

= Edward Elgar =

Sir Edward William Elgar , 1st Baronet OM GCVO (2 June 1857 ? 23 February 1934) was an English composer , many of whose works have entered the British and international classical concert repertoire . Among his best @-@ known compositions are orchestral works including the Enigma Variations , the Pomp and Circumstance Marches , concertos for violin and cello , and two symphonies . He also composed choral works , including The Dream of Gerontius , chamber music and songs . He was appointed Master of the King 's Musick in 1924 .

Although Elgar is often regarded as a typically English composer , most of his musical influences were not from England but from continental Europe . He felt himself to be an outsider , not only musically , but socially . In musical circles dominated by academics , he was a self @-@ taught composer ; in Protestant Britain , his Roman Catholicism was regarded with suspicion in some quarters ; and in the class @-@ conscious society of Victorian and Edwardian Britain , he was acutely sensitive about his humble origins even after he achieved recognition . He nevertheless married the daughter of a senior British army officer . She inspired him both musically and socially , but he struggled to achieve success until his forties , when after a series of moderately successful works his Enigma Variations (1899) became immediately popular in Britain and overseas . He followed the Variations with a choral work , The Dream of Gerontius (1900) , based on a Roman Catholic text that caused some disquiet in the Anglican establishment in Britain , but it became , and has remained , a core repertory work in Britain and elsewhere . His later full @-@ length religious choral works were well received but have not entered the regular repertory .

In his fifties , Elgar composed a symphony and a violin concerto that were immensely successful . His second symphony and his cello concerto did not gain immediate public popularity and took many years to achieve a regular place in the concert repertory of British orchestras . Elgar 's music came , in his later years , to be seen as appealing chiefly to British audiences . His stock remained low for a generation after his death . It began to revive significantly in the 1960s , helped by new recordings of his works . Some of his works have , in recent years , been taken up again internationally , but the music continues to be played more in Britain than elsewhere .

Elgar has been described as the first composer to take the gramophone seriously . Between 1914 and 1925 , he conducted a series of acoustic recordings of his works . The introduction of the microphone in 1925 made far more accurate sound reproduction possible , and Elgar made new recordings of most of his major orchestral works and excerpts from The Dream of Gerontius .

= = Biography = =

= = = Early years = = =

Edward Elgar was born in the small village of Lower Broadheath , outside Worcester , England . His father , William Henry Elgar (1821 ? 1906) , was raised in Dover and had been apprenticed to a London music publisher . In 1841 William moved to Worcester , where he worked as a piano tuner and set up a shop selling sheet music and musical instruments . In 1848 he married Ann Greening (1822 ? 1902) , daughter of a farm worker . Edward was the fourth of their seven children . Ann Elgar had converted to Roman Catholicism shortly before Edward 's birth , and he was baptised and brought up as a Roman Catholic , to the disapproval of his father . William Elgar was a violinist of professional standard and held the post of organist of St. George 's Roman Catholic Church , Worcester , from 1846 to 1885 . At his instigation , masses by Cherubini and Hummel were first heard at the Three Choirs Festival by the orchestra in which he played the violin . All the Elgar children received a musical upbringing . By the age of eight , Elgar was taking piano and violin lessons , and his father , who tuned the pianos at many grand houses in Worcestershire , would sometimes take him along , giving him the chance to display his skill to important local figures .

Elgar 's mother was interested in the arts and encouraged his musical development . He inherited from her a discerning taste for literature and a passionate love of the countryside . His friend and

biographer W. H. " Billy " Reed wrote that Elgar 's early surroundings had an influence that " permeated all his work and gave to his whole life that subtle but none the less true and sturdy English quality " . He began composing at an early age ; for a play written and acted by the Elgar children when he was about ten , he wrote music that forty years later he rearranged with only minor changes and orchestrated as the suites titled The Wand of Youth .

Until he was fifteen , Elgar received a general education at Littleton (now Lyttleton) House school , near Worcester . However , his only formal musical training beyond piano and violin lessons from local teachers consisted of more advanced violin studies with Adolf Pollitzer , during brief visits to London in 1877 ? 78 . Elgar said , " my first music was learnt in the Cathedral ... from books borrowed from the music library , when I was eight , nine or ten . " He worked through manuals of instruction on organ playing and read every book he could find on the theory of music . He later said that he had been most helped by Hubert Parry 's articles in the Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians . Elgar began to learn German , in the hope of going to the Leipzig Conservatory for further musical studies , but his father could not afford to send him . Years later , a profile in The Musical Times considered that his failure to get to Leipzig was fortunate for Elgar 's musical development : " Thus the budding composer escaped the dogmatism of the schools . " However , it was a disappointment to Elgar that on leaving school in 1872 he went not to Leipzig but to the office of a local solicitor as a clerk . He did not find an office career congenial , and for fulfilment he turned not only to music but to literature , becoming a voracious reader . Around this time , he made his first public appearances as a violinist and organist .

After a few months , Elgar left the solicitor to embark on a musical career , giving piano and violin lessons and working occasionally in his father 's shop . He was an active member of the Worcester Glee Club , along with his father , and he accompanied singers , played the violin , composed and arranged works , and conducted for the first time . Pollitzer believed that , as a violinist , Elgar had the potential to be one of the leading soloists in the country , but Elgar himself , having heard leading virtuosi at London concerts , felt his own violin playing lacked a full enough tone , and he abandoned his ambitions to be a soloist . At twenty @-@ two he took up the post of conductor of the attendants ' band at the Worcester and County Lunatic Asylum in Powick , three miles (five km) from Worcester . The band consisted of : piccolo , flute , clarinet , two cornets , euphonium , three or four first and a similar number of second violins , occasional viola , cello , double bass and piano . Elgar coached the players and wrote and arranged their music , including quadrilles and polkas , for the unusual combination of instruments . The Musical Times wrote , " This practical experience proved to be of the greatest value to the young musician He acquired a practical knowledge of the capabilities of these different instruments He thereby got to know intimately the tone colour , the ins and outs of these and many other instruments . " He held the post for five years , from 1879 , travelling to Powick once a week . Another post he held in his early days was professor of the violin at the Worcester College for the Blind Sons of Gentlemen .

Although rather solitary and introspective by nature , Elgar thrived in Worcester 's musical circles . He played in the violins at the Worcester and Birmingham Festivals , and one great experience was to play Dvořák 's Symphony No. 6 and Stabat Mater under the composer 's baton . Elgar regularly played the bassoon in a wind quintet , alongside his brother Frank , an oboist (and conductor who ran his own wind band) . Elgar arranged numerous pieces by Mozart , Beethoven , Haydn , and others for the quintet , honing his arranging and compositional skills .

In his first trips abroad , Elgar visited Paris in 1880 and Leipzig in 1882 . He heard Saint @-@ Saëns play the organ at the Madeleine and attended concerts by first @-@ rate orchestras . In 1882 he wrote , " I got pretty well dosed with Schumann (my ideal !) , Brahms , Rubinstein & Wagner , so had no cause to complain . " In Leipzig he visited a friend , Helen Weaver , who was a student at the Conservatoire . They became engaged in the summer of 1883 , but for unknown reasons the engagement was broken off the next year . Elgar was greatly distressed , and some of his later cryptic dedications of romantic music may have alluded to Helen and his feelings for her . Throughout his life , Elgar was often inspired by close women friends ; Helen Weaver was succeeded by Mary Lygon , Dora Penny , Julia Worthington , Alice Stuart Wortley and finally Vera Hockman , who enlivened his old age .

In 1883 , while a regular member of the orchestra for W. C. Stockley 's winter concert seasons in Birmingham , Elgar took part in a performance of one of his first works for full orchestra , the *Sérénade mauresque* . Stockley had invited him to conduct the piece , but , as Stockley later recalled , " he declined , and , further , insisted upon playing in his place in the orchestra . The consequence was that he had to appear , fiddle in hand , to acknowledge the genuine and hearty applause of the audience . " He often went to London in an attempt to get his works published , but this period in his life found him frequently despondent and low on money . He wrote to a friend in April 1884 , " My prospects are about as hopeless as ever ... I am not wanting in energy I think , so sometimes I conclude that ' tis want of ability I have no money ? not a cent . "

= = = Marriage = = =

When Elgar was twenty @-@ nine , he took on a new pupil , Caroline Alice Roberts , daughter of the late Major @-@ General Sir Henry Roberts , and a published author of verse and prose fiction . Eight years older than Elgar , Alice became his wife three years later . Elgar 's biographer Michael Kennedy writes , " Alice 's family was horrified by her intention to marry an unknown musician who worked in a shop and was a Roman Catholic . She was disinherited . " They were married on 8 May 1889 , at Brompton Oratory . From then until her death she acted as his business manager and social secretary , dealt with his mood swings and was a perceptive musical critic . She did her best to gain him the attention of influential society , though with limited success . In time he would learn to accept the honours given him , realising that they mattered more to her and her social class and recognising what she had given up to further his career . In her diary she wrote , " The care of a genius is enough of a life work for any woman . " As an engagement present , Elgar dedicated his short violin and piano piece *Salut d 'Amour* to her . With Alice 's encouragement , the Elgars moved to London to be closer to the centre of British musical life , and Elgar started devoting his time to composition . Their only child , Carice Irene , was born at their home in West Kensington on 14 August 1890 . Her name , revealed in Elgar 's dedication of *Salut d 'Amour* , was a contraction of her mother 's names Caroline and Alice .

Elgar took full advantage of the opportunity to hear unfamiliar music . In the days before miniature scores and recordings were available , it was not easy for young composers to get to know new music . Elgar took every chance to do so at the Crystal Palace concerts . He and Alice attended day after day , hearing music by a wide range of composers . Among these were masters of orchestration from whom he learned much , such as Berlioz and Richard Wagner . His own compositions , however , made little impact on London 's musical scene . August Manns conducted Elgar 's orchestral version of *Salut d 'amour* and the *Suite in D* at the Crystal Palace , and two publishers accepted some of Elgar 's violin pieces , organ voluntaries , and partsongs . Some tantalising opportunities seemed to be within reach but vanished unexpectedly . For example , an offer from the Royal Opera House , Covent Garden , to run through some of his works was withdrawn at the last second when Sir Arthur Sullivan arrived unannounced to rehearse some of his own music . Sullivan was horrified when Elgar later told him what had happened . Elgar 's only important commission while in London came from his home city : the Worcester Festival Committee invited him to compose a short orchestral work for the 1890 Three Choirs Festival . The result is described by Diana McVeagh in the *Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians* , as " his first major work , the assured and uninhibited *Froissart* . " Elgar conducted the first performance in Worcester in September 1890 . For lack of other work , he was obliged to leave London in 1891 and return with his wife and child to Worcestershire , where he could earn a living conducting local musical ensembles and teaching . They settled in Alice 's former home town , Great Malvern .

= = = Growing reputation = = =

During the 1890s , Elgar gradually built up a reputation as a composer , chiefly of works for the great choral festivals of the English Midlands . The *Black Knight* (1892) and *King Olaf* (1896) , both inspired by Longfellow , *The Light of Life* (1896) and *Caractacus* (1898) were all modestly

successful , and he obtained a long @-@ standing publisher in Novello and Co . Other works of this decade included the Serenade for Strings (1892) and Three Bavarian Dances (1897) . Elgar was of enough consequence locally to recommend the young composer Samuel Coleridge @-@ Taylor to the Three Choirs Festival for a concert piece , which helped establish the younger man 's career . Elgar was catching the attention of prominent critics , but their reviews were polite rather than enthusiastic . Although he was in demand as a festival composer , he was only just getting by financially and felt unappreciated . In 1898 , he said he was " very sick at heart over music " and hoped to find a way to succeed with a larger work . His friend August Jaeger tried to lift his spirits : " A day 's attack of the blues ... will not drive away your desire , your necessity , which is to exercise those creative faculties which a kind providence has given you . Your time of universal recognition will come . "

In 1899 , that prediction suddenly came true . At the age of forty @-@ two , Elgar produced the Enigma Variations , which were premiered in London under the baton of the eminent German conductor Hans Richter . In Elgar 's own words , " I have sketched a set of Variations on an original theme . The Variations have amused me because I 've labelled them with the nicknames of my particular friends ... that is to say I 've written the variations each one to represent the mood of the ' party ' (the person) ... and have written what I think they would have written ? if they were asses enough to compose " . He dedicated the work " To my friends pictured within " . Probably the best known variation is " Nimrod " , depicting Jaeger . Purely musical considerations led Elgar to omit variations depicting Arthur Sullivan and Hubert Parry , whose styles he tried but failed to incorporate in the variations . The large @-@ scale work was received with general acclaim for its originality , charm and craftsmanship , and it established Elgar as the pre @-@ eminent British composer of his generation .

The work is formally titled Variations on an Original Theme ; the word " Enigma " appears over the first six bars of music , which led to the familiar version of the title . The enigma is that , although there are fourteen variations on the " original theme " , there is another overarching theme , never identified by Elgar , which he said " runs through and over the whole set " but is never heard . Later commentators have observed that although Elgar is today regarded as a characteristically English composer , his orchestral music and this work in particular share much with the Central European tradition typified at the time by the work of Richard Strauss . The Enigma Variations were well received in Germany and Italy , and remain to the present day a worldwide concert staple .

= = = National and international fame = = =

Elgar 's biographer Basil Maine commented , " When Sir Arthur Sullivan died in 1900 it became apparent to many that Elgar , although a composer of another build , was his true successor as first musician of the land . " Elgar 's next major work was eagerly awaited . For the Birmingham Triennial Music Festival of 1900 , he set Cardinal John Henry Newman 's poem The Dream of Gerontius for soloists , chorus and orchestra . Richter conducted the premiere , which was marred by a poorly prepared chorus , which sang badly . Critics recognised the mastery of the piece despite the defects in performance . It was performed in Düsseldorf , Germany , in 1901 and again in 1902 , conducted by Julius Butts , who also conducted the European premiere of the Enigma Variations in 1901 . The German press was enthusiastic . The Cologne Gazette said , " In both parts we meet with beauties of imperishable value Elgar stands on the shoulders of Berlioz , Wagner , and Liszt , from whose influences he has freed himself until he has become an important individuality . He is one of the leaders of musical art of modern times . " The Düsseldorfer Volksblatt wrote , " A memorable and epoch @-@ making first performance ! Since the days of Liszt nothing has been produced in the way of oratorio ... which reaches the greatness and importance of this sacred cantata . " Richard Strauss , then widely viewed as the leading composer of his day , was so impressed that in Elgar 's presence he proposed a toast to the success of " the first English progressive musician , Meister Elgar . " Performances in Vienna , Paris and New York followed , and The Dream of Gerontius soon became equally admired in Britain . According to Kennedy , " It is unquestionably the greatest British work in the oratorio form ... [it] opened a new chapter in the English choral tradition and liberated it

from its Handelian preoccupation . " Elgar , as a Roman Catholic , was much moved by Newman 's poem about the death and redemption of a sinner , but some influential members of the Anglican establishment disagreed . His colleague , Charles Villiers Stanford complained that the work " stinks of incense " . The Dean of Gloucester banned *Gerontius* from his cathedral in 1901 , and at Worcester the following year , the Dean insisted on expurgations before allowing a performance .

Elgar is probably best known for the first of the five *Pomp and Circumstance* Marches , which were composed between 1901 and 1930 . It is familiar to millions of television viewers all over the world every year who watch the Last Night of the Proms , where it is traditionally performed . When the theme of the slower middle section (technically called the " trio ") of the first march came into his head , he told his friend Dora Penny , " I 've got a tune that will knock ' em ? will knock ' em flat " . When the first march was played in 1901 at a London Promenade Concert , it was conducted by Henry J. Wood , who later wrote that the audience " rose and yelled ... the one and only time in the history of the Promenade concerts that an orchestral item was accorded a double encore . " To mark the coronation of Edward VII , Elgar was commissioned to set A. C. Benson 's *Coronation Ode* for a gala concert at the Royal Opera House in June 1901 . The approval of the king was confirmed , and Elgar began work . The contralto Clara Butt had persuaded him that the trio of the first *Pomp and Circumstance* march could have words fitted to it , and Elgar invited Benson to do so . Elgar incorporated the new vocal version into the *Ode* . The publishers of the score recognised the potential of the vocal piece , " *Land of Hope and Glory* " , and asked Benson and Elgar to make a further revision for publication as a separate song . It was immensely popular and is now considered an unofficial British national anthem . In the United States , the trio , known simply as " *Pomp and Circumstance* " or " *The Graduation March* " , has been adopted since 1905 for virtually all high school and university graduations .

In March 1904 a three @-@ day festival of Elgar 's works was presented at Covent Garden , an honour never before given to any English composer . The Times commented , " Four or five years ago if any one had predicted that the Opera @-@ house would be full from floor to ceiling for the performance of an oratorio by an English composer he would probably have been supposed to be out of his mind . " The king and queen attended the first concert , at which Richter conducted *The Dream of Gerontius* , and returned the next evening for the second , the London premiere of *The Apostles* (first heard the previous year at the Birmingham Festival) . The final concert of the festival , conducted by Elgar , was primarily orchestral , apart for an excerpt from *Caractacus* and the complete *Sea Pictures* (sung by Clara Butt) . The orchestral items were *Froissart* , the *Enigma Variations* , *Cockaigne* , the first two (at that time the only two) *Pomp and Circumstance* marches , and the premiere of a new orchestral work , *In the South* (*Alassio*) , inspired by a holiday in Italy .

Elgar was knighted at Buckingham Palace on 5 July 1904 . The following month , he and his family moved to *Plâs Gwyn* , a large house on the outskirts of Hereford , overlooking the River Wye , where they lived until 1911 . Between 1902 and 1914 , Elgar was , in Kennedy 's words , at the zenith of popularity . He made four visits to the U.S. , including one conducting tour , and earned considerable fees from the performance of his music . Between 1905 and 1908 , he held the post of Peyton Professor of Music at the University of Birmingham . He had accepted the post reluctantly , feeling that a composer should not head a school of music . He was not at ease in the role , and his lectures caused controversy , with his attacks on the critics and on English music in general : " Vulgarly in the course of time may be refined . Vulgarly often goes with inventiveness ... but the commonplace mind can never be anything but commonplace . An Englishman will take you into a large room , beautifully proportioned , and will point out to you that it is white ? all over white ? and somebody will say , ' What exquisite taste ' . You know in your own mind , in your own soul , that it is not taste at all , that it is the want of taste , that is mere evasion . English music is white , and evades everything . " He regretted the controversy and was glad to hand on the post to his friend Granville Bantock in 1908 . His new life as a celebrity was a mixed blessing to the highly strung Elgar , as it interrupted his privacy , and he often was in ill @-@ health . He complained to Jaeger in 1903 , " My life is one continual giving up of little things which I love . " Both W. S. Gilbert and Thomas Hardy sought to collaborate with Elgar in this decade . Elgar refused , but would have collaborated with George Bernard Shaw had Shaw been willing .

Elgar 's principal composition in 1905 was the Introduction and Allegro for Strings , dedicated to Samuel Sanford , professor at Yale University . Elgar visited America in that year to conduct his music and to accept a doctorate from Yale . His next large @-@ scale work was the sequel to The Apostles ? the oratorio The Kingdom (1906) . It was well received but did not catch the public imagination as The Dream of Gerontius had done and continued to do . Among keen Elgarians , however , The Kingdom was sometimes preferred to the earlier work : Elgar 's friend Frank Schuster told the young Adrian Boult : " compared with The Kingdom , Gerontius is the work of a raw amateur . " As Elgar approached his fiftieth birthday , he began work on his first symphony , a project that had been in his mind in various forms for nearly ten years . His First Symphony (1908) was a national and international triumph . Within weeks of the premiere it was performed in New York under Walter Damrosch , Vienna under Ferdinand Löwe , St. Petersburg under Alexander Siloti , and Leipzig under Arthur Nikisch . There were performances in Rome , Chicago , Boston , Toronto and fifteen British towns and cities . In just over a year , it received a hundred performances in Britain , America and continental Europe .

The Violin Concerto (1910) was commissioned by Fritz Kreisler , one of the leading international violinists of the time . Elgar wrote it during the summer of 1910 , with occasional help from W. H. Reed , the leader of the London Symphony Orchestra , who helped the composer with advice on technical points . Elgar and Reed formed a firm friendship , which lasted for the rest of Elgar 's life . Reed 's biography , Elgar As I Knew Him (1936) , records many details of Elgar 's methods of composition . The work was presented by the Royal Philharmonic Society , with Kreisler and the London Symphony Orchestra , conducted by the composer . Reed recalled , " the Concerto proved to be a complete triumph , the concert a brilliant and unforgettable occasion . " So great was the impact of the concerto that Kreisler 's rival Eugène Ysaÿe spent much time with Elgar going through the work . There was great disappointment when contractual difficulties prevented Ysaÿe from playing it in London .

The Violin Concerto was Elgar 's last popular triumph . The following year he presented his Second Symphony in London , but was disappointed at its reception . Unlike the First Symphony , it ends not in a blaze of orchestral splendour but quietly and contemplatively . Reed , who played at the premiere , later wrote that Elgar was recalled to the platform several times to acknowledge the applause , " but missed that unmistakable note perceived when an audience , even an English audience , is thoroughly roused or worked up , as it was after the Violin Concerto or the First Symphony . " Elgar asked Reed , " What is the matter with them , Billy ? They sit there like a lot of stuffed pigs . " The work was , by normal standards , a success , with twenty @-@ seven performances within three years of its premiere , but it did not achieve the international furore of the First Symphony .

= = = Last major works = = =

In June 1911 , as part of the celebrations surrounding the coronation of King George V , Elgar was appointed to the Order of Merit , an honour limited to twenty @-@ four holders at any time . The following year , the Elgars moved back to London , to a large house in Netherhall Gardens , Hampstead , designed by Norman Shaw . There Elgar composed his last two large @-@ scale works of the pre @-@ war era , the choral ode , The Music Makers (for the Birmingham Festival , 1912) and the symphonic study Falstaff (for the Leeds Festival , 1913) . Both were received politely but without enthusiasm . Even the dedicatee of Falstaff , the conductor Landon Ronald , confessed privately that he could not " make head or tail of the piece , " while the musical scholar Percy Scholes wrote of Falstaff that it was a " great work " but , " so far as public appreciation goes , a comparative failure . "

When World War I broke out , Elgar was horrified at the prospect of the carnage , but his patriotic feelings were nonetheless aroused . He composed " A Song for Soldiers " , which he later withdrew . He signed up as a special constable in the local police and later joined the Hampstead Volunteer Reserve of the army . He composed patriotic works , Carillon , a recitation for speaker and orchestra in honour of Belgium , and Polonia , an orchestral piece in honour of Poland . Land of Hope and

Glory , already popular , became still more so , and Elgar wished in vain to have new , less nationalistic , words sung to the tune .

Elgar 's other compositions during the war included incidental music for a children 's play , The Starlight Express (1915) ; a ballet , The Sanguine Fan (1917) ; and The Spirit of England (1915 ? 17 , to poems by Laurence Binyon) , three choral settings very different in character from the romantic patriotism of his earlier years . His last large @-@ scale composition of the war years was The Fringes of the Fleet , settings of verses by Rudyard Kipling , performed with great popular success around the country , until Kipling for unexplained reasons objected to their performance in theatres . Elgar conducted a recording of the work for the Gramophone Company .

Towards the end of the war , Elgar was in poor health . His wife thought it best for him to move to the countryside , and she rented ' Brinkwells ' , a house near Fittleworth in Sussex , from the painter Rex Vicat Cole . There Elgar recovered his strength and , in 1918 and 1919 , he produced four large @-@ scale works . The first three of these were chamber pieces : the Violin Sonata in E minor , the Piano Quintet in A minor , and the String Quartet in E minor . On hearing the work in progress , Alice Elgar wrote in her diary , " E. writing wonderful new music " . All three works were well received . The Times wrote , " Elgar 's sonata contains much that we have heard before in other forms , but as we do not at all want him to change and be somebody else , that is as it should be . " The quartet and quintet were premiered at the Wigmore Hall on 21 May 1919 . The Manchester Guardian wrote , " This quartet , with its tremendous climaxes , curious refinements of dance @-@ rhythms , and its perfect symmetry , and the quintet , more lyrical and passionate , are as perfect examples of chamber music as the great oratorios were of their type . "

By contrast , the remaining work , the Cello Concerto in E minor , had a disastrous premiere , at the opening concert of the London Symphony Orchestra 's 1919 ? 20 season in October 1919 . Apart from the Elgar work , which the composer conducted , the rest of the programme was conducted by Albert Coates , who overran his rehearsal time at the expense of Elgar 's . Lady Elgar wrote , " that brutal selfish ill @-@ mannered bounder ... that brute Coates went on rehearsing . " The critic of The Observer , Ernest Newman , wrote , " There have been rumours about during the week of inadequate rehearsal . Whatever the explanation , the sad fact remains that never , in all probability , has so great an orchestra made so lamentable an exhibition of itself The work itself is lovely stuff , very simple ? that pregnant simplicity that has come upon Elgar 's music in the last couple of years ? but with a profound wisdom and beauty underlying its simplicity . " Elgar attached no blame to his soloist , Felix Salmond , who played for him again later . In contrast with the First Symphony and its hundred performances in just over a year , the Cello Concerto did not have a second performance in London for more than a year .

= = = Last years = = =

Although in the 1920s Elgar 's music was no longer in fashion , his admirers continued to present his works when possible . Reed singles out a performance of the Second Symphony in March 1920 conducted by " a young man almost unknown to the public " , Adrian Boult , for bringing " the grandeur and nobility of the work " to a wider public . Also in 1920 , Landon Ronald presented an all @-@ Elgar concert at the Queen 's Hall . Alice Elgar wrote with enthusiasm about the reception of the symphony , but this was one of the last times she heard Elgar 's music played in public . After a short illness , she died of lung cancer on 7 April 1920 , at the age of seventy @-@ two .

Elgar was devastated by the loss of his wife . With no public demand for new works , and deprived of Alice 's constant support and inspiration , he allowed himself to be deflected from composition . His daughter later wrote that Elgar inherited from his father a reluctance to " settle down to work on hand but could cheerfully spend hours over some perfectly unnecessary and entirely unremunerative undertaking " , a trait that became stronger after Alice 's death . For much of the rest of his life , Elgar indulged himself in his several hobbies . Throughout his life he was a keen amateur chemist , sometimes using a laboratory in his back garden . He even patented the " Elgar Sulphuretted Hydrogen Apparatus " in 1908 . He enjoyed football , supporting Wolverhampton Wanderers F.C. , for whom he composed an anthem , " He Banged the Leather for Goal " , and in

his later years he frequently attended horseraces . His protégés , the conductor Malcolm Sargent and violinist Yehudi Menuhin , both recalled rehearsals with Elgar at which he swiftly satisfied himself that all was well and then went off to the races . In his younger days , Elgar had been an enthusiastic cyclist , buying Royal Sunbeam bicycles for himself and his wife in 1903 (he named his " Mr. Phoebus ") . As an elderly widower , he enjoyed being driven about the countryside by his chauffeur . In November and December 1923 , he took a voyage to Brazil , journeying up the Amazon to Manaus , where he was impressed by its opera house , the Teatro Amazonas . Almost nothing is recorded about Elgar 's activities or the events that he encountered during the trip , which gave the novelist James Hamilton @-@ Paterson considerable latitude when writing *Gerontius* , a fictional account of the journey .

After Alice 's death , Elgar sold the Hampstead house , and after living for a short time in a flat in St James 's in the heart of London , he moved back to Worcestershire , to the village of Kempsey , where he lived from 1923 to 1927 . He did not wholly abandon composition in these years . He made large @-@ scale symphonic arrangements of works by Bach and Handel and wrote his *Empire March* and eight songs *Pageant of Empire* for the 1924 British Empire Exhibition . Shortly after these were published , he was appointed Master of the King 's Musick on 13 May 1924 , following the death of Sir Walter Parratt .

From 1926 onwards , Elgar made a series of recordings of his own works . Described by the music writer Robert Philip as " the first composer to take the gramophone seriously " , he had already recorded much of his music by the early acoustic @-@ recording process for His Master 's Voice (HMV) from 1914 onwards , but the introduction of electrical microphones in 1925 transformed the gramophone from a novelty into a realistic medium for reproducing orchestral and choral music . Elgar was the first composer to take full advantage of this technological advance . Fred Gaisberg of HMV , who produced Elgar 's recordings , set up a series of sessions to capture on disc the composer 's interpretations of his major orchestral works , including the *Enigma Variations* , *Falstaff* , the first and second symphonies , and the cello and violin concertos . For most of these , the orchestra was the LSO , but the *Variations* were played by the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra . Later in the series of recordings , Elgar also conducted two newly founded orchestras , Boult 's BBC Symphony Orchestra and Sir Thomas Beecham 's London Philharmonic Orchestra .

Elgar 's recordings were released on 78 @-@ rpm discs by both HMV and RCA Victor . After World War II , the 1932 recording of the *Violin Concerto* with the teenage Menuhin as soloist remained available on 78 and later on LP , but the other recordings were out of the catalogues for some years . When they were reissued by EMI on LP in the 1970s , they caused surprise to many by their fast tempi , in contrast to the slower speeds adopted by many conductors in the years since Elgar 's death . The recordings were reissued on CD in the 1990s .

In November 1931 , Elgar was filmed by Pathé for a newsreel depicting a recording session of *Pomp and Circumstance March No. 1* at the opening of EMI 's Abbey Road Studios in London . It is believed to be the only surviving sound film of Elgar , who makes a brief remark before conducting the London Symphony Orchestra , asking the musicians to " play this tune as though you 've never heard it before . " A memorial plaque to Elgar at Abbey Road was unveiled on 24 June 1993 .

A late piece of Elgar 's , the *Nursery Suite* , was an early example of a studio premiere : its first performance was in the Abbey Road studios . For this work , dedicated to the wife and daughters of the Duke of York , Elgar once again drew on his youthful sketch @-@ books .

In his final years , Elgar experienced a musical revival . The BBC organised a festival of his works to celebrate his seventy @-@ fifth birthday , in 1932 . He flew to Paris in 1933 to conduct the *Violin Concerto* for Menuhin . While in France , he visited his fellow composer Frederick Delius at his house at Grez @-@ sur @-@ Loing . He was sought out by younger musicians such as Adrian Boult , Malcolm Sargent and John Barbirolli , who championed his music when it was out of fashion . He began work on an opera , *The Spanish Lady* , and accepted a commission from the BBC to compose a *Third Symphony* . His final illness , however , prevented their completion . He fretted about the unfinished works . He asked Reed to ensure that nobody would " tinker " with the sketches and attempt a completion of the symphony , but at other times he said , " If I can 't complete the *Third Symphony* , somebody will complete it ? or write a better one . " After Elgar 's death , Percy M.

Young , in cooperation with the BBC and Elgar 's daughter Carice , produced a version of The Spanish Lady , which was issued on CD . The Third Symphony sketches were elaborated by the composer Anthony Payne into a complete score in 1998 .

Inoperable colorectal cancer was discovered during an operation on 8 October 1933 . He told his consulting doctor , Arthur Thomson , that he had no faith in an afterlife : " I believe there is nothing but complete oblivion . " Elgar died on 23 February 1934 at the age of seventy @-@ six and was buried next to his wife at St. Wulstan 's Roman Catholic Church in Little Malvern .

= = Music = =

= = = Influences , antecedents and early works = = =

Elgar was contemptuous of folk music and had little interest in or respect for the early English composers , calling William Byrd and his contemporaries " museum pieces " . Of later English composers , he regarded Purcell as the greatest , and he said that he had learned much of his own technique from studying Hubert Parry 's writings . The continental composers who most influenced Elgar were Handel , Dvořák and , to some degree , Brahms . In Elgar 's chromaticism , the influence of Wagner is apparent , but Elgar 's individual style of orchestration owes much to the clarity of nineteenth @-@ century French composers , Berlioz , Massenet , Saint @-@ Saëns and , particularly , Delibes , whose music Elgar played and conducted at Worcester and greatly admired .

Elgar began composing when still a child , and all his life he drew on his early sketchbooks for themes and inspiration . The habit of assembling his compositions , even large @-@ scale ones , from scraps of themes jotted down randomly remained throughout his life . His early adult works included violin and piano pieces , music for the wind quintet in which he and his brother played between 1878 ? 81 , and music of many types for the Powick Asylum band . Diana McVeagh in Grove 's Dictionary finds many embryonic Elgarian touches in these pieces , but few of them are regularly played , except Salut d 'Amour and (as arranged decades later into The Wand of Youth Suites) some of the childhood sketches . Elgar 's sole work of note during his first spell in London in 1889 ? 91 , the overture Froissart , was a romantic @-@ bravura piece , influenced by Mendelssohn and Wagner , but also showing further Elgarian characteristics . Orchestral works composed during the subsequent years in Worcestershire include the Serenade for Strings and Three Bavarian Dances . In this period and later , Elgar wrote songs and partsongs . W. H. Reed expressed reservations about these pieces , but praised the partsong The Snow , for female voices , and Sea Pictures , a cycle of five songs for contralto and orchestra which remains in the repertory .

Elgar 's principal large @-@ scale early works were for chorus and orchestra for the Three Choirs and other festivals . These were The Black Knight , King Olaf , The Light of Life , The Banner of St George and Caractacus . He also wrote a Te Deum and Benedictus for the Hereford Festival . Of these , McVeagh comments favourably on his lavish orchestration and innovative use of leitmotifs , but less favourably on the qualities of his chosen texts and the patchiness of his inspiration . McVeagh makes the point that , because these works of the 1890s were for many years little known (and performances remain rare) , the mastery of his first great success , the Enigma Variations , appeared to be a sudden transformation from mediocrity to genius , but in fact his orchestral skills had been building up throughout the decade .

= = = Peak creative years = = =

Elgar 's best @-@ known works were composed within the twenty @-@ one years between 1899 and 1920 . Most of them are orchestral . Reed wrote , " Elgar 's genius rose to its greatest height in his orchestral works " and quoted the composer as saying that , even in his oratorios , the orchestral part is the most important . The Enigma Variations made Elgar 's name nationally . The variation form was ideal for him at this stage of his career , when his comprehensive mastery of orchestration was still in contrast to his tendency to write his melodies in short , sometimes rigid , phrases . His

next orchestral works , Cockaigne (In London Town) , a concert @-@ overture (1900 ? 1901) , the first two Pomp and Circumstance marches (1901) , and the gentle Dream Children (1902) , are all short : the longest of them , Cockaigne , lasting less than fifteen minutes . In the South (Alassio) (1903 ? 1904) , although designated by Elgar as a concert @-@ overture , is , according to Kennedy , really a tone poem and the longest continuous piece of purely orchestral writing Elgar had essayed . He wrote it after setting aside an early attempt to compose a symphony . The work reveals his continuing progress in writing sustained themes and orchestral lines , although some critics , including Kennedy , find that in the middle part " Elgar 's inspiration burns at less than its brightest . " In 1905 Elgar completed the Introduction and Allegro for Strings . This work is based , unlike much of Elgar 's earlier writing , not on a profusion of themes but on only three . Kennedy called it a " masterly composition , equalled among English works for strings only by Vaughan Williams 's Tallis Fantasia . " Nevertheless , at less than a quarter of an hour , it was not by contemporary standards a lengthy composition . Gustav Mahler 's Seventh Symphony , composed at the same time , runs for well over an hour .

During the next four years , however , Elgar composed three major concert pieces , which , though shorter than comparable works by some of his European contemporaries , are among the most substantial such works by an English composer . These were his First Symphony , Violin Concerto , and Second Symphony , which all play for between forty @-@ five minutes and an hour . McVeagh says of the symphonies that they " rank high not only in Elgar 's output but in English musical history . Both are long and powerful , without published programmes , only hints and quotations to indicate some inward drama from which they derive their vitality and eloquence . Both are based on classical form but differ from it to the extent that ... they were considered prolix and slackly constructed by some critics . Certainly the invention in them is copious ; each symphony would need several dozen music examples to chart its progress . "

Elgar 's Violin Concerto and Cello Concerto , in the view of Kennedy , " rank not only among his finest works , but among the greatest of their kind " . They are , however , very different from each other . The Violin Concerto , composed in 1909 as Elgar reached the height of his popularity , and written for the instrument dearest to his heart , is lyrical throughout and rhapsodical and brilliant by turns . The Cello Concerto , composed a decade later , immediately after World War I , seems , in Kennedy 's words , " to belong to another age , another world ... the simplest of all Elgar 's major works ... also the least grandiloquent . " Between the two concertos came Elgar 's symphonic study Falstaff , which has divided opinion even among Elgar 's strongest admirers . Donald Tovey viewed it as " one of the immeasurably great things in music " , with power " identical with Shakespeare 's " , while Kennedy criticises the work for " too frequent reliance on sequences " and an over @-@ idealised depiction of the female characters . Reed thought that the principal themes show less distinction than some of Elgar 's earlier works . Elgar himself thought Falstaff the highest point of his purely orchestral work .

The major works for voices and orchestra of the twenty @-@ one years of Elgar 's middle period are three large @-@ scale works for soloists , chorus and orchestra : The Dream of Gerontius (1900) , and the oratorios The Apostles (1903) and The Kingdom (1906) ; and two shorter odes , the Coronation Ode (1902) and The Music Makers (1912) . The first of the odes , as a pièce d 'occasion , has rarely been revived after its initial success , with the culminating " Land of Hope and Glory " . The second is , for Elgar , unusual in that it contains several quotations from his earlier works , as Richard Strauss quoted himself in Ein Heldenleben . The choral works were all successful , although the first , Gerontius , was and remains the best @-@ loved and most performed . On the manuscript Elgar wrote , quoting John Ruskin , " This is the best of me ; for the rest , I ate , and drank , and slept , loved and hated , like another . My life was as the vapour , and is not ; but this I saw , and knew ; this , if anything of mine , is worth your memory . " All three of the large @-@ scale works follow the traditional model with sections for soloists , chorus and both together . Elgar 's distinctive orchestration , as well as his melodic inspiration , lifts them to a higher level than most of their British predecessors .

Elgar 's other works of his middle period include incidental music for Grania and Diarmid , a play by George Moore and W. B. Yeats (1901) , and for The Starlight Express , a play based on a story by

Algernon Blackwood (1916) . Of the former , Yeats called Elgar 's music " wonderful in its heroic melancholy " . Elgar also wrote a number of songs during his peak period , of which Reed observes , " it cannot be said that he enriched the vocal repertory to the same extent as he did that of the orchestra . "

= = = Final years and posthumous completions = = =

After the Cello Concerto , Elgar completed no more large @-@ scale works . He made arrangements of works by Bach , Handel and Chopin , in distinctively Elgarian orchestration , and once again turned his youthful notebooks to use for the Nursery Suite (1931) . His other compositions of this period have not held a place in the regular repertory . For most of the rest of the twentieth century , it was generally agreed that Elgar 's creative impulse ceased after his wife 's death . Anthony Payne 's elaboration of the sketches for Elgar 's Third Symphony led to a reconsideration of this supposition . Elgar left the opening of the symphony complete in full score , and those pages , along with others , show Elgar 's orchestration changed markedly from the richness of his pre @-@ war work . The Gramophone described the opening of the new work as something " thrilling ... unforgettably gaunt " . Payne also subsequently produced a performing version of the sketches for a sixth Pomp and Circumstance March , premiered at the Proms in August 2006 . Elgar 's sketches for a piano concerto dating from 1913 were elaborated by the composer Robert Walker and first performed in August 1997 by the pianist David Owen Norris . The realisation has since been extensively revised .

= = = Reputation = = =

Views of Elgar 's stature have varied in the decades since his music came to prominence at the beginning of the twentieth century . Richard Strauss , as noted , hailed Elgar as a progressive composer ; even the hostile reviewer in The Observer , unimpressed by the thematic material of the First Symphony in 1908 , called the orchestration " magnificently modern " . Hans Richter rated Elgar as " the greatest modern composer " in any country , and Richter 's colleague Arthur Nikisch considered the First Symphony " a masterpiece of the first order " to be " justly ranked with the great symphonic models ? Beethoven and Brahms . " By contrast , the critic W. J. Turner , in the mid @-@ twentieth century , wrote of Elgar 's " Salvation Army symphonies , " and Herbert von Karajan called the Enigma Variations " second @-@ hand Brahms " . Elgar 's immense popularity was not long @-@ lived . After the success of his First Symphony and Violin Concerto , his Second Symphony and Cello Concerto were politely received but without the earlier wild enthusiasm . His music was identified in the public mind with the Edwardian era , and after the First World War he no longer seemed a progressive or modern composer . In the early 1920s , even the First Symphony had only one London performance in more than three years . Henry Wood and younger conductors such as Boult , Sargent and Barbirolli championed Elgar 's music , but in the recording catalogues and the concert programmes of the middle of the century his works were not well represented .

In 1924 , the music scholar Edward J. Dent wrote an article for a German music journal in which he identified four features of Elgar 's style that gave offence to a section of English opinion (namely , Dent indicated , the academic and snobbish section) : " too emotional " , " not quite free from vulgarity " , " pompous " , and " too deliberately noble in expression " . This article was reprinted in 1930 and caused controversy . In the later years of the century there was , in Britain at least , a revival of interest in Elgar 's music . The features that had offended austere taste in the inter @-@ war years were seen from a different perspective . In 1955 , the reference book The Record Guide wrote of the Edwardian background during the height of Elgar 's career :

Boastful self @-@ confidence , emotional vulgarity , material extravagance , a ruthless philistinism expressed in tasteless architecture and every kind of expensive yet hideous accessory : such features of a late phase of Imperial England are faithfully reflected in Elgar 's larger works and are apt to prove indigestible today . But if it is difficult to overlook the bombastic , the sentimental , and the trivial elements in his music , the effort to do so should nevertheless be made , for the sake of

the many inspired pages , the power and eloquence and lofty pathos , of Elgar 's best work Anyone who doubts the fact of Elgar 's genius should take the first opportunity of hearing *The Dream of Gerontius* , which remains his masterpiece , as it is his largest and perhaps most deeply felt work ; the symphonic study , *Falstaff* ; the Introduction and Allegro for Strings ; the Enigma Variations ; and the Violoncello Concerto .

By the 1960s , a less severe view was being taken of the Edwardian era . In 1966 the critic Frank Howes wrote that Elgar reflected the last blaze of opulence , expansiveness and full @-@ blooded life , before World War I swept so much away . In Howes 's view , there was a touch of vulgarity in both the era and Elgar 's music , but " a composer is entitled to be judged by posterity for his best work Elgar is historically important for giving to English music a sense of the orchestra , for expressing what it felt like to be alive in the Edwardian age , for conferring on the world at least four unqualified masterpieces , and for thereby restoring England to the comity of musical nations . "

In 1967 the critic and analyst David Cox considered the question of the supposed Englishness of Elgar 's music . Cox noted that Elgar disliked folk @-@ songs and never used them in his works , opting for an idiom that was essentially German , leavened by a lightness derived from French composers including Berlioz and Gounod . How then , asked Cox , could Elgar be " the most English of composers " ? Cox found the answer in Elgar 's own personality , which " could use the alien idioms in such a way as to make of them a vital form of expression that was his and his alone . And the personality that comes through in the music is English . " This point about Elgar 's transmuting his influences had been touched on before . In 1930 *The Times* wrote , " When Elgar 's first symphony came out , someone attempted to prove that its main tune on which all depends was like the Grail theme in *Parsifal* but the attempt fell flat because everyone else , including those who disliked the tune , had instantly recognized it as typically ' Elgarian ' , while the Grail theme is as typically Wagnerian . " As for Elgar 's " Englishness " , his fellow @-@ composers recognised it : Richard Strauss and Stravinsky made particular reference to it , and Sibelius called him , " the personification of the true English character in music ... a noble personality and a born aristocrat " .

Among Elgar 's admirers there is disagreement about which of his works are to be regarded as masterpieces . The Enigma Variations are generally counted among them . *The Dream of Gerontius* has also been given high praise by Elgarians , and the Cello Concerto is similarly rated . Many rate the Violin Concerto equally highly , but some do not . Sackville @-@ West omitted it from the list of Elgar masterpieces in *The Record Guide* , and in a long analytical article in *The Musical Quarterly* , Daniel Gregory Mason criticised the first movement of the concerto for a " kind of sing @-@ songiness ... as fatal to noble rhythm in music as it is in poetry . " *Falstaff* also divides opinion . It has never been a great popular favourite , and Kennedy and Reed identify shortcomings in it . In a *Musical Times* 1957 centenary symposium on Elgar led by Vaughan Williams , by contrast , several contributors share Eric Blom 's view that *Falstaff* is the greatest of all Elgar 's works .

The two symphonies divide opinion even more sharply . Mason rates the Second poorly for its " over @-@ obvious rhythmic scheme " , but calls the First " Elgar 's masterpiece It is hard to see how any candid student can deny the greatness of this symphony . " However , in the 1957 centenary symposium , several leading admirers of Elgar express reservations about one or both symphonies . In the same year , Roger Fiske wrote in *The Gramophone* , " For some reason few people seem to like the two Elgar symphonies equally ; each has its champions and often they are more than a little bored by the rival work . " The critic John Warrack wrote , " There are no sadder pages in symphonic literature than the close of the First Symphony 's Adagio , as horn and trombones twice softly intone a phrase of utter grief " , whereas to Michael Kennedy , the movement is notable for its lack of anguished yearning and angst and is marked instead by a " benevolent tranquillity . "

Despite the fluctuating critical assessment of the various works over the years , Elgar 's major works taken as a whole have in the twenty @-@ first century recovered strongly from their neglect in the 1950s . *The Record Guide* in 1955 could list only one currently available recording of the First Symphony , none of the Second , one of the Violin Concerto , two of the Cello Concerto , two of the Enigma Variations , one of *Falstaff* , and none of *The Dream of Gerontius* . Since then there have been multiple recordings of all the major works . More than thirty recordings have been made of the

First Symphony since 1955 , for example , and more than a dozen of The Dream of Gerontius . Similarly , in the concert hall , Elgar 's works , after a period of neglect , are once again frequently programmed . The Elgar Society 's website , in its diary of forthcoming performances , lists performances of Elgar 's works by orchestras , soloists and conductors across Europe , North America and Australia .

= = Honours , awards and commemorations = =

Elgar was knighted in 1904 , and in 1911 he was appointed a member of the Order of Merit . In 1920 he received the Cross of Commander of the Belgian Order of the Crown ; in 1924 he was made Master of the King 's Musick ; the following year he received the Gold Medal of the Royal Philharmonic Society ; and in 1928 he was appointed a Knight Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (KCVO) . Between 1900 and 1931 , Elgar received honorary degrees from the Universities of Cambridge , Durham , Leeds , Oxford , Yale (USA) , Aberdeen , Western Pennsylvania (USA) , Birmingham and London . Foreign academies of which he was made a member were Regia Accademia di Santa Cecilia , Rome ; Accademia del Reale Istituto Musicale , Florence ; Académie des Beaux Arts , Paris ; Institut de France ; and the American Academy . In 1931 he was created a Baronet , of Broadheath in the County of Worcester . In 1933 he was promoted within the Royal Victorian Order to Knight Grand Cross (GCVO) . In Kennedy 's words , he " shamelessly touted " for a peerage , but in vain . In Who 's Who , post World War I , he claimed to have been awarded " several Imperial Russian and German decorations (lapsed) " .

The house in Lower Broadheath where Elgar was born is now the Elgar Birthplace Museum , devoted to his life and work . Elgar 's daughter , Carice , helped to found the museum in 1936 and bequeathed to it much of her collection of Elgar 's letters and documents on her death in 1970 . Carice left Elgar manuscripts to musical colleges : The Black Knight to Trinity College of Music ; King Olaf to the Royal Academy of Music ; The Music Makers to Birmingham University ; the Cello Concerto to the Royal College of Music ; The Kingdom to the Bodleian Library ; and other manuscripts to the British Museum . The Elgar Society dedicated to the composer and his works was formed in 1951 . The University of Birmingham 's Special Collections contain an archive of letters written by Elgar .

Elgar 's statue at the end of Worcester High Street stands facing the cathedral , only yards from where his father 's shop once stood . Another statue of the composer by Rose Garrard is at the top of Church Street in Malvern , overlooking the town and giving visitors an opportunity to stand next to the composer in the shadow of the Hills that he so often regarded . In September 2005 , a third statue sculpted by Jemma Pearson was unveiled near Hereford Cathedral in honour of his many musical and other associations with the city . It depicts Elgar with his bicycle . From 1999 until early 2007 , new Bank of England twenty pound notes featured a portrait of Elgar . The change to remove his image generated controversy , particularly because 2007 was the 150th anniversary of Elgar 's birth . From 2007 the Elgar notes were phased out , ceasing to be legal tender on 30 June 2010 .

There are around 65 roads in the UK named after Elgar , including six in the counties of Herefordshire and Worcestershire . Elgar had three locomotives named in his honour .

Elgar 's life and music have inspired works of literature including the novel Gerontius and several plays . Elgar 's Rondo , a 1993 stage play by David Pownall depicts the dead Jaeger offering ghostly advice on Elgar 's musical development . Pownall also wrote a radio play , Elgar 's Third (1994) ; another Elgar @-@ themed radio play is Alick Rowe 's The Dorabella Variation (2003) . David Rudkin 's BBC television " Play for Today " Penda 's Fen (1974) deals with themes including sex and adolescence , spying , and snobbery , with Elgar 's music , chiefly The Dream of Gerontius , as its background . In one scene , a ghostly Elgar whispers the secret of the " Enigma " tune to the youthful central character , with an injunction not to reveal it . Elgar on the Journey to Hanley , a novel by Keith Alldritt (1979) , tells of the composer 's attachment to Dora Penny , later Mrs Powell , (depicted as " Dorabella " in the Enigma Variations) , and covers the fifteen years from their first meeting in the mid @-@ 1890s to the genesis of the Violin Concerto when , in the novel , Dora has been supplanted in Elgar 's affections by Alice Stuart @-@ Wortley .

Perhaps the best @-@ known work depicting Elgar is Ken Russell 's 1962 BBC television film Elgar , made when the composer was still largely out of fashion . This hour @-@ long film contradicted the view of Elgar as a jingoistic and bombastic composer , and evoked the more pastoral and melancholy side of his character and music .

= = Selected works = =

The following have been selected as representative of Elgar 's works , based on quality , significance and popularity .

= = = Orchestral = = =

Froissart , concert overture , Op. 19 (1890)
Serenade for Strings , Op. 20 (1888 ? 1892)
Variations on an Original Theme (Enigma) , Op. 36 (1899)
includes Variation 9 Nimrod
Cockaigne (In London Town) , concert overture , Op. 40 (1900 ? 1901)
Pomp and Circumstance , five marches , all Op. 39 (1901 ? 1930)
March No. 1 in D (1901) (The trio contains the tune known as Land of Hope and Glory)
In the South (Alassio) , concert overture , Op. 50 (1903 ? 1904)
Introduction and Allegro for strings (quartet and orchestra) , Op. 47 (1904 ? 05)
The Wand of Youth , suites Nos. 1 and 2 , Opp . 1a / b (1867 ? 71 , rev. 1907 / 8)
Symphony No. 1 in A @-@ flat , Op. 55 (1907 ? 1908)
Violin Concerto in B minor , Op. 61 (1909 ? 1910)
Romance for bassoon and orchestra , Op. 62 (1910)
Symphony No. 2 in E @-@ flat , Op. 63 (1909 ? 1911)
Falstaff , symphonic study , Op. 68 (1913)
Cello Concerto in E minor , Op. 85 (1918 ? 1919)
The Severn Suite , Op. 87 (1930) (for brass band , trans. for orchestra 1932)

= = = Cantatas and oratorios = = =

The Black Knight , symphony / cantata for chorus and orchestra , Op. 25 (1889 ? 1892)
The Light of Life (Lux Christi) , oratorio for soprano , alto , tenor and bass soloists , chorus and orchestra , Op. 29 (1896)
Scenes From The Saga Of King Olaf , cantata for soprano , tenor and bass soloists , chorus and orchestra , Op. 30 (1896)
Caractacus , cantata for soprano , tenor , baritone and bass soloists , chorus and orchestra , Op. 35 (1897 ? 1898)
The Dream of Gerontius , for mezzo @-@ soprano , tenor and bass soloists , chorus and orchestra , Op. 38 (1899 ? 1900)
The Apostles , oratorio for soprano , contralto , tenor and three bass soloists , chorus and orchestra , Op. 49 (1902 ? 1903)
The Kingdom , oratorio for soprano , contralto , tenor and bass soloists , chorus and orchestra , Op. 51 (1901 ? 1906)
The Music Makers , ode for contralto or mezzo @-@ soprano soloist , chorus and orchestra , Op. 69 (1912)

= = = Songs = = =

" The Wind at Dawn " , poem by C. Alice Roberts (1888)
Sea Pictures , (Sea Pictures : A Cycle of Five Songs for Contralto) , Op. 37 . (1897 ? 1899)
" Land of Hope and Glory " , words by Arthur Christopher Benson (1902)

Seven Lieder of Edward Elgar (1907)

== = Partsongs == =

" O Happy Eyes " , SATB unacc . , words by C. Alice Elgar , Op. 18 No.1 (1890)

" My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land " , SATB unacc . , words by Andrew Lang , dedicated to Rev. J. Hampton (1890)

" The Snow " , SSA acc . 2 violins and piano , words by C. Alice Elgar , dedicated to Mrs. E. B. Fitton , Op. 26 No.1 (1894) (also with orchestral accompaniment , 1903 , and various other combinations of voices SATB etc .)

" Go , Song of Mine " , SSAATB unacc . , words by Cavalcanti , tr . D. G. Rossetti , dedicated to Alfred H. Littleton , Op. 57 (1909)

" The Shower " and " The Fountain " , SATB unacc . , words by Henry Vaughan , Op. 71 Nos.1 and 2 (1914)

== = Church music == =

Three motets : " Ave verum corpus " , " Ave Maria " and " Ave Maris Stella " , Op. 2 (1887)

Te Deum and Benedictus , Op. 34 (1897)

== = Chamber music == =

Romance , violin and piano , Op. 1 (1878)

Salut d 'Amour (Liebesgruss) , violin and piano , Op. 12 (1888)

Chanson de Nuit and Chanson de Matin , violin and piano , Op. 15 Nos. 1 and 2 (1897 / 1899) .

Violin Sonata in E minor , Op. 82 (1918)

String Quartet in E minor , Op. 83 (1918)

Piano Quintet in A minor , Op. 84 (1918 ? 1919)

== = Keyboard == =

Organ Sonata in G , Op. 28

Concert Allegro , piano , Op. 46 (1901 ; unpublished)

== = Arrangements == =

J. S. Bach , Fantasia and Fugue in C minor , BWV 537 , tr. for orchestra , Op. 86 (1921 ? 1922)

Handel , Overture in D minor (Overture to Chandos Anthem " In the Lord put I my Trust " , HWV247) , tr. for orchestra (1923)