Carr, who writes: '...by searching in the relevant sources through every file of his music individually, I eventually located the opera, in 2003; the three Acts of both the full score and the short score were all filed separately, amongst other Coleridge-Taylor works in various genres, in the British Library.' The Library had acquired it in 1985.

The Prelude was performed on 17 March 1910 by the New Symphony Orchestra conducted by the composer, in a concert otherwise conducted by Landon Ronald which included Tchaikovsky's First Piano Concerto and Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. *The Times* review next day said:

This prelude is made up of several of the themes which occur in the opera, all of which are melodious, though they have not much distinction; the chorale-like tune which recurs several times has more character than the others, but it hardly fulfils the promise of its opening bars, and the scoring is noisy, and consequently insists upon the weakness of some of the ideas.

Elgarians interested in Croydon's composers will not, of course, forget W. H. Reed. *The Lincoln Imp* of 1921 was dedicated to Elgar. Writing to Carice in April 1922 Elgar observed: 'Billy Reed came to conduct his *Income Limp* & had a good reception'. The Dutton recording by Robert Gibbs and Mary Wu of some of Reed's miniatures (CDLX7135) is still available, and at the time of going to press was available direct from Dutton at a super-bargain price.

100 YEARS AGO ...

Newly installed in Severn House, Elgar told Ernest Newman: 'Hampstead is like an old county town – it is quieter here than Hereford & the Heath is really lovely & only on occasions is it overrun.' Edward Speyer had written to offer a housewarming present of panelling and shelves for the library. Elgar replied immediately, saying 'I cannot tell you how overwhelmed I am by your very kind suggestion. It takes away all my breath & I cannot believe that my poor dear beloved books are to have a real home at last.' Troyte Griffith came to stay for a few days at the beginning of February to design the shelves.

Conducting commitments continued, and on 29 January Elgar conducted his next L.S.O. concert, which included Mozart's G minor Symphony and Tchaikovsky's *Romeo and Juliet*. At the beginning of February he took the orchestra to Cambridge, where he 'Had to conduct Stanford's [Third] Symphony, made the Orch. play it splendidly.' On the 7th he was in Leeds with the Hallé and on the 12th conducted his last L.S.O. concert of the season: 'Brahms [*Tragic Overture*] fine & [Saint-Saëns's] Concerto successful. Wertheim agitating as he left out ½ bars, required a genius to keep it right. Schumann Symphony most noble & splendidly conducted.'

While in Leeds, Charles Haigh, the Secretary of the Leeds Musical Festival, had had a meeting with Elgar to discuss the 1913 Festival. Stanford was not to be its conductor, and the Committee was thinking of having a triumvirate. Elgar agreed to be one of them, provided that he was satisfied with the calibre of the other two. He was asked for a new choral work 'but said he doubted whether he had sufficient time to get such a work ready, but he believed he could be ready with a new orchestral work'. The result was to be *Falstaff*.

At the same time negotiations were going on with the Birmingham Festival, and it was announced that 'Arrangements had been made with Sir Edward Elgar that he should write a short new work for alto solo and chorus, entitled "We are the Music Makers" ... it was hoped to persuade Sir Edward Elgar to complete the series of oratorios begun with *The Apostles* and followed by *The Kingdom*, but he was too busy to undertake to do so.'

Throughout this busy period Elgar had been writing *The Crown of India* – 'engrossed in his work, writing all day almost'. On the 16th 'Dr. Blair here about his arrangements &c –'. Hugh Blair had agreed to produce a piano reduction of the score. On the 25th Elgar was 'just finishing the Masque', and the first rehearsal was next day. Another old Worcester friend, John Austin, had been summoned to help with rehearsals, and arrived on 4 March. *Berrow's Worcester Journal* crowed: 'In preference even to the conductor of the Coliseum band, he invited Mr. Austin to assist at rehearsals. That might not have been flattering to the people of that most provincial of all places, London; but it was very flattering to Mr. Austin.' The first performance was on 11 March, Elgar sharing the bill with The Five Cliftons, Gymnastic Equilibrists and Billy Merson, The New London Eccentric Comedian.

20 March found Elgar 'very interested in his Anthem', *Great is the Lord*. But he had been unwell, and 'vesy uneasy about noise in ear &c'. He consulted Dr. Edward Law, one of the leading E.N.T. specialists of the day, who prescribed a 'gout cure' which commenced on 1 April. Alice told Troyte Griffith: 'He is not a very placable patient & does not like it at all but I trust it will have good results.' From the 4th Elgar was 'in what he called "Cold Storage" –'.

ISSN 0143-1269

*Printed by
John Price Printers
Brook Street, Bilston
West Midlands, WV14 0NW*