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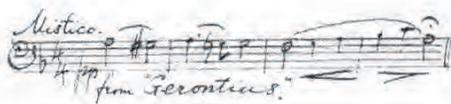


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Edward Elgar

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CORONATION ODE

Analytical notes

Joseph Bennett

[For several of Elgar's choral works, Novello brought out a book of words and analytical notes. The best known are by Jaeger (for Gerontius and the biblical oratorios), but Joseph Bennett did one for King Olaf, and Herbert Thompson one on Caractacus. However, it is not widely known that Boosey's brought out one - also by Bennett - for the Coronation Ode, which of course they published. It seems appropriate to reproduce it in the centenary year of the work.

Joseph Bennett (1831-1911) was one of the leading music critics of the day, writing in The Daily Telegraph. The young Elgar wrote to him late in 1889 informing him of the commission he had received to write a work for the 1890 Worcester Festival (the overture Froissart). Bennett wrote favourably about Elgar's music, although he later took exception to Elgar's charge that the "sleepy London press" had ignored musical progress in the north of England.]

This work was written, by special request, for a State performance in Covent Garden Theatre, on the (proposed) occasion of the Coronation of King Edward VII in June last. Consequent upon the illness of His Majesty, and the postponement of the great ceremony in Westminster Abbey, the festive representation on the stage of the Royal Opera was abandoned. But Dr Elgar's Coronation Ode is more than a *piece d'occasion*, and is now performed not only because of its reference to a historic event, but also because of its value as music.

As befits a pageant, the composer here employs the fullest available means, using a vocal quartet and chorus, with an orchestra made up of the following instruments : piccolo, flutes, oboes, clarinets, bass clarinet, bassoons, double bassoon, horns, trumpets, trombones, tuba, tympani, bass drum, cymbals, side drum, organ, harp, strings, and (ad lib.) military band. This formidable force is by no means recklessly employed. On the contrary, great restraint is shown in its use throughout, and all temptations towards unnecessary power are strongly resisted. Moreover advantage has been taken of the opportunities for contrast of "dynamic effect" which the poem so carefully supplies. All this will more fully appear as the performance proceeds.

No 1. - CROWN THE KING! INTRODUCTION, SOLI AND CHORUS

Crown the King with Life!
Through our thankful state
Let the cries of hate
Die in joy away;
Cease ye, sounds of strife!
Lord of Life, we pray,
Crown the King with Life!

Crown the King with Might!
Let the King be strong,
Hating guile and wrong;
He that scorneth pride,
Fearing truth and right,
Feareth nought beside; -

Crown the King with Might!

Crown the King with Peace;
Peace that suffers long,
Peace that maketh strong,
Peace with kindly wealth,
As the years increase,
Nurse of joy and health; -
Crown the King with Peace!

Crown the King with Love!
To his land most dear
He shall bend to hear
Every pleading call;
Loving God above,
With a heart for all; -
Crown the King with Love!

Crown the King with Faith!
God, the King of Kings,
Ruleth earthly things;
God of great and small,
Lord of Life and Death,
God, above us all!
Crown the King with Faith!

God shall save the King,
God shall make him great,
God shall guard the state;
All that hearts can pray,
All that lips can sing,
God shall hear today; -
God shall save the King!

Allegro maestoso. E flat major.

The orchestral introduction to this, the most extended and elaborate 'number' in the work, covers forty-nine bars, and is of much thematic significance, because introducing the more important of the subjects upon which the number as a whole is founded, and by the recurrence of which musical unity is secured. The chief of these, a phrase of two bars, is heard at the outset from the cornets, trumpets, and trombones of the military band.



This theme forms what may be considered as the motto of the entire work. It becomes associated, on the entry of the chorus, with the words, "Crown the King with Life," which it carries through the Ode by here and there recurring to the very end.

Other themes in the introduction, if not as important as that just shown, should be noted for future

recognition. For example, this -

Str. Wood

No. 2



and one which follows hard upon it -

Str. Wood

No. 3



This, also -

Vlns. Cl.

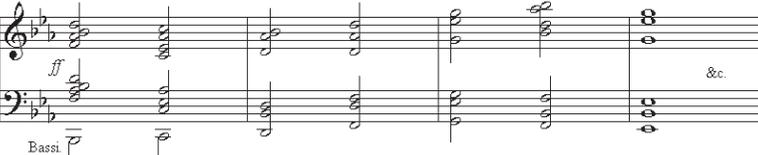
No. 4



At the close of No 4 the military band repeats the motto (No 1), and another recapitulatory passage leads to the link connecting the introduction with the chorus.

The entire preamble is scored with considerable, though not uniform, fullness; much use being made of the harp, which has, in one instance, an independent subject; accompanying No 2 above with the subjoined chorale-like theme -

No. 5



The chorus enters with a variant of the motto in four-part harmony -

No. 6

ff Crown the King with Life! Crown the King with

5

sf Life!.....

sf *8va*.....

Bass, Tromboni.

its last two bars being attended (as shown) by a theme for bass instruments, brass, wood, and string - an example of the majestic basses with which the composer gives distinction to his music. This subject is recurrent, and is not likely to escape notice whenever it re-appears.

Now we have (*Animato*) a specimen of the vocal polyphony which Dr Elgar handles with ease. The melody, as set out below, is an ascending sequence -

Cantabile

No. 7

Thro' our thank - ful state, _ Let the cries _ of

Crown the

5

cres.

hate _ Die in joy _ a - way, _ Let the cries _ of &c.

King with Life!

Thro' our thank - ful state, _ Let the cries _ of

and the accompaniment is of the lightest till the recurring themes again assert themselves, and the section ends, as it began, with the motto in its vocal form.

The motto also introduces the second section, "Crown the King with Might ! Let the King be strong!" the bass theme in No 6 being again conspicuous. It is followed by the melody of No 7, now given to tenors

and basses in unison, and having a different continuation; all voices uniting in unison on the words, "He that scorneth pride," &c. Approaching the close of this section we find the voices unaccompanied, save for a few horn notes, but on the last utterance of "Crown the King with Might!" the military band gives out the motto phrase, *grandioso*, supported by other wind instruments -

No. 8

the harmony in the last bar indicating a change of key to G flat; the section immediately ending with a full close in that tonality.

The stanza beginning, "Crown the King with Peace", obviously suggests a change of treatment, and the composer deals with it in a manner most felicitous. Only the strings are used in an accompaniment designed merely to support the voices (*poco a poco tranquillo*), but here the 'celli and bassi have another of the distinctive themes assigned to them in the work. The words are set as a soprano solo, introduced and followed by choral utterance of "Crown the King with Peace," as thus, the distinctive subject for bass strings being in attendance -

No. 9

The gently melodious soprano solo, "Peace that suffers long", will speak eloquently for itself, and it need only be added that the instrumental basses continue their subject throughout; as they do, moreover, through the next stanza, "Crown the King with Love", which belongs to the same musical section. The solo, in this case, passes to the contralto, but otherwise there is little change of design.

The next section, "Crown the King with Faith", opens with a transition to G major, in which key we have the subjoined, accompanied by arpeggios for harp and strings -

No. 10

As though to give a religious significance to these words the deep notes of the organ are now heard, helping to sustain a tonic pedal, upon which a vocal *ensemble* is constructed; the quartet having a theme in unison, supported by violins in octaves, while the chorus has a different subject in two-part harmony, aided by wood-wind -

Soli Unis.

p God, the King of Kings, _____ Rul - eth earth - ly

No. 11 Chorus Lord _____ of _____ Life, of Life and _____

ppp

4 things; God of great _____ and small,

Death, God a - above us all!

There is now an orchestral interlude of eight bars, which not only serves for a modulation back to the key of E flat major, but also for reiteration of the motto phrase (No 1) with gathering force, the military band taking part. The original *tempo* and key thus approached, the chorus re-enters on "God shall save the King!" -

No. 12

ff God shall save the King, God shall make him great.....

At the last chord above shown, the orchestral bass passage cited in No 6 recurs; much other also comes back. A theme from the introduction (No 2), for example, returns in four-part harmony -

No. 13

f All that hearts can pray, All that lips can sing.

The long triplet phrase (No 4) is likewise heard again, and the motto figures conspicuously, as it is bound to do. Through such interesting reminiscences a climax (*Grandioso*) is entered upon, in which the composer calls up all his reserves. The organ peals; the trumpets and cornets of the military band execute fanfare passages, and the full orchestra is at its loudest, while both quartet and chorus are concerned strenuously to proclaim, "God shall save the King, God shall make him great!" So, with all

possible 'pomp and circumstance,' the *Coda* of the number is approached.

The theme of the *Coda* is that of the 'Trio' in the first number of the composer's 'Pomp and Circumstance,' and was introduced here by request. Before citing it attention should be called to a harp accompaniment, in the nature of a chorale. Dr Elgar has written lovingly for the harp in various parts of this work, and here, save for bass strings, it stands alone in attendance upon the melody, while having a theme of its own. A few bars may be quoted -

Nobilmente.

No. 14

&c.

The melody from 'Pomp and Circumstance' is sung chiefly in unison of all the voices (quartet and chorus), but a clarinet has the first phrase to itself -

Nobilmente.

No. 15

Cl

pp

p cresc.

p All that hearts can pray, —
largamente ed espress.

f

— All that lips can sing, — God shall

f

hear to - day, God shall hear — to - day

sf *pp*

God shall save the King!

The same theme, it may now be said, forms the *Coda* of the entire work, and there, as here, the military band takes a conspicuous place in the closing bars -

No. 16

Trump. & Tromb.

Trump. tacent.

Str.

p *cresc.* *mf*

No 2. - DAUGHTER OF ANCIENT KINGS.
CHORUS.

Daughter of ancient Kings,
Mother of Kings to be,
Gift that the bright wind bore on his sparkling wings,
Over the Northern Sea!

Nothing so sweet he brings,
Nothing so fair to see,
Purest, stateliest, Daughter of ancient Kings,
Mother of Kings to be!

Allegretto espressivo. E flat.

This number is, both as to character and construction, the simplest possible. Only strings are used in accompaniment, and those only in the second stanza, the first being for voices alone. In the vocal part we have a plainly harmonised melody, chiefly "note against note", and there is really nothing to explain or specially press upon attention. But this rare simplicity is not without a purpose. It is effective by contrast with that which goes before, and that which follows after, while its sweetness and tenderness have an obvious application.

No 3. - BRITAIN, ASK OF THYSELF
SOLO (BASS) AND CHORUS (TENOR AND BASS)

Britain, ask of thyself, and see that thy sons be strong,
Strong to arise and go, if ever the war-trump peal;
See that thy navies speed, to the sound of the battle-song,
Then, when the winds are up, and the shuddering bulwarks reel,
Smite the mountainous wave, and scatter the flying foam,
Big with the battle-thunder that echoeth loud and long; -
See that thy squadrons haste, when loosed are the hounds of hell: -
Then shall the eye flash fire, and the valorous heart grow light,
Under the drifting smoke, and the scream of the flying shell,
When the hillside hisses with death, - and never a foe in sight.
So shalt thou rest in peace, enthroned in thine island home; -
Britain, ask of thyself, and see that thy sons be strong!

Marziale. C minor.

For the illustration of these stirring and picturesque lines the composer calls up all his resources. Orchestra, organ, military band, and the entire battery of percussion, are brought into play, and a distinctly military effect is produced throughout by the march-like movement which attends upon the

voices. At the outset we have an introduction, eight bars in length, for instruments only; tonic and dominant chords alternating like the "left, right" of a marching army, while clarinets, horns, &c., announce two subjects afterwards prominent. The first of these is the theme of the opening recit -



The second stands as below -



Following the introductory bars comes the main body of the number; the themes first used being those just shown; the solo voice taking No 17 with part of No 18, and the orchestra employing both as accompaniment to the *ensemble* of solo and chorus. Hence we have -

The continuation on the words, "See that thy navies speed", &c., follows much the same pattern, but includes some important new phrases. This, for example -

In "Smite the mountainous wave," solo and chorus, with military band and percussion, give tremendous emphasis to the first word; while on the line following, "And scatter the flying foam", the violins and wood wind introduce a new and apt figure -



of which later use is made.

The examples above show all the prominent thematic material in the number, which, from the point just reached, is chiefly, as to the subjects, recapitulation. But there are still features which should be indicated; among them a well-conceived and effective change to the tonic major at the line, "So shalt thou rest in peace"; more free and sustained use of the military band, especially in the stanza to which the line just quoted belongs; and a *Coda (poco più lento)* wherein the key of C minor resumes, and a new vocal ensemble presents itself -

The image shows a musical score for 'No. 22'. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system includes a Solo part (bass clef), a vocal part (treble clef) with lyrics 'See that thy sons', and a Chorus part (bass clef). The second system continues the vocal and chorus parts with lyrics 'be strong, thy sons be strong,'. The score features various musical notations including triplets, dynamics like *ff* and *Con fuoco*, and articulation marks.

No 4 (I). - HARK, UPON THE HALLOWED AIR.
SOLI (SOPRANO AND TENOR).

Hark, upon the hallowed air,
Spirits pure of sight and sense,
Hovering visions, rich and fair,
Lend their radiant influence!
Airy powers of Earth and Sky
Bless our meet solemnity!

Music, sweetest child of heaven,
At thy touch the heart is free, -
Ancient wrongs by thee forgiven,
Cares uplifted, healed by thee,
Listen smiling, borne along
In the sacred tide of song.

Music of the poet's heart!
Widening yet the echoes roll;

Fiery secrets, winged by art,
 Light the lonely listening soul,
 Till the aching silence rings
 With the beat of heavenly wings.

Magic web of woven hues,
 Tender shadow, linkèd line,
 Sweet mysterious avenues
 Opening out to Light Divine!
 Painter-poet, thou canst teach
 More than frail and faltering speech.

Moderato, Lento, leading to Andantino. C major.

This, with the number following, is a song of peace and peaceful influences, and all the more sonorous and warlike instruments disappear from the score, leaving only the strings, woodwind, and horns.

The appeal to “airy powers of earth and sky” is assigned to the tenor voice, accompanied chiefly by strings alone. Its fourteen bars are filled with well-balanced vocal phrases, supported by plain diatonic harmony. A brief quotation will suffice -

No. 23

Solo. *Quasi. Recit.*

Str. *p* Hark, up-on the hal-low'd air, Spi-rits pure of sight and sense,

pp

We now enter upon the *Andantino* (C major), the great interest of which lies mainly in the orchestral part. The soprano solo approaches nearly, especially in certain places, to the declamatory, but the accompaniment, suave, melodious, richly harmonised, throws a spell over the whole which, better than the voice, expresses the sentiment of the poetic text. In choosing this method the composer had many precedents to support himself upon. The orchestral themes are mostly given to the strings, though the wind (wood and horns) share them to some extent. Here is the opening phrase, leading up to the entrance of the voice -

No. 24

Str. *p*

It is perhaps the most typical orchestral *motif*, it and its derivatives weaving themselves into the tissue of the music like threads of gold.

At the sixth bar the rhythm changes to 12-8, and in this larger measure, with a new theme, the accompaniment attends upon the voice as below -

No. 25

thee, *largamente.* Lis - ten smil - ing,

Str. Celi.

pp C.B.

2

borne a - long In the sa - - - cred

Viola &va. &c.

The musical score for No. 25 consists of two systems. The first system shows a vocal line with the lyrics 'thee, largamente. Lis - ten smil - ing,' and an orchestral accompaniment for strings (Str.) and cellos/bass (Celi.). The tempo is marked 'largamente.' and the dynamics are 'pp'. The second system shows the vocal line with the lyrics 'borne a - long In the sa - - - cred' and an orchestral accompaniment for viola and strings (Viola &va. &c.). The tempo is marked '2' and the dynamics are '&c.'.

In this manner the solo proceeds, using the orchestral material above indicated, till the final section, "Magic web of woven hues", is reached. Here the theme of the tenor solo recurs (*più mosso*) in the voice part, doubled by the violins in octaves, and, after a few more bars, the passage shown in No 24 brings to an end that which it also began.

(II). ONLY LET THE HEART BE PURE
QUARTET.

Only let the heart be pure,
Pure in steadfast innocence;
Stainless honour, strong and sure,
Stem the ardent tide of sense!
So shall Wisdom, one with Truth,
Keep undimmed the fires of youth.

Strong to conquer, strong to bless,
Britain, Heav'n hath made thee great!
Courage knit with gentleness
Best befits thy sober state.
As the golden days increase,
Crown your victories with peace!

Più Lento. C major.

This Quartet is an integral part of the fourth number, which it brings to an end. Although it introduces new themes the connection is close; the character of the music, the key, the tempo, the orchestra employed, and even some of the subjects being the same as in the soli section. Here, however, owing to the existence of four vocal parts, the writing is more elaborate, and, in that relation, shows the composer at his best.

The tenor voice begins with a solo of two bars, accompanied in close and flowing harmony by woodwind and horns only -

No. 26

Tenor. *dolce.* *pp*

On - ly let the heart_ be pure, _____ Pure in stead - fast in -no - cence,

This subject belongs to the orchestra not less than to the voices, and in a first section of eight bars is almost continuously repeated by the instruments. The method of treatment, both for voices and orchestra, is largely imitative, as the subjoined example shows. It is taken from the accompaniment to the first two bars following the extract given above, and largely doubles the vocal parts -

No. 27

pp Str. Cor. &c.

At the ninth bar begins a section *poco animato*, the soprano voice announcing another important theme -

No. 28

mf

So shall Wis - dom, one with Truth,

Large use is made of this subject in the imitative style before exemplified. The orchestra also is fully concerned with it, sometimes using it where the voices have little more than harmonic significance -

No. 29

2nd Vln. 1st Vln. &c.

Cour - age knit with gen - fle - ness, Cour - age knit with gen - fle - ness, &c.

The Coda (*Tranquillo, espress*) "As the golden days increase", consists of unaccompanied vocal phrases in full harmony, between which the first bar of the opening *Andantino* serves as an interlude.

No 5. - PEACE, GENTLE PEACE.
QUARTET AND CHORUS (UNACCOMPANIED)

Peace, gentle Peace, who, smiling through thy tears,
Returnest, when the sounds of war are dumb,
Replenishing the bruised and broken earth,
And lifting motherly her shattered form;
When comest thou? Our brethren long for thee.

Thou dost restore the darkened light of home,
Give back the father to his children's arms;
Thou driest tenderly the mourner's tears,
And all thy face is lit with holy light; -
Our earth is fain for thee! Return and come!

Andante. F major.

Throughout this number save for a few bars, the orchestra is silent, and voices alone invoke the gentle goddess of peace. There is, however, an orchestral introduction four bars long, the subject being one of those used in the opening chorus (see Ex 2). It is allotted to strings, woodwind, and horns.

The vocal music, not less than that in "Daughter of Ancient Kings", shows the composer's command of tender and pathetic expression by simple means. In the first section (there are two) the chorus is exclusively employed - how employed let the following extract show, better than any number of words -

Legato e cantabile.

No. 30

p Peace, gen - tle Peace, who, smi - ling thro' thy
tears, Re - turn - est when the sounds of war are dumb, &c.

poco allargando.

4

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for a vocal piece. It consists of two systems of music. The first system is labeled 'No. 30' and 'p'. It features a treble clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'Peace, gen - tle Peace, who, smi - ling thro' thy tears, Re - turn - est when the sounds of war are dumb, &c.'. The second system is labeled '4' and 'poco allargando.'. It features a bass clef and a 4/4 time signature. The melody is written on a single staff with lyrics underneath. The lyrics are: 'tears, Re - turn - est when the sounds of war are dumb, &c.'. The score is written in F major and includes dynamic markings like 'p' and 'poco allargando.'.

This is good enough, even as an invocation of peace.

In the second section the orchestra (clarinets, bassoons, horns and strings) is employed to establish the key of A flat major; for this purpose continuing through four bars of the quartet -

No. 31

espress. *pp* Thou dost re -

4 *sf* *dim.* store the dark - en'd light of home, &c.

dim.

The supremely touching and beautiful ending, in which quartet and chorus are used antiphonally, has only to be heard in order to be understood and appreciated.

No 6. - LAND OF HOPE AND GLORY
FINALE (CONTRALTO SOLO AND TUTTI).

Land of hope and glory, Mother of the free,
How may we extol thee, who are born of thee?

Truth and Right and Freedom, each a holy gem,
Stars of solemn brightness, weave thy diadem.

Tho' thy way be darkened, still in splendour drest,
As the star that trembles o'er the liquid West.

Throned amid the billows, throned inviolate,
Thou hast reigned victorious, thou hast smiled at fate.

Land of hope and glory, Fortress of the free,
How may we extol thee, praise thee, honour thee?

Hark, a mighty nation maketh glad reply;
Lo, our lips are thankful, lo, our hearts are high!

Hearts in hope uplifted, loyal lips that sing;
Strong in faith and freedom, we have crowned our King!

Andante. B flat and E flat

The orchestral phrase from the first number which introduced "Peace, gentle Peace", is used here for a like purpose, but when, at its close, the extra percussion and the horns of the military band are heard, though softly, it is easy to conclude that different conditions will soon arise.

But the composer is not going to anticipate his climax. He gives to the solo contralto, with a light accompaniment, the melody already referred to and quoted as that of the Trio in the first March of 'Pomp and Circumstance' -

Cantabile e sostenuto.

No. 32

p Land of hope_ and glo - ry, Mo - ther of the free,
 5 *cresc.*
 How may we ex - tol thee, who are born_ of thee?

The entire melody, with first violins supporting the voice, is given in this modest fashion, and followed by a second section in E flat, for soli and chorus : "Though thy way be darkened". There is here a gradual increase of force, but the big battalions are still held in reserve, while for a theme the composer goes back to the triplet subject which figured in the opening number -

No. 33

pp dolce.

It is with a variant of this that the contraltos open the chorus, supported by tenors and basses -

No. 34

p Though thy way be dark - en'd, still in splen - dour drest,

But treatment of the revived subject is not prolonged. It gives way to a short soprano solo, "Thron'd amid the billows" (*Molto maestoso*), leading to an *ensemble* of soli and chorus, which works, with gathering power, to a point where the trumpets of the military band (*allargando*) reiterate the dominant note (B flat) through two bars. This is the signal to let loose the powers of voices and instruments, bringing them to bear upon the melody already sung by the solo contralto, and now set to different words : "Hark! a mighty nation maketh glad reply". It is unnecessary to describe this imposing treatment of the theme, which makes its way, with more 'pomp and circumstance' than ever before, to the triumphant close, "We have crown'd our King". Then the military band blares the motto phrase a last time, and with a repetition of the words just quoted, the Ode comes to a fitting end.

Elgar's fullest explanation of the Coronation Ode seems to have been in a letter of 1 September 1902 to Herbert Thompson, chief critic of the Yorkshire Post.

My dear Thompson,

I am so very sorry to have kept you so long without definite news of the ode : Mr Bennett's analysis is not ready yet.

My idea was to write the ode on broad majestic lines without undue complication - you will see

my trail however in passages like [fig] 3 to [fig] 4 & much else. The piano score gives, as usual, little idea of the orchestration & still less of the employment of the Military Band - in one place at least there is a device which will delight your soul - that is the uncritical part of it - at 66 where the choir sing the big tune the M. Band suddenly bursts in with 32 ! See score.

You will see I have used the Trio of 'Pomp & Circumstance' no.1 as the climax of the first number 25. The whole thing (the first No) is of course an "address" to Sovereignty in the abstract - very different is No.2. We are allowed to show personal affection to our Queen - Turning the [same direction] in harmony at 'Northern Sea'.

No 3 is frankly military, or rather naval & military & means "fight". At 36 "So shalt thou rest in Peace" I have kept the audacious military tread going in the background and the whole idea is "if you are ready to fight there will be peace"! - which is true I believe : It looks, at first, as though the vows shd have been set *peacefully* - but I don't think so - the promised peace in this case depends upon the military preparedness, hence the setting.

Nos 4 & 5 are obvious in construction. Page 56 - I did not make a great burst on "great" because here the "greatness" seemed to depend upon wisdom, truth & blessing more than the military aspect. The movement is of course "the" tune again & fraction of the 1st movement.

You will notice that as a "link" I use the phrase 1 in several places.

You must forgive my writing however. I have just at this moment heard that my dear old mother has passed away after long and weary suffering.

[This letter was first published in *From Parry to Britten : British Music in Letters 1900-1945*, edited by Lewis Foreman, and published by Batsford in 1987, and is here reproduced by kind permission.]

ELGAR'S POLONIA UPDATED

Joseph A Herter

[This article first appeared in *Polish Music Newsletter*, vol 8, no 1, January 2002 (Los Angeles : Polish Music Center, University of Southern California)]

In November 2001, Elgar Editions in Great Britain issued a new book entitled *Oh, My Horses! Elgar and the Great War*, edited by Lewis Foreman. The book, which deals with the life, times and music of the composer during World War I, includes my essay *Edward Elgar's 'Polonia'*, which appeared in the August 1999 issue of USC's Polish Music Reference Center's Newsletter, a reprint of the same article that appeared in the July issue of the *Elgar Society Journal* of that same year. In *Oh, My Horses!*, however, the article has been retitled *Solidarity and Poland - Elgar's Opus 76*.

Since the 1999 printing, several things regarding Elgar's Polish masterpiece have come to light, including an original copy of the 6 July 1915 program for the first performance of *Polonia*, found in the Elgar Birthplace Museum in Broadheath and included as an illustration in the latest edition of the paper; clippings of reviews of the first American performance of the work, found in the Paderewski Files in the National Archives (*Archiwum Akt Nowych*) in Warsaw; and two articles which appeared in the 1995 Volume I of *Musica Jagellonica* in Cracow : Jadwiga Paja-Stach's *Polish Themes in 'Polonia' by Edward Elgar* and Robert Anderson's *Paderewski and Elgar's 'Polonia'*.

Ms Paja-Stach identifies *Đmia»o podnieŃmy sztandar*, one the Polish melodies used in the symphonic prelude, as being derived from an earlier song known as *Marsz óuawów (March of the Zouaves)*. The original term of Zouave referred to the French infantry units which fought in Algeria. In its Polish connotation, though, the Polish *óuawi* were formed by the French officer François de Rocherbrune to take part in the Polish insurrection of January 1863.¹ This earlier version of the march is printed in the 1915 program and its melodic contour and dotted second-beat rhythms can now be compared to the later version, also known as *The 1905 Warszawianka*, which is also given in its entirety.

The earlier edition of the article only mentioned part of the original program given as a benefit for Paderewski's Polish Victims Relief Fund: the world premiPre of Elgar's *Polonia*, Ignacy Paderewski's (1860-1941) *Polish Fantasy for Piano and Orchestra*, and the second movement of Emil Mynarski's (1870-1935) *Symphony* which also bore the nickname *Polonia*. Actually, the program was much longer and, in addition to several other symphonic pieces, it also included solo violin works by Henryk Wieniawski (1835-1880) performed by Albert Sammons (1886-1957); a Polish folk song and two art songs - one by Mieczysław Karłowicz (1876-1909) and the other by Paderewski - sung by baritone J Campbell McInnes (c1871-1947); and three Chopin piano works performed by a former pupil of Clara Schumann, Leonard Borwick (1868-1925), the soloist for Paderewski's *Polish Fantasy*. Although Elgar, himself, conducted his *Polonia*, the other orchestral works on the program were conducted by Thomas Beecham (1879-1961). These not-earlier-mentioned works included Zygmunt Noskowski's (1846-1909) Symphonic Poem *The Steppe*, Stanisław Moniuszko's (1819-1872) 'Dance of the Polish Mountaineers' from the opera *Halka*, and Zygmunt Stojowski's (1870-1946) *Suite in E flat for Orchestra*, Op 9.

¹ Encyklopedia Powszechna; Warszawa: Pastwowe Wydawnictwo Naukowe, vol IV, p 10, 1987

Fate would have it that Stojowski's music would also share the program that featured the American premiPre of Elgar's *Polonia* at Carnegie Hall on 2 March 1916, with the New York Symphony Society under the direction of Walter Damrosch. This time the concert would feature still another work dedicated to Paderewski other than Elgar's : Stojowski's own *Concerto No 2 in A flat major (Prologue, Scherzo and Variations)*, op 32. The score's dedication to Paderewski, Stojowski's teacher and mentor, reads, 'Au Maitre Paderewski Homage d'affection reconnaissante'. The performance took place with Stojowski's master performing as soloist. The remainder of the New York program included Paderewski also playing Robert Schumann's (1810-1856) *Piano Concerto* and Florent Schmitt's (1870-1958) '*Pupazzi*' *Orchestral Suite*.

Originally, there was only to be one performance of the concert on 4 March. However, Paderewski's performance of the concerto caused quite a sensation in New York. There was such a demand for tickets for the concert on 4 March that an open rehearsal had to be added on 2 March. At the concert on the 4th, the audience refused to leave. It was only after innumerable bows, accompanied by tremendous applause, that the hall once more dimmed its lights and let Paderewski, who was breaking the Symphony Society's rule forbidding soloists to play encores at orchestral concerts, return to the piano and play Stojowski's *Chant d'amour*.² Zygmunt Stojowski's piano concertos are due to be released for the first time as a commercial recording this late winter by the British record company Hyperion. The brilliant British pianist Jonathan Plowright is the featured soloist on the recording.

The New York press went wild with praise for Stojowski, Elgar and Paderewski. Here are some excerpts from the reviews found in the Paderewski Scrap Books in Warsaw. They are all undated, but all are reviews of the 4 March concert. In addition to the ones given below, there are also press clippings from an unidentified Brooklyn paper, *The New York Journal*, *The Brooklyn Citizen*, the local NYC German paper *Staats Zeitung*, and the *New York Evening Post*.

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ELGAR'S 'POLONIA' AND PADEREWSKI CHARM AT CONCERT

With a sign displayed in the lobby of Carnegie Hall 'All Seats Sold,' which is the concert version of 'S.R.O.', yesterday afternoon's first of two gala concerts given by the New York Symphony Society, with Ignacy Paderewski as soloist, was a success. On Thursday there had been a public rehearsal of the concert, but critical comment was not invited by the management, so yesterday was the first official public performance in the city of Sir Edward Elgar's 'Polonia,' a symphonic prelude on Polish themes, written for a Polish benefit concert. It employs some typical Polish themes, including the national air, 'Poland is Not Yet Lost'; a quotation from Chopin's G minor nocturne and a fragment from Mr Paderewski's 'Polish Fantasy'. It is brilliant writing, but rather a composition to fit the occasion of a Polish benefit than a piece which will remain in the concert repertoire for time to come...

From *The New York Herald*

* * *

GALA CONCERT

...There was also distinction added to the occasion by the first performance in this country of a new orchestral work by Sir Edward Elgar, 'Polonia'. This was written and produced in England last year to help the Polish fund, as Sir Edward's 'Carillon' was written to help the Belgian; also, as the composer

² *Paderewski in Concert - Appears as Soloist with New York Symphony Society*, review of 4 March 1916 concert in *The Brooklyn Citizen*

states, in the hope of that it "might be a practical and perhaps useful tribute to my friend Paderewski for the concert in aid of his countrymen". So its appearance on this program had a special appropriateness. 'Polonia' is an "occasional piece", but it has more than the usual value of such pieces. It is based largely on Polish national tunes... The composer has contributed a 'chivalric theme' of his own; a theme worthy of a place with the others. These themes are used with a true constructive skill in building up a composition of strong fibre and stirring power. It is by no means a 'fantasia' on Polish airs; the composer has used his chosen material with the resources of a creative artist, making of it something new, with a new value of its own. There is the suggestion, in the dirge-like opening, of Poland's present sorrow; there are passages that recall past glories. The theme of Chopin - coming as Mrs Newmarch says, in her skilful analysis of the work, as an apparition, a shadow from the past - is followed by Paderewski's making apparent "the presence of a vivid and living personality"; and for a short moment the two themes united show the "two patriotic souls linked in musical communion". There is a brilliant climax of 'Poland is not yet lost', a regenerated Poland.

All of this is accomplished with the skill of a master craftsman in the manipulation of the thematic material and the imaginative power of an artist in evoking a vision. The orchestra has the glowing richness of Elgar's palette, with perhaps in some places an overemphasis of brass. The piece, even if it be no lasting contribution to modern literature, is impressive...

From *The New York Times*

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SYMPHONY SOCIETY WITH PADEREWSKI ELGAR'S 'POLONIA' GIVEN

...The programmes of both concerts were the same. The first number was Sir Edward Elgar's new symphonic poem, 'Polonia'. After this Mr Paderewski was heard in the Schumann concerto. Florent Schmitt's little humorous suite 'Pupazzi' followed, and then Mr Paderewski and the orchestra played the prologue, scherzo and variations of Sigismund Stojowski, a Polish resident of this city and a pupil of the famous pianist.

Elgar's symphonic poem was written for a concert in aid of the Polish Victims Relief Fund given in Queen's Hall, London on July 6, 1915. It rests largely upon popular Polish melodies, which are used with skill and effectiveness to be expected from a composer of Elgar's ability. Possibly the Polish heart is most stirred by hearing the melody 'Poland is not yet lost'... But no portion of the work is more beautiful than that which consists of a skilfully treated quotation from Paderewski's 'Polish Fantasia' for piano and orchestra...

From *The New York Sun*

* * *

N.Y. SYMPHONY AND PADEREWSKI HEARD

...The programme began with Sir Edward Elgar's symphonic Prelude 'Polonia'. The work is intended as the great English composer's tribute to suffering Poland. He has based the Prelude on Polish themes, ingeniously interweaving with them musical quotations from Chopin (signifying the past), and Paderewski (the present). It represents Elgar in his most eloquent and majestic moods...

From *The New York American*

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GREAT CROWDS SEE PADEREWSKI

Hundreds Too Late to Get Seats at His Second Concert of Season

PIANIST PLAYS WITH DAMROSCH

Interprets New Elgar Music, Aided by Symphony Society's Orchestra

...The Elgar symphonic prelude made a pleasing if not profound impression. It was written for Mr Paderewski's London concert in aid of the Poles, and employs three national themes, to which is added a fourth of chivalric character, in which the composer expresses his admiration for Poland... Sir Edward in the climax made very effective use of 'Poland Is Not Yet Lost', and this climax is perhaps the most interesting moment of the prelude. It is, however, throughout a very workmanlike and musicianly production, and in its use of the various national themes exceedingly clever...

From *The New York Tribune*

ELGAR AND ENGLISHNESS

[Three excellent pieces of writing follow, all on the subject of Elgar and his "Englishness", a theme which still intrigues and divides Elgarians.

The first is by Samuel Langford (1863-1927), chief music critic of the Manchester Guardian from 1905 until his death. He showed an early talent for music and was sent to study under Carl Reinecke in Leipzig. He followed Arthur Johnstone and Ernest Newman as chief critic, and was succeeded by Neville Cardus, who edited a selection of Langford's writings in 1929. The following article was published in February 1922.]

Now that the end of the war has brought back to us the conception of music as an international art - the one common speech of man - it has sent us back to our English composers with the question, "Can they stand this test?" and it is significant that the question has brought the music of Elgar once more into a special prominence. Mr G B Shaw, faced with the question whether Elgar was one of music's immortals in the world sense, answers first that his toughness makes him that or nothing, and then gives his answer in Elgar's favour. But even Mr Shaw admits that to announce this view is to anticipate the verdict of time; and an Englishman may be forgiven if he prefers to linger more lovingly on the English traits of Elgar's genius. The world, as musicians think of it, is still a very long way from being a complete world, and includes only the main cities of Europe and, latterly, a few cities in America. And even regarding it as no more, this world of music is still a very long way from acknowledging Elgar as a world master, and America has not even the excuse of a strange language for its neglect of his choral works. But these considerations will not greatly trouble any one who reflects that the first necessity of art is to be indigenous, and that, given a secure fame in that view, world fame scarcely matters. To our own feeling, the true revelation of Elgar's music has been found, not everywhere in England, but is bound up with certain golden days of autumn when, sitting in the cathedrals of Worcester, Gloucester and Hereford, we have heard Elgar himself at work, conducting the succession of his choral works which, more than the music of Mendelssohn, Handel or even Bach, have vitalised the music of the Three Choirs' Festival in recent years. Here, in these works, we have known music, as music everywhere ought to be - an art indigenous, creative, serious, free, and life-quickenning, as it can become only under such conditions. The consciousness that an art has grown up to maturity from the very ground on which you are treading, and is bearing its blossom and its fruit all around you, is something very different from the feeling that it has been brought to you from a very long way, or that somewhere, in a distant country, there is a man who has something to tell you for your life's delight and your soul's good if only you will take the requisite trouble to get to him. For this reason the creative element is necessary everywhere for an art to flourish and for us to be fully conscious of its beauty and delight. It is more to the point that Elgar's music should work this kind of miracle in the place where it is made than that it should maintain a doubtful place side by side with the already sufficient masterpieces of the world.

Sir Thomas Beecham has told us that when he stood up under the blue sky of Italy to conduct what he had judged were masterpieces of English music he found that for Italian conditions there was something wrong with them. They may not be, on that account, the less vital for us, but may even be more so, for they may apply the more strongly to our own case. For if the delight of art is something divergent from the delight of life, it is in some sense a reflection of it, and unless life were sometimes sweet, art itself could have no sweetness. Elgar's music may, under certain conditions, be felt as cold, but it also has in its coldness a great intensity. Elgar also has in his work as a practical musician this peculiar combination of gifts. He comes on the scene, and a great seriousness pervades it. To hear him begin, say, with the overture to *Gerontius* is to experience a chill seriousness which no other experience in music can afford. There are plenty of other things in music which bring us tragic thought, but they do not affect us in the

same way. And though much of Elgar's music is in its essence and purpose lively, it all produces upon us something of this Gerontian expression. We feel it as something in Elgar's very regard for the art of music. To other people music may be something sensuous, light-hearted, or casual. To him it is something serious, intense. He said in his young days that the air was full of music, and that you only, so to speak, had to open your hand to catch it. Yet the suggestion of a later musical work of the composer is that all delight is fugitive, and this view applies more forcibly to Elgar's sparse and deliberate way of working.

It is as true of him as of Beethoven or Wagner that he comes out of each work a new man. There has been but one *Dream of Gerontius*, but one work lyrical and perfectly unified. The *Dream of Gerontius* before Elgar touched it was hardly to be called a poem. Like a hard, rocky substance, it was as nothing until the waters of music had flowed over it and the creeping plants of musical embroidery had worked their roots into its being, and, thus softened, its hard substance was seen to imprison a heart. Its unity and hardness kept the composer to his task and wrung from him a masterpiece.

Gerontius was first appreciated in Germany, where it has left, as far as one can judge, no influence. In England it changed the face of music. It emancipated the English composer, and, however weak he may be still, he has since *Gerontius* written in freedom and after his own heart. Elgar went on to write an oratorio. *The Apostles* is in bulk and power a greater work than *Gerontius*. The composer's idea had both unity and greatness, but he endeavoured to carry it out under the old delusion that a Biblical work needed only to be Biblical to have literary life. When the composer's main idea of a pontifical apostolism came strongly upon him he brought forth great music in the composition of *The Apostles*, but it was very much by his own power and very little by a compelling poetic impulse. He went on farther, to write *The Kingdom*, and in these works there were already the signs of a ripeness more intent on mellowness of effect than on directness and energy. These works had a tremendous influence on the development of choral singing in England, which was only dispersed by the outbreak of war.

Richter had at this time taken Elgar as it were on both shoulders and held him up for the English people to worship. The result was seen in Elgar's first great breakaway from choral writing - the heroic Symphony in A Flat which was dedicated to Richter and first performed by the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester in December 1908. A great future was expected for the symphony, but its popularity is hampered by its heaviness and great length, and the smaller second Symphony on Shelley's words "Rarely, rarely comest thou, Spirit of Delight" is now generally held to be the more beautiful. Apart from these works of scope, Elgar turned aside to write, during a winter in Italy, a number of difficult and very beautiful part-songs, apparently designed for use at competitive festivals, but in difficulty so far overshooting their mark that they are in bulk still insufficiently known.

After the war Elgar brought forth unexpectedly a group of chamber works which form a very fine nucleus for a modern English school of chamber music. He could hardly by any extension of his purely orchestral works have done anything quite so serviceable to English musical life. In still another field - that of the concerto - he has written two remarkable works. His own early love of the violin and the proximity of Kreisler prompted the first, and here again his innate seriousness of aim saved him from the common error of meretriciousness and enabled him to succeed beyond every expectation. We have left out of the account the variations, overtures, and symphonic poems. All these works, notably the *Enigma Variations*, which had so marked a romantic quality that they almost linked him with Schumann, are worthy of a composer who has been everywhere so serious in his aim as to do all things well. His work is so uniformly good that no-one has yet attempted to say which of all his compositions will most assuredly outlive him.

[J B Priestley (1894-1984), the novelist and playwright, had a great love for Elgar's music, and wrote about it on many

occasions (see Frank Beck's article in the *JOURNAL*, July 1995). The following is taken from his book *The Edwardians*.]

These years were Elgar's. Between 1905 and 1911 he produced his magnificent Introduction and Allegro for Strings, his two symphonies, and the violin concerto. Both his detractors and his admirers like me see him as music's Edwardian. I am ready to accept the Edwardian label for him, but then I think people who sneer at him fail to understand either Elgar or the Edwardian age. They take his weaknesses - the brassy pomp, the too obvious *nobilmente* - then blow them up and attach them to a false picture of the age, which did not simply consist of the British Empire still untroubled, garden parties and champagne suppers, and the Guards on parade. Certainly, as we have already discovered, Elgar genuinely admired King Edward. It is easy to understand why he should have done. Apart from his music and all that it involved, Elgar was a modest man, almost naive; he was a self-made provincial musician, who married a woman a few years older than himself, a member of a socially superior family; and though he had the *Enigma* variations and *Gerontius* behind him, he could not help feeling delighted by King Edward's reception of him. (Elgar was deeply devoted to his wife, the daughter of a major-general, and it is more than likely that his tendency to be ultra-conservative and chauvinistic was the result of her influence.) His Second Symphony, the E flat, had at least been sketched out some years before the First, 1908, but was not finished until 1911, when it had to be dedicated to King Edward's memory. Though the noble slow movement, which explores the depths of grief, is generally held to be an elegy for the late king, we know now that the loss of his friend, Rodewald, back in 1904 when he first began work on the symphony had distressed him terribly. "O my god; it is too awful", he had written to a friend; and we can catch that cry in certain moments of the slow movement.

Elgar is essentially Edwardian, not because of his pomps and circumstances and his increasing enjoyment - though perhaps, better, his enjoyment of his wife's enjoyment - of the society of important personages and a fine style of living; but because there is in him and his music all the rich confusion of this age, the deepening doubt, the melancholy whispers from the unconscious, as well as all that hope and glory. He is very English in this, just as he is in his characteristic rhythms and cadences. I have heard many great foreign conductors playing Elgar, but it has always seemed to me that they never quite reproduce the right shape and flow of him as conductors like Boult and Barbirolli have been able to do. Over and above his inventiveness and magnificent orchestration, and more important than they are, is something that never fails even now to ravish my ear and catch at my heart. It is the kind of passage, for ever recurring, when strings are quietened and the jagged thunder of his brass has gone, and like a purple-and-sepia sunset suddenly revealing patches of purest cerulean or fading apple-green, it is all different, strangely beautiful as music and catching at the heart because the man himself, no longer masterful, seems to be staring at us out of a sorrowful bewilderment. These moments when the *persona* is dropped are to me the secret of Elgar's lasting enchantment. The musicologists who shrug him away, because he added little or nothing to the formal development of the art, cannot want to find in music any communication from a great fellow man. His *Falstaff* is a glorious feast of sound, but it is not about Falstaff, better suggested by Verdi in his old age. It is a pity that Strauss did not tackle Falstaff, and Elgar Don Quixote. Clamped into his retired-colonel-off-to-the-races persona, he outlasted the Edwardian era by nearly twenty years, and his last major work, the 'cello concerto in 1919, is more or less a lament, in which we catch him looking back, not merely with nostalgia but often with anguish, at the Edwardian years, gone for ever.

[Alex Cohen (1884-1953) was born in Leeds, and as a violinist was active in chamber music in the city in the early years of the 20th century, and led the Leeds Symphony Orchestra from 1915 to 1920, when he became leader of the newly-formed City of Birmingham Orchestra. He also founded the Bloch Society. The following article by Cohen, entitled 'This Englishness', appeared in Radio Times on 14 July 1933. The concerts

referred to in the first paragraph were celebrating the composer's 75th birthday.]

In a leading article in the *Radio Times* introducing the first of the Elgar celebration concerts last autumn occurred this sentence : "His (Elgar's) idiom, his musical philosophy, the very turn of his melodies and the colour of his scoring, are such as could have come only from one born and reared in the heart of England."

Is it true?

Busoni (Italian-German) was the greatest exponent of the Hungarian Liszt : Toscanini (Italian) is the ideal Wagner interpreter, Harold Samuel a great Bach player, Beecham an unequalled Mozart conductor, Donald Tovey a profounder writer on German music than any German. On which patch of earth, then, must one be born to understand Beethoven, the Dutch German? The French mulatto, Dumas, has sold here by the million. Our most 'English' novelist, Dickens, has for almost a century been a best-seller in France and Russia. Are foreigners attracted by his Englishness? What is the common English factor in the poems of Herrick, Browning, and D H Lawrence; in the paintings of Turner, Rossetti, and Brangwyn; in the music of Elgar, Delius, and Walton? Do our composers use exclusively English rhythms, harmonies, and orchestral colouring, or, if not, do they by some secret fusion or mingling of the elements of music achieve an amalgam recognisable as English?

It seems to me that they do neither, and that we stimulate our pride of possession by conveniently ignoring the purely personal idiom and idiosyncrasies of our great men and lumping their characteristics together as "national" - a proceeding common to all nations. Can love of one's country or the race among which one was born produce such exclusive traits in a work of art that we can say "This is definitely French, German, or Italian"? I submit that the greatest works in literature and music cannot be pigeon-holed in these "national" categories.

Let us begin with Shakespeare.

By some sublime alchemy each thought that came to him was clad in beauty. An idea struck the kaleidoscope of his mind and at once assumed a magical shape and colouring. His mature plays scintillate with jewels of imagery such as no other artificer in speech ever wrought, and, had he been professional philosopher instead of actor, he would have lit the firmament of human speculation with an inner universe of stars. But wherein does his *Englishness* lie? I cannot tell. If a poet believes in his race's high destiny he will be a patriot. No beloved land was ever apostrophised in such glowing language as that of Gaunt's speech, "This royal throne of kings". If Shakespeare had been a Spaniard we should still be reading the deathless invocation, but in an English translation. He would still have had his unmatched imaginative genius and would have seen his changing world through the eyes of his creations. Apart from the invocation, what is there peculiarly English in the *imaginative treatment of Richard II? Hamlet and Antony and Cleopatra, King Lear and The Tempest* are no more and no less English than the plays dealing with our insular historical material. Choice of national subject-matter does not make a man a restrictedly national artist. In whatever land Shakespeare had been born he would have been a patriot.

This is equally true of Elgar.

His Second Symphony is dedicated as a "loyal tribute" to the memory of King Edward VII. Elgar's finely-nerved, ardent, and aspiring mind and temperament - all are there, together with his harmonic predilections, personal technique and instrumentation. What of the Englishness? His First Symphony was dedicated to a German, Richter, who was constitutionally incapable of experiencing Elgar's Shelleyan raptures and ecstatic reveries. Richter's insensitive handling of *The Dream of Gerontius* at its

first performance helped to cloud its fortunes until its qualities were revealed in *Germany by another German*, Richard Strauss. Its 'Englishness' was hidden from Englishmen. Was it its German character that fired the Germans? And, if so, why did Richter so lamentably miss that 'Teutonic' quality? The truth is that Elgar had no predecessor, English or German : he will leave no heir. But for him that note would never have been sounded in music.

Think of Purcell's 'When I am laid in earth', the Cavatina from Beethoven's Thirteenth Quartet, 'Have mercy, Lord,' from Bach's *St Matthew Passion*. What is there English or German here? Like all great art they transcend nationality and reach out to the ends of the earth. The lesser the mind or the degree of incandescence that accompanies the making of even consciously 'patriotic' music, the more clearly will 'national' characteristics stand out : *and these are generally reducible to formulae*. There is the supreme instance of Beethoven in the 'Choral' Symphony, which he called a 'German' Symphony (after writing it for an English Society). Is there anything in it to justify that title beyond the fact that the Finale was a setting of words from a German poem? If there is a solitary exclusively German trait in that work it has eluded me. When Beethoven was moved to take wings into the Empyrean he made music for mankind. The heavens are too vast to canopy a few square miles of chosen earth.

Not even Elgar's *Spirit of England* is insularly English. Singing through these English aspirations, the voices of the nations are to be heard. If he and Binyon had lived in America, *Spirit of England* would still have sung the spirit of humanity however its title might have fared. Had Elgar's parents emigrated to Boston before he was born, the USA would be claiming his music as "a hundred per cent American". Had he been brought up in a village near Worcester, Massachusetts, instead of Worcester, England, he would still have sung of God, fields, and flowers : he would still have loved his Shakespeare and written his *Falstaff* : and, fantastic as it may seem, he would still have been proud of the country of his birth. It is said that the most satisfying conductor of Elgar is Elgar. Is he more English than our other conductors, or is it simply that in conducting - *re-creating* - he feels once again what he felt during creation? How, with conviction, can he help convincing?

A composer's ideal interpreter is, theoretically, a fellow countryman. I heard Richter, who rehearsed the first performance of the *Siegfried Idyll* under Wagner's guidance, give it several times, but I recollect a performance at Bradford that was the most phlegmatic reading of this masterpiece I ever heard. We all detest sentimentality where sentiment is implicit, but the only German quality that reading had was, not German tenderness and a poet's fresh delight in fatherhood, but German stodge - which is much like any other brand of stodge.

The German claims Shakespeare as German by adoption. We do no less by Delius. Is it his German parentage or his birth at Bradford that makes his music so British? *He* has not even the inbred cultural nurture of English forbears to delude us into reading Anglo-Saxon qualities into his music. His student years were spent in Germany, part of his early manhood in Florida and most of his adult life in France. Even if he had come of English ancestry, how English could we have expected his music to remain? What other Englishman does he resemble? He is wonderfully like - Delius. He is just as emphatically like no German.

We read the newspapers to see whether we really enjoyed last night's concert. If we call this 'alter-suggestion', what of that self-delusion, auto-suggestion? When "allied" bands played 'God Save the King' during the war, some perceived a foreign flavour in it. What more natural? The eye will bias the ear. How many of us have been deluded by this collusion into believing, while hearing some Blue Hungarian Band, that we were getting the intoxicating native strain, until a Cockney or Lancashire accent ruined the illusion? Yet who has not heard our National Anthem "played" by genuine Britons with the

fervour of Soviet agents? And the players were not Britain's enemies but unmusical Englishmen.

BOOK REVIEWS

Oh, My Horses! Elgar and the Great War, edited by Lewis Foreman.

Elgar Editions, 2001. xvi + 496 pp, hardback.
£25 (£21 to Elgar Society members): CD included.

As Elgar Society members will know better than most, Elgar has - generally speaking - been well served by those who have written about him and not least by this latest volume, which explores in depth his life and works during 1914-18. However - and this greatly enhances the value of this generous and competitively-priced publication - it does not confine itself simply to Elgar but (and this is particularly so of the chapters comprising Part 1 thereof) it seeks to place him in the context of British music and perhaps even British history generally during those years. He is of course the "lead player" in the book and that is as it should be, because by almost universal consent he was at that time regarded as Britain's greatest composer; I say "almost", because the book occasionally recalls in passing some mean-spirited comments by musicians associated with Cambridge - but we all know about those sad blots on the reputation of a great university. Thus we have valuable articles from Jeremy Dibble underlining the overwhelmingly German-based character of pre-1914 British serious music (for better or worse, nothing was ever the same in that direction after the war); from the Editor, who gives us an outstandingly good short overview of the state of music in this country during 1914-18; and from Stephen Lloyd, who puts an expert spotlight on Bournemouth's music in those years.

On Elgar himself Andrew Neill views the progress of his war through the pages of Lady Elgar's diary, and later in the book studies Elgar's wartime output and, in greater detail, his "non-war" music of those years (*The Starlight Express* - one of Elgar's longest scores, incidentally - and *The Sanguine Fan*); Joseph Herter looks at *Polonia* (and surely this is the last word thereon); Brian Trowell brilliantly considers the "Brinkwells" music; the Editor analyses the three Cammaerts musical recitations; and John Norris studies *The Spirit of England*, both the vicissitudes this work - surely and by some distance Elgar's finest achievement of the war - endured during its gestation and the music itself, the latter rather concisely for some devotees, though this reviewer, for one, always applauds *concise* musical analysis!

The War was a tragic time for everyone, for Elgar, who deplored its waste and the cataclysmic effect it had on many things he held dear, as much as anyone. The fatal casualties included the son of his one-time fiancée Helen Weaver (we need not necessarily follow Mr Trowell's "playing the Helen Weaver card", however stimulatingly, in his suggestion that this had a major effect on the Brinkwells music); his collaborator Rudyard Kipling's son John; and, discussed here in a chapter by Charles Hooley, the fine baritone Charles Mott, whose part in *The Fringes of the Fleet* (words by Kipling, music by Elgar) may be appreciated on the accompanying CD. This gathers together, in finely managed Dutton transfers, a varied collection of appropriate recordings. Some, like the Mott *Fringes*, the Henry Ainley version of *Carillon*; and patriotic songs by Parry (*Hymn to the Aviators*), Edward German (his setting of Kipling's poignant *Have You News of My Boy Jack?*), Cowen (Harry Dearth sounds wonderfully virile in his *We Sweep the Seas*), and - clearly showing his skill as a composer of musical comedy - Paul Rubens, all come from the war itself. Others, like Peter Dawson's classic singing of 'Farewell' from Stanford's *Songs of the Fleet*, and Basil Maine's recitation of Wilfred Owen's almost unbearably moving poem 'Spring Offensive' (from Arthur Bliss's *Morning Heroes*) come from the 1930s. Others still come from live performances of 1975 conducted by that great, if unsung, Elgarian Leslie Head. Here it is a pity that Alvar Lidell, of famous memory, is too backwardly balanced in his version of *Carillon*, but it is good to have these, too, not least the two excerpts from the post-war *Pageant of Empire* of which 'A Song of Union' is, to my knowledge,

not available on record anywhere else.

On the Empire, perhaps the most thought-provoking chapter of the whole book is Bernard Porter's, which questions whether Elgar was an imperialist, still less a "jingoist" composer. With his broad conclusions we may agree (I had previously reached them), though we may query bits of his "working". For example, were Britain's lower classes, and with them the young Elgar, as indifferent to the Empire as he suggests? And did Sullivan really write more explicitly imperial pieces than Elgar? (Of these, Professor Porter quotes the *Boer War Te Deum* which for all its incorporation of *Onward Christian Soldiers* is decidedly - and to me, movingly - down-beat). Porter also says (p 146) that *The Fringes of the Fleet* was the only time that Elgar set Kipling, forgetting the admittedly slight *Big Steamers*; and Alice Elgar did not "rule Elgar's manuscript paper when they were too poor to buy it" (she ruled the bar lines, a different thing altogether).

Several of the chapters have previously appeared in other publications, notably those by Andrew Neill, Charles Hoey and Joseph Herter in this JOURNAL, but all of those have been thoroughly revised and sometimes extended for this book. The Reference Section at the back includes an 'Elgarian Chronology 1914-18', compiled from various sources including, again, Lady Elgar's diary (some overlaps in the book are inevitable and indeed can be useful), plus a comprehensive Bibliography and a select Discography of appropriate music by Elgar and others. The production is excellent with by my count 109 black-and-white illustrations, many of them fascinating and some not to be encountered anywhere else, all helping to convey the atmosphere of the period, and twenty music examples. For a book of this size I noticed relatively few misprints; one worth correcting is on p 100 where the Ruhleben inmates are stated to include "Quentin Morvaren", actually Quentin Morvaren Maclean, son of Alick Maclean of Scarborough fame and a light music composer of some note. There are three other minor points to comment on. Charles Mott died of his wounds during the Third Battle of the Aisne and not the Second Battle of the Marne, which did not take place until July 1918 (cf. p 442). The Editor omits on p 129 to mention Barbirolli among the post-war champions of Elgar. And for him to say on p 284 that the 1942 Binyon version of the *Carillon* text (which alludes to the fact that church bells were, after 1940, not to be rung except to signal a German invasion!) "disappeared without trace" is not quite correct. As recently as 1989 your reviewer spoke Binyon's words in a concert performance of *Carillon* by a Doncaster orchestra; admittedly in quality these fall breathtakingly short of Cammaerts' original and that is, by general consent, not great poetry. (It might be interesting, though, to have a recording of the former, if only as a curiosity.)

All in all, this volume should be essential reading - and, for some chapters at least, repeated re-reading - for everyone interested, not just in Elgar but in music in Great Britain generally.

Philip Scowcroft

The Dream of Gerontius, by John Henry Newman.

*Family Publications, 2001. 74 pp, paperback. £4.95
Available from 77 Banbury Road, Oxford OX2 6LF*

This publication was brought out last year to celebrate the bicentenary of Newman's birth. It contains a Foreword by the Roman Catholic Archbishop of Birmingham, and an introduction by Rev Gregory Winterton of the Birmingham Oratory. This last is a well-written description of the poem and the background to its composition. Then follows 'Elgar's Dream', a brief account of the genesis of Elgar's work, written by Thames Valley Branch member Denis Riches, who is the publisher of the book.

The text is set out as in the original poem and is in large type. The version is Newman's original from *The Month* in 1865, not the later revision; thus there are two points at which the words differ from Elgar's setting - "But hark! a deep mysterious harmony", and "Softly and gently, dearest, sweetest soul". Illustrations include photographs of the two men, and of pages from the respective manuscripts; and an appendix to the book contains a discography.

The Editor

Light Music in Britain since 1870 : a survey, by Geoffrey Self.

Ashgate, 2001. £45

It is not disputed that Elgar's output includes a substantial amount of light music, which (to use Mr Self's definition) shall "divert rather than disturb, entertain rather than disquiet". Perhaps wisely, he does not go too much further down the road of definition, though he views light music widely (as I do myself) and includes chapters on piano and choral music for example. At times, and perhaps inevitably he appears to contradict himself. Elgar's *Coronation March* (1911) "has emotional implications too serious to rank as light music". On another page, however, he regards Elgar's early choral works as "light in the sense that their subjects are not profound" - *The Banner of St George* maybe is, but surely not *The Black Knight*, which is virtually a choral symphony, nor, its glittering march apart, *Caractacus*.

Mr Self's story begins in 1870, appropriately, with Sullivan, although many light music institutions (the ballad concert, the promenade concert, and the brass band among them) along with other important factors like railways, metal framed pianos and cheaper music printing are datable to the 1840s if not earlier. Chapters deal with British comic opera, virtually invented by Sullivan, abetted by Gilbert (though Mr Self should have said more about Sullivan's non-Gilbert operas) and carried on by others, metamorphosing into musical comedy on the way, and with "incidental" theatre music in its great era either side of 1900. Ballads (though the author appears to view them with less than enthusiasm and he implies that Elgar's ventures in that field were less than popular, ignoring the success of *Shepherd's Song* and, later, *Pleading*) and music-hall (which he prefers and indeed it was a lively influence, musically) are also well covered. Most of all he discusses the orchestral music written in the period 1870-1950 which is the "great glory of British light music" and surely the envy of other nations. Elgar's achievement in this is given its full due (even his light piano music is briefly discussed) and many intelligent and thoughtful comments are offered thereon. True, not all will agree with the suggestion that large-scale Elgar orchestral works comprise miniatures strung together, though the influence of many of these miniatures in major Elgar is undeniable. Mr Self also regards the *Sea Pictures* as "light songs" - 'Where Corals Lie' probably is and maybe 'In Haven', handicapped by Alice's indifferent verse, but not, surely 'The Swimmer'? A few minor errors relating to Elgar have crept in (there are more misprints generally than one would expect in an Ashgate volume) - *Sevillana* is Opus 7, not 17; the *Serenade for Strings* is Opus 20, not Opus 20 no 1; and the original accompaniment of *From the Bavarian Highlands* was for piano solo, not piano duet.

But enough of carping. This is a beautifully written major survey of British light music and its development over a period of more than a century which relates that music to the British musical scene generally and even, especially when the narrative arrives at 1914-18 and 1939-45, the overall history of the country. No significant light music composer is ignored and many are illuminated in fresh and stimulating detail, with the aid of 30 musical examples. The price may deter some, but this is a volume which should be on the shelves of all who are interested in this country's musical history.

Philip Scowcroft

Music Maker : an appreciation of the life and work of Clifford Harker,

by Margaret Hilton.

*Verona House Publications, 2001. 162 + xxiv pp. £18.75 (incl. postage)
available from 382 Church Road, Frampton Cotterell, Bristol BS36 2AB*

The cause of music in this country has been nobly served over the years by people such as Clifford Harker. Society members may well know him as the first Chairman of the South-West Branch, and more recently as Branch Patron : he was also made an Honorary Member of the Society in 1994. Dr Harker was Organist of Bristol Cathedral for thirty-four years from 1949, and was very active in music making, conducting a number of local choirs, including the Bristol Cathedral Special Choir, and the choral societies of Bristol and Bath. Margaret Hilton has put together a very readable book, with generous anecdotal material provided by a whole host of people, including ex-choristers, who all testify to the graciousness, charm and dedication of this man, who died two years ago at the age of 87.

The music of Elgar played a large part in Harker's life, and a useful appendix - showing a list of the major works he conducted with the three choirs mentioned above - gives twelve performances of *Gerontius*, nine of *The Kingdom*, three of *The Apostles*, seven of *The Music Makers*, two of the Te Deum and Benedictus, and one of *Caractacus*. Only *Messiah* - given annually - exceeded the number of performances of *Gerontius*. There are Elgarian anecdotes from the likes of David Johnston and Brian Rayner Cook; and a letter from Carice Elgar-Blake after a performance of *The Kingdom* in 1968 in which she says : "... your reading was perfect... I never hope to hear a better performance".

The author eschews a chronological approach to her subject; the various chapters deal with the cathedral, with choirs and orchestras, and with organs in the churches Harker was associated with, and so on. This inevitably leads to repetition in places, and the book lacks an index, which would have been helpful; also, such things as organ specifications, if needed at all, are best kept in an appendix. However, Mrs Hilton's enthusiasm for her subject keeps the reader's interest. The book's appeal is enhanced by more than forty black-and-white illustrations, and is a worthy memorial of a great Elgarian, musician, and human being.

The Editor

Imperialism & Music - Britain 1876-1953, by Jeffrey Richards.

Manchester University Press, 2001. Hardback £55. Paperback £19. 99

It is unfortunate that today 'Imperialism' has become a dirty word, removed from its original meaning. 'Patriotism' too is in danger of following suit, as instanced by the ludicrous decision to cancel the usual flag-waving and singing at last year's 'Last Night of the Proms.' It was the more ridiculous since the USA, where the September outrage had struck, was almost overwhelmed by an understandable surge of patriotism, and flags were being waved with great enthusiasm.

This preamble serves as a warning, for this book is a fascinating survey of music in many forms - popular song, music hall, military marches, patriotic odes, the symphony, the hymn, the Aldershot Tattoos, Armistice Day, Empire Day, and singers such as the Australian Peter Dawson, the Canadian Madame Albani, and the British Dame Clara Butt. Exhibitions and Festivals too gave rise to much music-making, and not just in Britain. Parades and Celebrations were the norm in many parts of the British Empire, and were certainly not at that time glorying in our dominance over Kipling's "lesser breeds." Perhaps this is

the right moment to look sensibly at patriotism and pride of Empire (an Empire now almost extinct), and the arts which arose from it.

The book is an example of excellent research, and the use of that research in such a way as to immediately involve the reader. There are fifteen chapters, all with bibliographies, and although united by a common theme they have the advantage that they can be read individually, in the same way that one lecture out of a series can be appreciated. Of course, the chapters overlap, and occasionally the same information is forthcoming. Elgar has his chapter, and many other mentions, as does Arthur Sullivan. Even opera, operetta, ballet, and film music (the 1930s saw a number of films celebrating an 'Imperial heritage'), are treated in depth, but all in the most readable and interesting way. The author is Professor of Cultural History at Lancaster University, and if this is the standard which he applies to his University tutorials, then his students are indeed fortunate. If I have a tiny criticism it is that in the chapter on Clara Butt the author has relied too much on that curious authoress Winifred Ponder, whose adulatory biography of the singer remains, remarkably, the only book on the great lady.

This is a substantial volume, 534 pp. but the hardback price of £55 does surprise. Fortunately, the paperback price of £19.99 is a much more realistic figure, and readers are recommended to purchase without delay. It is a remarkable study which will become a standard work.

Ronald Taylor

RECORD REVIEWS

In the South (Alassio) - Concert Overture, Op 50 (recorded Kingsway Hall, June 1955). Symphony No 1 in A flat, Op 55 (recorded No 1 Studio, Abbey Road, September 1949)

*London Philharmonic Orchestra conducted by Sir Adrian Boult
Testament SBT 1229*

It is difficult to assess Sir Adrian Boult's legacy these days. Andrew Achenbach's valuable notes that accompany this important disc remind us of Sir Adrian's "indelible link with Elgar". Boult's style has gone out of fashion, presaged during his career by more "limelight-seeking" conductors such as Bernstein and Karajan. Both were instinctive musicians, but Karajan ended his life believing as much in his publicity as his art.

In Sir Adrian, as with Barbirolli - a personality completely different to Boult - the music always came first. I never attended a Barbirolli concert; the nearest I came was that I had tickets for a concert he was scheduled to conduct, but he died just before it. On the other hand it was Boult who moulded much of my earliest musical education, and he remains, with Vernon Handley (for whom Boult was a mentor), the conductor whose beat I never had difficulty in following.

My musical memories of Sir Adrian (I think that sounds better than 'Boult') rest on works with which he was closely associated such as the Vaughan Williams 5th Symphony, Schubert's Great C major, all the Brahms Symphonies and the greatest live 'Eroica' I can remember. The following week Sir Adrian conducted one of the dullest Choral Symphonies perhaps, thereby, giving me a glimpse of his musical sympathies. However, it is in Elgar that he remains most vivid, with several *Enigmas* and *Dreams of Gerontius*, *Falstaff*, the symphonies and concertos and *The Kingdom*. My last conducting memory of him is at a promenade concert in the A Flat Symphony, where the clarinet phrase at the end of the Adagio was drowned by a fit of coughing. Ironically an earlier Albert Hall performance of *The Dream of Gerontius*

had also been spoilt when what was then the new interval alarm sounded round the hall about 30 seconds before the end of Part One!

At this juncture I ask a rhetorical question : why is there a Barbirolli society and not a Boult society? There is no real need to form one, but it perhaps reflects our view of Sir Adrian : tall, distinguished (the hint of the Elgarian colonel?), a man in control, that we have not felt the need. On the surface he lacked Barbirolli's passion, but you only have to listen to his last recording of the Brahms D major Symphony or his *Eroica* made for the Everest label to realise this image is untrue. Like Barbirolli he recorded much, indeed he is unique among conductors in having made recordings stretching from the acoustic to the digital eras. On the few occasions I met Sir Adrian, as President of this society, I found him to be exactly what I had expected, a man of deep courtesy and charm, but interested in a young man like me. On the last occasion he was studying a score of Parry so he could give advice to Lady Aberdeen who was to conduct it later that year at Haddo House.

It is to EMI's credit that HMV recorded Sir Adrian comprehensively, particularly during his great Indian summer, but as Andrew Achenbach points out, the earlier wartime and post-war recordings have a serious claim on our attention. Indeed he says this performance of the Symphony "displays the greatest invincibility, dynamism and emotional charge [of his three recordings]". So again we are indebted to Testament for reissuing an important Elgar recording.

I have to say that I find myself in a minority, it seems, in neither finding this performance of the Symphony characteristic of Sir Adrian, nor having the insights or drive which later, supposedly slower and less coherent, recordings demonstrate. Furthermore, the recorded sound is also less attractive than Elgar's own recording of nearly twenty years earlier. On the other hand the performance of *In the South* is a wonderful demonstration of Sir Adrian's ability to move music forward whilst giving us time to enjoy it on the way! The sound of the recording made a few years later in the gracious acoustic of the Kingsway Hall is much more welcoming too!

Although Sir Adrian is generally quicker in this recording, the differences are only marginal, and the Adagio is 1' 30" longer in this new issue than in his 1976 recording that turned out to be his last. If we compare these performances, there are some intriguing differences and similarities that are worth noting. First, I wondered if the later recording sounded slower. It does not and there are examples aplenty of why this is not the case. Sir Adrian's pulse for the opening motto theme in the later recording is faster (3' 04") than in the recording of 1949 (3' 24"). The overall time difference for the movement is only 40". Incidentally Elgar's timing for the opening motto is 3' 07" which shows how Sir Adrian instinctively followed Elgar's 'walking pace', which Jerrold Northrop Moore demonstrated so effectively at the Jubilee conference last September.

In the Adagio third movement we can hear the inner parts more clearly in the later performance, which is again slower overall in the earlier performance. The transition from the Allegro molto is the natural bridge one would expect in the 1949 recording as it is in 1976, but to my ear Sir Adrian penetrates deeper into the soul of this movement in his final recording, allowing the music to hang in extraordinary rapt and intense anticipation at cue 104, the point which Jaeger said 'we are brought near to heaven'. He knows this is great music but just allows it to speak for itself. In 1949 he moves over the moment more slowly - almost casually (if one can ever apply such a word to Sir Adrian) to the conclusion. He takes from there to the movement's end 3' 17", whereas in 1976 he took 2' 55", which is of course quicker, but conversely more profound. This is a demonstration of how this greater control can add to the profundity that comes with years, in this case another twenty-seven! It also contradicts the assumption that Sir Adrian "got slower".

The end of the symphony in 1949 is beautifully managed, as one would have expected. However, it does not have that sense of occasion that this extraordinary work is given in 1976. The hints at the motto theme, Elgar's adaptation of it and the build up to the end, the orchestra all the while trying to subdue it until it bursts into sunshine, all come together gloriously in 1976 helped by EMI's rich sound and the LPO which was by then a world class orchestra. Of course, all Elgarians should have this Testament disc, but for me this is but an example of a great conductor developing his insight into a work which reached maturity in his last years.

In the South, again with the LPO, was recorded a few years later. Sir Adrian made a particular study of the work with Elgar in 1918, and he always brought a special authority to its interpretation, enabling what might seem to be repetitiveness in the hands of some to become a seamless flow of music reflecting Italy, through English eyes, in its many moods. The sound is warmer (back to the Kingsway Hall) and the LPO are a better orchestra than they were in 1949, although their viola soloist is somewhat unfocused in the 'Canto popolare' section. This is one of the great Elgar performances and stands equally with Elgar's own and that of the Silvestri recordings, the other touchstones for the piece.

Even if I may have poured cold water on Sir Adrian's symphony, this record is a tribute to many of his qualities both as conductor and as one of the few "great" people I have had the privilege to meet.

Andrew Neill

Symphony no 1 in A flat, Op 55.

London Symphony Orchestra conducted by Sir Colin Davis
LSO Live LSO0017

The London Symphony Orchestra have already struck gold on their own label through Sir Colin Davis's Berlioz recordings, which have been enthusiastically received with acclaim. Now comes the first of his Elgar cycle (the Second Symphony follows in May; the Elgar/ Payne no 3 in July). They were all recorded from live performances on consecutive evenings at the Barbican last year - the First on 30 September and 1 October, the Second on 4 & 5 October, and Elgar/ Payne 3 on 13 & 14 December.

Critical reaction was ecstatic. Michael Kennedy wrote of Davis in the *Sunday Telegraph* : "He is surely now our premier Elgarian", while Andrew Clark in the *Financial Times* called him "... the greatest living Elgarian". Such a reputation is something of a recent phenomenon; despite a fine *Enigma* from Philips in 1965 (one of the top half-dozen on record in my book), for years Davis did not conduct a great deal of Elgar, and I remember being deeply disappointed with a Second Symphony televised from the Proms in the 1970s. Yet five or so years back I attended *Gerontius* at the Barbican, which for me - some very ordinary solo singing excepted - was possibly the finest live performance of the work I ever heard. There was an intensity - a spirituality, even - which somehow caught up the listener in a remarkable way.

Something of the same is present in this recording. Davis seems to want to involve the listener in what he is doing; and if that sounds pretentious, so be it - but we've all heard works in which stick-waving is the order of the day, and this is most certainly *not* one of those. This is a heart-on-sleeve First Symphony; I was often reminded of Barbirolli. The overall pulse is slow, and makes this at almost 55 minutes the slowest version in my collection (I do not possess Thomson or Sinopoli!); but, unlike some slow performances, the pulse is still there, and the overall shape Davis gives the piece, aided by some wonderful playing, makes this a compelling account. The opening Andante is slow (4'15"), and one can

sense the spirit of Sir John nodding approvingly as Davis makes the *fortissimo* statement at fig 3 really count. The Allegro is also slower to start with, but warms up, and there are some superb passages, for instance the *cantabile* theme for lower woodwind and strings at fig 13. The second movement is again slightly slower than usual, but not much; however, Davis begins the “descent” into the Adagio much sooner than most others, but the *segue* is seamless and nicely done. Davis lingers lovingly in places in this slow movement, and once again comparisons with Barbirolli are perhaps inevitable. The *cantabile* at fig 96 is very broad, almost overblown, but absolutely right in the context. The expression and intensity are first-rate; Elgar once said of his music that “if you cut that, it will bleed”, and if that be the case, there is a good deal of haemorrhaging here! The ending is again slow, but very effective - the quietest set of *ppps* I can remember on record. The Finale is much the same, with an irresistibly indulgent climax of the *cantabile* march theme six before 134, and a majestic final peroration.

Much as I enjoyed Davis’s interpretation, for me this is not a definitive version. I miss the restlessness and forward motion of Elgar’s own recording and other faster versions; but in its own way it convinces and has a deep integrity, and I will be glad to return to it often for its many treasures. And, even allowing for a lack of fill-up, at under a fiver it is a remarkable bargain. You will not only be getting a great recording, you will be supporting an outstanding orchestra.

The Editor

[To coincide with this release, a website dedicated to Elgar, www.iso.co.uk/elgar is being launched, containing interviews with Sir Colin and musicians who worked with Elgar, including Lord Menuhin.]

Enigma Variations, Op 36. Cello Concerto, Op 85. Overture Cockaigne, Op 40. Pomp & Circumstance Marches, Op 39. Violin Concerto, Op 61.

Jacqueline du PrJ (cello), Pinchas Zukerman (violin),
Philadelphia, Philharmonia and London Philharmonic orchestras
conducted by Eugene Ormandy, Daniel Barenboim and Sir Andrew Davis
Sony Essential Classics SB2K (2-CD set)

This set has been out a few years, but as it is now being remaindered in W H Smith’s sale of two CDs for £10, and counts as only *one* disc, at £5 it must be one of the bargains of the year (or any other year, for that matter). Two generously filled discs give well over two-and-a-half hours of music. Disc 1 features the Philadelphia Orchestra, conducted by Ormandy and Barenboim. The latter accompanies his wife, Jacqueline du PrJ, in her second recording of the Cello Concerto. This, as most Elgarians will know, is taken from two live performances in Philadelphia on consecutive evenings in November 1970. Yet there is a pleasing absence of audience participation, except in the odd place, and a fine, full recording. Du PrJ’s performance is, if anything, more impassioned than the more famous Barbirolli version (and it lasts 1½ minutes longer), but listening to it again after a long gap, I found it utterly compelling, especially the obvious total commitment of the soloist. As another great interpreter, Paul Tortelier, said of her at one of the early London Branch meetings : “Elle s’abandonne”. The rest of the first disc features Ormandy conducting the *Variations* and *Cockaigne*, first released in this country on CBS in 1972, although recorded almost ten years earlier. They are fine accounts, perhaps not quite in the top bracket, but perfectly acceptable, and it’s always good to hear foreign orchestras in Elgar, particularly one as good as the Philadelphia.

Disc 2 features British orchestras in two works. First, Andrew Davis’s *Pomp & Circumstance* marches from a 1983 CBS disc (released with the second of his three *Enigma* recordings). To be honest, there

are more incisive versions available, but this is a notable recording, nonetheless, beautifully played. Finally, Zukerman's first (and better) account of the Violin Concerto from 1976 with Barenboim and the LPO. Like his great friend and contemporary, Perlman, Zukerman's mastery of technique and control are outstanding. The outer movements are the most successful; Zukerman does not quite capture the subtle intimacy of the Andante, though its conclusion is very sensitively played. But rush to Smith's to see if the sale is still on : this is a real bargain.

The Editor

The famous recording of Elgar's Violin Concerto by Albert Sammons (together with that of Delius) has just been released on the Naxos Historical label (8.110951) but as yet a review copy is unavailable.

A second disc of transcriptions of Elgar's music for military band will be coming out in the summer on the Specialist Recording Company label. The major works will be *Cockaigne* and the *Severn Suite*. (See November JOURNAL p 131 for a review of the first disc).

LETTERS

From : Charles A Hooley

My contribution to the recent Society book Oh My Horses! consisted of a revamped version of earlier writings about Charles Mott. Studying his full discography, I was struck by the fact that this singer had apparently composed not one but two songs which he subsequently recorded. Neither The Gift of Life nor Love's Appeal was ever released, but if they still reside in EMI's vaults they should be exhumed immediately and given special prominence in the next Elgar CD. It seems that Mott's composing predated his time with Elgar. Did his experience creating music in this most personal way help make him the understanding and complete interpreter of the senior composer's music?

Then I realised this multi-talented baritone had written at least one other song, Nada, which was recorded by tenor Morgan Kingston in 1913. In August 2000 an admirer of Kingston named John Adams prepared a special CD to display this tenor's talent and included his rendition of Nada. It was recorded on 78 rpm as Columbia 6295. A fine period ballad, it taxes the tenor to his limit. I wonder how many others Mott composed, and if any were recorded?

There is another mystery attached to the Mott legend. Alice Elgar made note of a visit Mott, his wife and child made during the heydays of The Starlight Express. If anyone knows what happened to this "child", perhaps more can be added to enlarge our understanding of this remarkable individual.

From : Michael Trott

Some years ago a letter in the Elgar Society JOURNAL from Sandy Morrison drew my attention to a passage in The Brides of Enderby : A Lincolnshire Childhood by Ralph Townley (Century Publishing, 1988). 'The Brides of Enderby' is a tune played by the church bells at Enderby in Lincolnshire to warn of

impending calamity. It rang out famously in 1571 at the great high tide on the Lincolnshire coast, dramatically related by Jean Ingelow's poem, and Elgar considered setting this as a cantata for the 1902 Norwich Festival.

In the book Ralph Townley states : "My father was born in Tewkesbury in one of a row of medieval houses close to the Abbey, where my grandfather, Nelson Townley, was a stocking maker. Father held a striking resemblance to his older second cousin, Edward Elgar".

Living outside the town, and having compiled an Elgar family tree, I was naturally intrigued. A hunt to determine the precise family connection involved me in much research and correspondence, but solution found I none. The author of the book, a retired United Nations official, died just before I started my enquiries, and his relatives could offer no assistance. I believe that the relationship of the Townleys to Elgar is through Ann Elgar's family and that the following can be stated. Nelson Townley's mother, or the mother of his wife (Annie Preece) was either one of Ann Elgar's father's sisters (Betty, Sarah or Martha Greening) or Ann Elgar's mother's sister, Betty Apperly. I hope this is clear!

Nelson Townley (1841-1923) was one of Tewkesbury's characters, a one-time Sergeant at Mace and Town Crier, a man of intelligence and charm. The Tewkesbury Register wrote that he was "a most interesting and able raconteur and possessed a fund of knowledge of the quaint characters and customs of past generations"; the similarities with Elgar are striking. His son, Frank (author Ralph's father and born circa 1879), visited Elgar at Plas Gwyn, later moved to Lincolnshire and became a Quaker.

Can any member of the Elgar Society help me? It will be fascinating to establish an Elgar Quaker connection.

100 YEARS AGO...

Following the successful performance of *Gerontius* on 19 December, the Elgars spent Christmas at Düsseldorf and Mainz with the likes of Buths, Ettlting, and Volbach, arriving back in London on New Year's Day, when they lunched at Pagani's with the Henry Woods and Percy Pitt. Edward returned to a back log of things which seemed humdrum after his German triumphs. Novello had asked him to set a hymn tune for the forthcoming Coronation; on 3 January he sent it to Jaeger with no great enthusiasm, and he ended his letter : "The horrible musical atmosphere I plunged into at once in this benighted country nearly suffocated me - I wish it had completely".

Elgar revised a *Pie Jesu* of 1887 and sent it to Novello on 20 January as *Ave Verum*, calling it "nice & harmless & quite easy". Although not at all well, he worked on two earlier sketches which he now completed on 14 January under the title *Dream Children*. (Jaeger was heavily involved in a major project of preparing the full score of *The Dream of Gerontius* for publication : up to now it only existed in manuscript.) Elgar was well enough to attend the first London performance of the *Grania & Diarmid* music given by its dedicatee, Henry Wood, on 18 January. This music too was to be published, and Elgar wrote to Pitt asking him if he thought a theme from the March was reminiscent of the end of *Parsifal*. Pitt replied on 2 February that it was sufficiently different for Elgar to proceed.

On 12 February he was in London again : "Lunch with Mr Higgins & confer re secret". This was the *Coronation Ode*, which he now began to set for a Gala Concert at Covent Garden in June. Back in London on 24th the Elgars dined with George Boosey, whose firm was to publish the *Ode*. Composition continued into March, and an early spring at the beginning of March found Elgar cycling a good deal. By 27th : "E. very busy. Endless proofs to correct". The *Ode* was completed on 1 April, but then the librettist Arthur Benson realised that he had omitted any mention of Queen Alexandra, and on 2 April sent Elgar a short verse, 'Daughter of Ancient Kings', which was inserted in the work. The rest of the month was taken up with orchestrating the work, and also an arrangement of *God Save the King* for Novello, anxious to make capital of Elgar's growing fame.

Local music-making involved a Worcestershire Philharmonic concert on 10 May, which included the two *Pomp & Circumstance* marches, Parry's *The Lotos-Eaters* and Volbach's *Reigen* (the latter sung in English to a translation by Alice); and the Madresfield Music Competition, at which Elgar also conducted the *Pomp & Circumstance* Marches on 28 April, to great acclaim. "Seldom if ever has such great enthusiasm been locally evoked", said the *Malvern News*; "Malvern perfectly mad over 'Pomp & Circumstance' No.1". Alice noted. However, the forthcoming Three Choirs was to include an almost complete performance of *Gerontius*, and objections had been made to the Bishop insisting on the removal of some of the more overtly Catholic words if it were to be performed. The Committee drew up a list of offending words, and Elgar was given the task of seeking permission from Father Bellasis to approve the cuts. Eventually it was sorted out to enable the work to go ahead.

No such problems existed over the next performance of the work - at the Lower Rhine Festival at Düsseldorf on 19 May, again conducted by Julius Buths. The success of the first Düsseldorf performance had raised expectations here and in Germany, and a large party of friends and journalists accompanied the Elgars.

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Front Cover : An Elgarian postcard typical of those on sale in the early years of the twentieth century.

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