

# THE CROWN IMPERIAL

Marches for 20th-century British Coronations

First Recording of the newly-formed  
LONDON SYMPHONIC CONCERT BAND

Tom Higgins *director*

1	March – Imperial Edward	Edward VII	1901	John Philip Sousa	2:30
2	Coronation March Op. 117	Edward VII	1902	Camille Saint-Saëns ( <i>arr. M. Retford</i> )	6:35
3	Coronation March	Edward VII	1902	Sir Alexander Mackenzie ( <i>arr. J. Mackenzie-Rogan</i> )	6:46
4	Coronation March	Edward VII	1902	Percy Godfrey ( <i>arr. Charles Godfrey</i> )	4:47
5	Coronation March Op. 65	George V	1911	Sir Edward Elgar ( <i>arr. Tom Higgins</i> )	9:26
6	Coronation March	George V	1911	Sir Edward German ( <i>arr. Dan Godfrey</i> )	6:12
7	The Crown of India Op. 65	George V	1912	Sir Edward Elgar ( <i>arr. Frank Winterbottom</i> )	4:21
8	Crown Imperial	George VI	1937	Sir William Walton ( <i>arr. W.J. Duthoit</i> )	8:11
9	Orb and Sceptre	Elizabeth II	1953	Sir William Walton ( <i>arr. Norman Richardson</i> )	7:13
10	Coronation March	Elizabeth II	1953	Sir Arnold Bax ( <i>arr. George Pollen</i> )	6:25
11	Welcome the Queen	Elizabeth II	1954	Sir Arthur Bliss ( <i>arr. W.J. Duthoit</i> )	5:29
	<b>Total duration</b>				<b>69:11</b>

Recorded at St. John the Evangelist, Upper Norwood on 20th and 21st July 2013

Recording Producer: Siva Oke Recording Engineer: Ben Connellan

Front Cover: *The new Imperial Crown to be worn by His Majesty George IV at his Coronation*  
(coloured engraving – detail), English School, (19th century) / Private Collection /

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Marches for  
20th-century  
British Coronations

SOUSA · ELGAR  
WALTON · BAX  
BLISS  
and others

London Symphonic Concert Band  
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## Marches for 20th-century British Coronations

When Queen Victoria died in the arms of her grandson Kaiser Wilhelm II at Osborn House, Isle of Wight, on January 22nd 1901 at the age of 81, the longest reign of any British monarch was at an end. The Queen's funeral took place just thirteen days later, on February 4th, after which the public gaze began to turn from a period of mourning to one of expectation as the preparations for the first British Coronation for 64 years got under way.

Very few people in August 1902 could remember Queen Victoria's Coronation in 1838, but it was soon clear that the music, under the general direction of Sir Frederick Bridge, who, with Sir Walter Parratt, the then master of the King's Musick, and the Westminster Abbey organist (later Sir) Walter Alcock, made the occasion a veritable showcase for British music, and not just for British choral music. Of course, there was one anthem which had earned its place through its use at every Coronation Service since that of King George II in 1727: Handel's 'Zadok the Priest', which has been performed at every coronation since, but Bridge and Parratt inaugurated several important musical additions during and surrounding the service, in no little way predicated upon the natural musical interests of the sovereign (the new King took the greatest interest in all aspects of the Coronation Service), which included the employment of a full orchestra in Westminster Abbey. The orchestra would be used for virtually all of the music performed during the Coronation itself, and would also play before and after the ceremony for the distinguished congregation.

Edward VII's Coronation was originally set for June 26th, 1902, but two days before, the King underwent emergency surgery and the ceremony was postponed for six weeks. During that time, many foreign heads of state and other dignitaries had returned home and did not witness the Coronation itself. Nonetheless, the Coronation naturally made a big impact, within Britain and throughout the Empire; it came five years after the last great celebration of Imperial power, Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee of 1897, marking the zenith of the British Empire, which then covered one-fifth of the world's population.

For Victoria's Diamond Jubilee, Elgar had composed his *Imperial March* opus 32 (dedicated to the Queen), and for her son's Coronation, a large-scale choral-orchestral *Coronation Ode* opus 44 to words by A C Benson, and including the trio section of the first *Pomp and Circumstance* March as the patriotic song *Land of Hope and Glory*. During those five years Elgar had achieved national fame with the first two *Pomp and Circumstance* Marches, the *Enigma* Variations, *Sea Pictures*, *The Dream of Gerontius* and the *Cockaigne* Overture. However, perhaps as a Catholic, he was not asked to provide music for the Service itself.

The success of the first *Pomp and Circumstance* March and of *Land of Hope and Glory* was total, demonstrating that British composers had nothing to fear from foreign masters of the march genre, including the great American John Philip Sousa, whose band undertook a British tour towards the end of 1901. At that time, Sousa's fame was truly transcontinental; he was invited by the new (as yet uncrowned) King to Sandringham for a command performance on December 1st. For the occasion, Sousa wrote a new march, *Imperial Edward*, which was given its premiere then and there. It is an interesting piece, for its relatively unusual tonal

structure (it begins in B flat but ends in E flat) and for its incorporation of the British National Anthem (also known in the United States as 'America') as a counter-melody. *Imperial Edward* enjoyed a transient success, being often requested during the Sousa band's return visit to Britain in 1903.

Sousa's *Imperial Edward* was doubtless the first march to be dedicated to the King, and for the Coronation itself in 1902 several new marches appeared, not only by British composers. Camille Saint-Saëns wrote his *Marche du couronnement (Coronation March)* opus 117 for the purely orchestral part of the ceremony itself (interestingly, sharing the 'Imperial' key of E flat major) utilising the basic march and central contrasting trio structure.

The Edinburgh-born composer Sir Alexander Mackenzie (1847-1935) had been appointed Principal of the Royal Academy of Music in 1888, the year after his Golden Jubilee Ode for Queen Victoria was premiered at the Crystal Palace (where, in April 1886, Mackenzie had conducted a performance of Liszt's oratorio 'St Elizabeth' in Liszt's presence); he had (by 1901) also been conductor of the London Philharmonic Society, and was a natural choice in being invited to compose a march to precede the Coronation Service.

Alongside the ceremonial pieces by Saint-Saëns and Mackenzie the winning march from a public competition for such works was also performed prior to the Service. This was the *Coronation March* by Percy Godfrey (1859-1945), later music master of King's School, Canterbury and better-known as a composer in lighter vein, although a Piano Quintet and some choral works were much admired. An interesting point is that Godfrey's opening anticipates that of Walton's *Orb and Sceptre* of half a century later.

The nine years of Edward VII's reign saw major developments across many aspects of public life – not least from a generation rich in musical quality the emergence of Elgar as the leading British composer. In the rise of Elgar's fame at that time, the part played by the King was not insignificant, and in the wake of the successes of the composer's First Symphony (1908) and Violin Concerto (1910) Elgar planned a Second Symphony 'as a loyal tribute', but the King's death changed the dedication to one of memorial – not entirely unsuitable, given the nature of the work.

But whereas Elgar in 1901 contributed nothing to the Coronation Service in Westminster Abbey, for the 1911 ceremony he provided two works – the Offertorium for chorus, organ and orchestra *O Harken Thou*, his opus 64, and a full-scale orchestral *Coronation March* opus 65. Given the popularity of Elgar's marches, it is strange this one is little-known. Perhaps its length (approaching ten minutes) and inherent solemnity remove it from the flag-waving affairs of the *Pomp and Circumstance* set, but it is a superb work in its own right, touching the gravely dignified character of aspects of the Service wherein the monarch was crowned as Governor of the British Empire and anointed as head of the Anglican Church. Elgar's march is a profound acknowledgment from a leading (if hardly regularly practicing) Catholic artist of the new King George V's refusal to discriminate against Catholics (as the original Coronation Oath implies). This recording is the first to be made of Tom Higgins's superb transcription of the march for concert band.

During Edward VII's reign Edward German was another British composer whose reputation ascended considerably. The success of his light operas *Merrie England* and *Tom Jones* in 1902 and 1907 increased his fame; he and Elgar became close friends, and German's *Coronation March and Hymn* (giving the work its full title) of

1911 proved to be one of his last serious compositions. German based the March (the hymn, *Veni Creator Spiritus*, accompanying the anointing of the Sovereign, is not the VIII Mode melody) on earlier material, and much of its outwardly optimistic air must have made a vivid contrast in the Abbey to Elgar's more contemplative work.

Several months after their Coronation on June 22nd, 1911, King George V and Queen Mary travelled to India for the Delhi Durbar, where they were presented as Emperor and Empress of India. The Imperial Durbar had been held twice before, but on neither occasion was either Victoria (in 1877) or Edward VII (in 1903) present, so the presence of the new King and Queen in December 1911, before an estimated half-million people, was a profound innovation – some early colour film footage of the occasion survives. German's *Coronation March and Hymn* was repeated at the Durbar, and on the return of their majesties, a masque in two tableaux, ***The Crown of India***, was created and performed at the London Coliseum in March 1912. Elgar provided an extensive score (and conducted the performances for the initial fortnight) of twelve items, from which he extracted an orchestral suite including a movement entitled *March of the Mogul Emperors* that became very popular. In tableau II, a second March – recorded here – is more closely relevant to King and Emperor, a stately and noble pulse underlies the music which in essence is dissimilar to the Coronation March itself.

George V appointed Elgar as Master of the King's Musick in 1924 on the death of Sir Walter Parratt, but when Elgar died in February 1934, the King was to survive him by less than two years, succeeded in turn by Edward VIII. Yet Edward abdicated after eleven months in December 1936 in favour of his brother, now King George VI. The date of Edward VIII's Coronation in 1937, fixed for May 12, was retained for

the new King and Queen, the music for the Service being in the hands of (later Sir) Ernest Bullock – organist of Westminster Abbey, and Elgar's successor, Sir Henry Walford Davies.

As the Preface to the 1937 Coronation Service states "Together [Bullock and Walford Davies], and after consultation with other musicians, they have sought out musical works old and new", retaining the (by then) traditional orchestral items before and after the Service itself. German's 1911 March was performed on that occasion for the entrance to the Abbey of the widowed Queen Mary, but the composer himself had died on November 11th 1936, thirty days before Edward's Abdication. However, the work that is most remembered from music heard prior to the service itself was a new march by the 34-year-old William Walton, ***Crown Imperial***, commissioned by the BBC for the occasion. Its title comes from *In Honour of the City of London* (c 1501) by the Scottish poet William Dunbar, which Walton coincidentally set in 1937 to a commission from the Leeds Festival – the line (in modern English) is 'in beauty bearing the Crown Imperial'. Walton's march has become one of the most widely-admired ceremonial marches since Elgar's *Pomp and Circumstance*, and on the accession of Queen Elizabeth II in 1952 Walton was approached for a companion Coronation March to be heard during the ceremony on June 2nd 1953.

Nor was this Walton's only contribution to the Coronation, for – like Elgar in 1911 – he provided a choral setting, this time of the concluding *Te Deum*, laid out on spacious lines for double chorus, two semi-choruses, organ and orchestra. Walton's 1953 Coronation March is ***Orb and Sceptre***, symbolic items presented to the Sovereign prior to the putting on of the crown itself – the orb signifying the globe, the sceptre kingly power.

The character of Walton's *Orb and Sceptre* is different from *Crown Imperial* – more flamboyant and brilliant than its stately predecessor – and it has also entered the ceremonial music repertory. Walton's two coronation marches were played before and after the Abbey service in 1953, sharing the programme with music by Elgar and others, and a new work by the then Master of the Queen's Music, Sir Arnold Bax, who had been appointed in 1942, succeeding Walford Davies.

Bax's 1952 *Coronation March* was to prove his last orchestral composition, for he died in October 1953 aged 69. The work possesses a more intimate expression than *Orb and Sceptre*, reflecting perhaps the character of the young Queen, and seeming – as did German's 1911 March – to quote from music the composer had written earlier; in this case, that which Bax wrote for the wartime film *Malta GC*. This recording is the first of the excellent transcription by George Pollen.

Five months after her Coronation, Queen Elizabeth II embarked upon a demanding tour of the Empire and Commonwealth, which took her away from the United Kingdom for six months. Her dramatic return to London was by ship up the River Thames, and within a few days she had attended a Royal concert at the Royal Festival Hall (opened by King George VI in May 1951 as part of the Festival of Britain) by the London Symphony Orchestra.

Sir Arthur Bliss had succeeded Bax as Master of the Queen's Music and for the concert he composed two works – a cantata *A Song of Welcome* (the soloists being Joan Sutherland and John Cameron) and a splendid orchestral march, *Welcome the Queen*, in which latter work Bliss showed himself to be in every way a worthy successor to his notable predecessors.

Robert Matthew-Walker © 2014

## TOM HIGGINS *conductor*

Tom Higgins studied conducting at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, winning a silver medal with honours in his first year. He continued his studies with James Lockhart, formerly Music Director of the Kassel Opera House in Germany.

He has regularly conducted leading British orchestras and during a four-year association with London's Opera Holland Park directed the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra. His diverse operatic repertoire includes more than 50 works for the stage, ranging from Mozart's *The Magic Flute* to Menotti's *The Consul*.

He made his German debut in 2003 when he conducted the New Year's Day Concert with Dresden's Staatsoperetten Orchestra. Appearances in the United Kingdom include: St. Martin-in-the-Fields, the Covent Garden Festival, the Brighton Festival, the English Music Festival and Cadogan Hall, where he conducted the New Queen's Hall Symphonic Wind Band. He is Founding Music Director of the recently formed London Symphonic Concert Band.

In 1999 he released through the *BBC Music Magazine* the world premiere recording of Sir Arthur Sullivan's last completed work for the stage – *The Rose of Persia*. Chosen by *The Observer* as 'Classical CD of the Week', it features the Hanover Band. The CD was recently re-issued by CPO - ('It is very good with excellent playing under Tom Higgins caught in good clean sound' – *Opera Magazine*). In 2009 he recorded a revival of Elgar's song cycle, *The Fringes of the Fleet* (SOMMCD 243) with Roderick Williams, baritone and the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra. This was the work's first professional recording since Elgar's own in 1917. It drew wide critical acclaim

and became Classic FM's CD of the week. (*'This is a superb performance'* – Michael Kennedy.) (*'Wonderfully done!'* – Jerrold Northrop Moore). Tom Higgins later directed a private performance of the work for the Queen and Duke of Edinburgh.

In 2000 he was awarded a Diploma of Honour by the International Robert Stolz Society of Vienna. He has directed a series of concerts in Berlin for the district of Charlottenburg and from 2002 to 2011 was Resident Music Director of Opera South, attaining highly-praised performances – (*'Tom Higgins drew firm polished playing from the Guildford Philharmonic Orchestra and gave good support to his cast – Opera Magazine'*).

He assisted the late Sir Charles Mackerras in the reconstruction of Sullivan's Cello Concerto and has also created a portfolio of solos for the international violinist, Midori. In 2011 he conducted the Sir Charles Mackerras Memorial Concert at the Royal Academy of Music.

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## THE LONDON SYMPHONIC CONCERT BAND

The recently-formed London Symphonic Concert Band has been assembled by Hale Hambleton and Leslie Lake and marks a new venture in British symphonic wind music. Its members are drawn from all quarters of the music profession, including leading symphony orchestras, concert bands and a representation from prominent Forces' Bands.



## THE LONDON SYMPHONIC CONCERT BAND Tom Higgins *conductor*

PICCOLO	Tim Kipling
FLUTES	Mark Esmonde, Catherine Borner
OBOES	Philip Knight, Jo Shepard
E FLAT CLARINET	Hale Hambleton
SOLO CLARINETS	Alan Timperley, Brian Edwards
FIRST CLARINETS	Andy Mattison, Chris Hatton
SECOND CLARINETS	Gregor Laing, Andy Cankett, Jay Bevan
THIRD CLARINETS	Nicky Jenkins, Jane Unwin
BASS CLARINET	David Floyd
ALTO SAXOPHONES	Nigel Keates, Emma Hendran
TENOR SAXOPHONE	Phil Willans
BARITONE SAXOPHONE	Barry Graham
BASSOONS	Stephen Fuller, Julian Farrel
TRUMPETS <i>(In alphabetical order)</i>	Ashley Buxton, Adam Furness, Stuart Jenkins, John Kelly, Paul Martin, Simon Suter
HORNS <i>(In alphabetical order)</i>	Anthony Catterick, David Clack, Charlotte Cooley, Tracey Golding, Gillian Jones, David Laurence, Brian Newman
FIRST TROMBONE	David Carnac
SECOND TROMBONE	Nigel McDonald
BASS TROMBONE	Leslie Lake
EUPHONIUM	Stephen Saunders
TUBAS	Tom Kelly, David Young
DOUBLE BASS	Caz Atthill, Jonathan Moss
TIMPANI and PERCUSSION <i>(In alphabetical order)</i>	John Hargreaves, Stephen Matthews, Anthony Moloney, Bennet Smith, Keith Wilkinson
HARP	Janice Beven