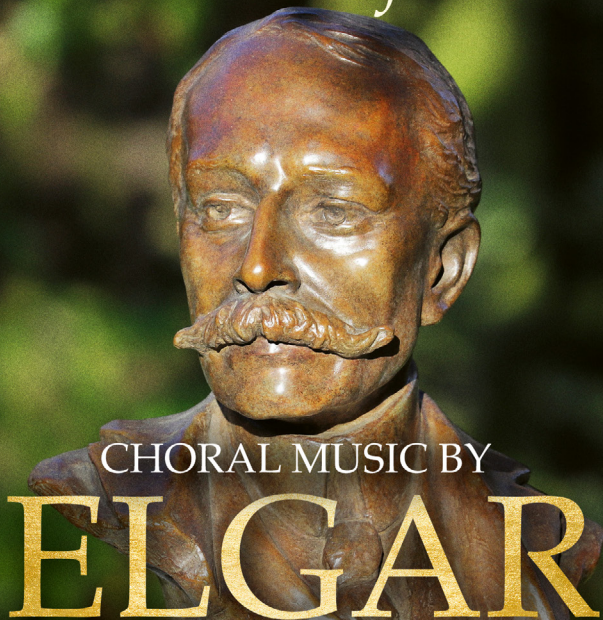


SOMM
RECORDINGS



Light out of Darkness



CHORAL MUSIC BY

ELGAR

CHAPEL CHOIR OF THE ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA
WILLIAM VANN *Director*

LIGHT OUT OF DARKNESS

The Choral Music of Edward Elgar

The development of Elgar as a composer can be discovered through the series of recordings issued on the SOMM label, notably *Music for Powick Asylum* (SOMMCD 252), some orchestrated settings of music contained in this issue: *Ecce sacerdos magnus* (SOMMCD 267) and *“The Reeds by Severn Side”* (SOMMCD 278).

Although Edward Elgar (1857–1934) took his first steps to becoming a serious composer when a teenager, it would take him a further 20 years to develop a style of his own and the confidence to compose a large-scale work, his *Froissart* Overture for orchestra in 1890. Though juvenilia (early works) can tell us little before an artist’s style becomes recognisable, in Elgar’s case, to observe how he learned his craft remains fascinating and instructive. If he was frustrated that he could not afford a formal musical education, let alone study in centres such as Leipzig, he was able to teach himself what was needed to structure the large forms which would eventually confirm his reputation.

The circumstances in which the young Elgar developed can now be seen to be ideal for a young man with little hope of an extended musical education. Living in Worcester “above the shop” (his father’s) in the High Street, he was able to study scores and instruction manuals such as Catel’s *Treatise on Harmony*. He had the opportunity to be practical, too, for his so-called “Shed” music enabled him to compose for the unusual combination of two flutes, oboe, clarinet and bassoon (the instruments of friends and family). In January 1879 he was appointed Bandmaster to the local mental hospital at Powick, a position he held until late 1884 (SOMMCD 252). This required him to compose, arrange and conduct music for the weekly entertainments given before the patients. Then there was the world of church music. Although as a boy he befriended some of the lay clerks in Worcester’s

Anglican Cathedral, his outsider status (born into trade, a Roman Catholic) meant that, instead, he took the modest opportunities afforded by the choir of St George's Roman Catholic Church and made it his own. All this turned out to be a remarkable "university".

The St George's Years

Worcester's St George's Church was built during 1829, the year of the emancipation of Roman Catholics by Parliament. The rebuilt organ of 1846 was the instrument on which William Elgar, the composer's father, played as organist from 1853 until forcibly retired in 1880. His son was appointed organist in 1885 but, after his marriage in 1889, had little subsequent involvement with the church, particularly as he moved to London and, later, settled in Malvern.

Young Edward attended services and moved from operating the bellows for the organ to assisting his father who would, on occasions, leave during the sermon to have a drink in a local public house. If he could, Edward would attend Mattins in the Cathedral and, if Sunday morning Mass finished in time, would run across the city to hear the concluding voluntary in the Cathedral. These experiences seem to have bred within him an ecumenical sense which never left him. As the demands on his skills grew he would also use the time during sermons in St George's to compose or correct music. As it turned out, the works he composed there were his only liturgical Roman Catholic settings.

In 1878 Elgar composed three hymn tunes for St George's, including his C major setting of the hymn **Praise ye the Lord** and the better known *Drakes Broughton* in F major (SOMMCD 278). Like *Drakes Broughton*, he recalled his *Praise ye the Lord* tune in later life, as it formed his composition of the carol *Good Morrow* (SOMMCD 278) in 1929.

Elgar set **O Salutaris Hostia** seven times. The earliest version in this collection is almost certainly from 1877. This was composed at the time Elgar was taking violin lessons with

Adolph Pollitzer, which required him to stay in London for twelve days. Despite the financial burden of the lessons and accommodation, this was an opportunity for a young musician to expand his musical horizons. Furthermore, he had been engaged as “Leader and Instructor” of Worcester’s Amateur Instrumental Society in the summer of that year. Earlier, in 1873 as a violinist in Worcester’s Union Workhouse, he played music from the operas of Rossini and Weber, and over the years he had heard *Il trovatore*, *La traviata* and *Norma* from visiting operatic companies, too. In G major, for alto solo, this version of *O Salutaris Hostia* suggests the 20-year-old Elgar was not immune from such influences.

Dedicated “To my father – with affection”, the 23-year-old Elgar’s setting in E flat major from c.1880 shows an advance on the earlier version, with the soprano voices beginning on a memorable rising phrase following a nine-bar organ introduction. This setting was published by Alphonse Cary of Newbury who prematurely credited Elgar as the organist of St George’s.

The version of *O Salutaris Hostia* from April 1882 was another for solo voice, this time a bass or baritone. Also in E flat, Elgar presumably intended it for performance by the St George’s choir, adding the chorus for the twice-repeated Amen over six bars and thereby bringing it to a satisfactory conclusion. Elgar left the organ part incomplete, which conductor William Vann has reconstructed for this recording.

As Elgar developed, his natural melodic ability became more obvious, a skill that would lead him to dominate British music. Nevertheless, he struggled to complete and then abandoned numerous attempts at composing anthems and other settings. Elgar’s *a cappella* setting of the **Stabat Mater** – in F major throughout – is from 1886. The medieval text is at least 20 stanzas in length, and Elgar seems uncertain as to how many verses should be sung, proposing four, five or even six verses (as sung here).

In 1888 Elgar, now 31, was living with his eldest sister Lucy and her husband Charles Pipe in their home in Worcester. He had also taken a room in Malvern where he could

teach the violin and had accepted the position of professor at the Worcester College for the Blind Sons of Gentlemen. In response to the visit of the newly installed Bishop of Birmingham, Edward Isley, to St George's in October 1888, Elgar composed the dignified **Ecce sacerdos magnus** (Behold a great priest), which begins with the same notes of the Benedictus from Haydn's *Harmoniemesse*, the steady tread suggesting the solemn arrival of the Bishop. There is reason to believe that the Haydn Mass (or at least its Benedictus) was sung during the visit. Published by Cary of Newbury, *Ecce sacerdos magnus* was dedicated by Elgar to his childhood friend, Hubert Leicester. He later orchestrated it (SOMMCD 267).

In 1909, furthering his relationship with the Anglican Church, Elgar sent a number of chants to Novello for publication in their *New Cathedral Psalter Chants*. Elgar's sequence was not published at the time. It is performed on this recording in a setting of **Psalm 51**, chosen by William Vann because that text seemed an appropriate fit for the penitential nature of the music. Beginning in A flat minor it traverses key changes through E flat major, C major, E major and finally D flat major before, *dal segno* – in what Diane Nolan Cooke calls “a continuous Escheresque loop” – the sequence begins again.

Branching Out

This recording includes three anthems extracted by Elgar from oratorios: two from his first, *The Light of Life (Lux Christi)* from 1896, and one from his penultimate, *The Apostles* from 1903. The 1890s were a critical decade for Elgar as he developed his style and mastered his “instrument”, the orchestra. 1896 was particularly significant, for the premiere of his *From the Bavarian Highlands* took place in Worcester and two substantial choral compositions were completed: *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* and *The Light of Life (Lux Christi)*. The latter, commissioned for that year's Three Choirs Festival in Worcester, restricted Elgar to composing an oratorio of less than an hour in length. *The Light of Life* (from St John's Gospel, Chapter eight: “he that followeth me...shall have the light of life”) was premiered in the Cathedral on 8 September.

Elgar utilised the services of the Anglican priest, the Rev. Edward Capel-Cure, in the preparation of the libretto. For four soloists, the story tells of Jesus restoring the sight of the blind man and the consequences of performing such an act on the Sabbath day. Two choruses were extracted from *The Light of Life*. The first, **Light out of darkness** is a commentary on prejudice and how, through the life and death of Christ, "the past is dead".

Elgar ends his oratorio with the chorus **Light of the World, we know Thy praise** which, detached from the preceding solo sung by the baritone (Christ), works effectively as a final example of Elgar's Victorian style, which he would leave behind for good in *The Dream of Gerontius* four years later.

At the Heart of British Music

The Apostles, Elgar's largest composition, was composed in response to a commission from the 1903 Birmingham Music Festival. Elgar's original concept, which was to tell the story of the Early Church, had to be altered owing to the pressure of time and his practice of writing his own libretto. He changed the planned structure into three oratorios but only one other was completed, *The Kingdom*, in 1906. *The Kingdom* shares leitmotifs and themes with *The Apostles*, the opening chorus of which, **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me**, sets the scene of what is to come. It begins quietly (*pp*) before (*f* into *ff*) the chorus sings "So the Lord God will cause righteousness and praise to spring forth..." This magnificent anthem then returns (*ppp*) to its conclusion as the music looks forward to the work of the apostles to come.

Great is the Lord for SATB chorus, bass solo and organ was largely composed during 1910 and completed in 1912. This coincides with work on his Violin Concerto, and there are suggestions of thematic connections. As is so often the case with Elgar, matters are not straightforward: he used the Anglican Prayer Book and both the Authorised and Revised Versions of the Bible for the text. Begun in 1910 and dedicated to Armitage Robinson, the Dean of Wells, Elgar put *Great is the Lord* to one side before returning to complete it in March 1912. When sending the score to Novello and Company he stressed the importance of the

organ part and called the Anthem “gigantic”! It received its first performance in Westminster Abbey under the direction of Sir Frederick Bridge on 16 July 1912 during the service to celebrate the 250th anniversary of the Royal Society. Elgar orchestrated *Great is the Lord* in February 1913. As with *Give unto the Lord* (SOMMCD 278), Elgar responds to the vividness of the text, scoring for a six-part choir. A change to F sharp minor (“For lo! the kings”) and back to the home key precedes the *andante* A flat major section (“We have thought on thy loving kindness”). At “Let mount Zion be glad” Elgar anticipates the move back to D major via A major for the Psalm’s conclusion.

Mastery of Form: The Choral Songs

The critic Robin Legge wrote in *The Daily Telegraph* (14 March 1914) of Elgar’s part songs: “In the matter of sheer originality and individuality Elgar has never reached a higher mark; that itself is remarkable considering the smallness of the form”. As can be heard in this collection, Elgar’s part songs (or choral songs, as he was to call his larger unaccompanied settings) contain some of his greatest music. Although he set poetry by Byron, Shelley and Tennyson, he tended to avoid the finest poetry and, with one or two exceptions, his word setting is exemplary. The Four Part Songs, Op.53 were composed in Rome during the winter of 1907–1908. The first of them, *There Is Sweet Music*, features on this album’s predecessor, *“The Reeds by Severn Side”*, while the present collection includes Nos. 2 and 3. Elgar’s virtuoso setting of Byron’s **Deep in my soul** from *The Corsair* begins in E flat before modulating to the distant key of A major. As it ends, the uncertain tonality is emphasised by the basses singing in E flat before moving into E major, while the other voices continue singing in E flat. It was dedicated to Elgar’s American friend, Julia Worthington.

O wild West Wind! sets Shelley, who wrote *Ode to the West Wind* during a stay near Florence in response to the autumnal winds of Tuscany. Elgar was inspired to set the final section of this poem with music marked “Nobilmente”, a unique instruction among his part songs. This is the Italy that Elgar loved and which inspired him: “If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?” 1907 was a productive year, for he composed seven part songs including

the strophic **How calmly the evening** by the 19th-century hymn writer Thomas Toke Lynch (1818–1871). Elgar was asked to set the words by Frederick Edwards, the editor of *The Musical Times* for inclusion in a future supplement. Elgar's description is apposite: "Here's the little setting of those simple words – homely but '*felt*'". Subsequently he made other arrangements for groups such as female voices only.

It was during the spring of 1909 that Elgar, when staying in Careggi, near Florence, set **Go, Song of Mine**. Once again Italy was his inspiration. Dedicated to Alfred Littleton of Novello, which certainly "got its money's worth", *Go, Song of Mine* demonstrates Elgar's mastery of word setting. Novello published it as a "part song" for double mixed voices. Elgar was unhappy with any such description, not liking "chorus" or "motet", but accepted "part song". It was in 1913 that he settled on the description of "choral songs". Elgar set the final stanza of a poem attributed to Guido Cavalcanti (c.1255–1300), a friend of Dante's, in a translation by Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828–1882) titled "A Dispute with Death". With its *Gerontius*-like sentiment, *Go, Song of Mine* begins in B minor, moving to its emotional climax at the words "His soul, being purified". The inspired ending, in B major on the hushed word "Go", remains unforgettable. First performed at the 1909 Hereford Three Choirs Festival, Elgar's greatest part song soon gained a wider currency.

Except for the orchestral *Sospiri*, 1914 for Elgar was a year devoted to word settings. It included the anthems *Give unto the Lord* and *Fear not, O land* (SOMMCD 278), as well as the two Choral Song settings, Op.73, recorded here. The poems, translated by Rosa Newmarch (1857–1940), are by the Russian poets Apollon Maykov (1821–1897) and Nikolai Minsky (real name Vilenkin, 1855–1937), respectively. **Love's Tempest**, a representation of storms at sea and the tumult in a lover's heart, allows Elgar to begin each verse quietly, the sea and heart in repose. The storm breaks *fff* and "allegro con fuoco" rises to "Grandioso" for the second verse. In contrast, Elgar's **Serenade** setting is propelled by the repetition of the words "Dreams all too brief, Dreams without grief". Dedicated "To my friend Percy C. Hull, Hereford" the words may well have been recalled by Hull when interned in Ruhleben Camp near Berlin during World War I.

God Save the King was arranged for large orchestra by Elgar in 1902 at the request of Novello. The publisher wanted a setting to compete with “Land of Hope and Glory” which concluded *The Coronation Ode*, published by Boosey. The version for organ accompaniment as recorded here, follows Elgar’s arrangement with a soprano solo singing the lines of the first verse before the chorus enters. The second verse follows (which nowadays is usually ignored) and the third, in unison, brings the anthem to its conclusion.

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CHAPEL CHOIR of the ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA

Sopranos

Helen Ashby
Katy Hill
Eloise Irving⁵
Leah Jackson⁴
Kirsty O’Neill

Altos

Emma Ashby
Rosemary Clifford³
Clara Kanter
Lorna Price⁵

Tenors

Ruairi Bowen
Jonathan Hanley⁵
Edward Hughes
Matthew Long

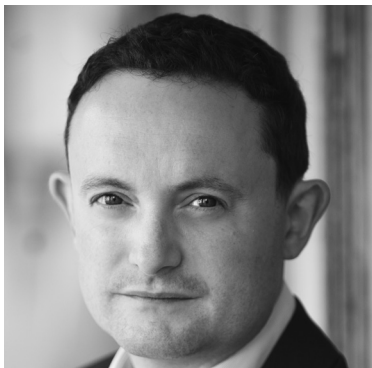
Basses

Jack Comerford⁵
Tristan Hambleton¹
Angus McPhee²
Thomas Stoddart
Andrew Tipple

Soloists

- ¹ [5] Great is the Lord, Op.67
² [15] O Salutaris Hostia No.2 in E flat
³ [16] O Salutaris Hostia in G
[18] God Save the King ⁴ v.1 · ⁵ v.2

Callum Knox organ
William Vann director



William Vann is the Organist and Director of Music at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, the fifteenth holder of the post since 1692. A multiple prize-winning conductor and pianist, he has a particular interest in English choral and vocal music: his discography includes world-premiere recordings of works by Elgar, Holst, Parry and Vaughan Williams.

His musical education began while a Chorister at King's College, Cambridge and continued as a Music and Organ Scholar at Bedford School; he subsequently read Law and held a Choral Scholarship at Gonville & Caius College,

Cambridge and studied as a pianist at the Royal Academy of Music with Malcolm Martineau and Colin Stone.

He is the Chorus Master of The Grange Festival, Musical Director of Dulwich Choral Society, an Associate of the Royal Academy of Music, a Fellow of the Royal College of Organists, a Trustee of The Ralph Vaughan Williams Society, a Freeman of the Worshipful Company of Musicians and Chairman of Kensington and Chelsea Music Society. He is also the founder and Artistic Director of the London English Song Festival. (williamvann.com)

As a prize-winning graduate of the Sydney Conservatorium of Music, **Callum Knox** is an emerging talent from Australia. He has recently taken the position of Organ Scholar at St Mary's Bourne Street, following a successful year as Organ Scholar at the Royal Hospital Chelsea, during which he was the primary accompanist for the renowned Chapel Choir.

In Australia, he was Assistant Organist at St Mary's Cathedral, Sydney (2023–24), where he directed and accompanied the choir of boys and men at the daily choral Vespers and Mass liturgies. Prior to this, he was Organ Scholar at St James' King Street, Sydney (2020–23) and Junior Organ Scholar at St Andrew's Cathedral, Sydney (2019), following five years as a boy chorister in the cathedral choir.

As an Associate of the Royal College of Organists in London, Callum is currently undertaking an MA in Organ Performance at the Royal Academy of Music, where he studies with Professor David Titterington under a scholarship. His studies are generously supported by the Organists' Charitable Trust, the Eric Thompson Charitable Trust for Organists and the Tait Memorial Trust.



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The Royal Hospital Chelsea is the home of the iconic Chelsea Pensioners, who are all retired soldiers of the British Army. Founded in 1682 by King Charles II for “the relief and succour” of veterans, it admitted its first Chelsea Pensioners in 1692, among them some who were injured at the Battle of Sedgemoor. Designed by Sir Christopher Wren, the Royal Hospital is one of the most visually stunning landmarks in London, sitting beside the River Thames opposite Battersea Park. The **Chapel Choir of the Royal Hospital Chelsea** is one of the finest professional church choirs in the UK, whose primary purpose is to sing at the Sunday morning Matins service in the Wren Chapel (a service open to the general public). Members regularly sing with many of the world's leading consort groups, such as The

Sixteen, Tallis Scholars, Stile Antico and Monteverdi Choir, and also work in the fields of opera, conducting, teaching and music journalism. Its twelve singers, occasionally enlarged for occasions such as this recording, are chosen not only for their skill at choral singing but also for a high standard of solo ability and general musicianship. The Choir's other SOMM Recordings are *In Remembrance*, *Carols from Chelsea* and, of course, *"The Reeds by Severn Side"*, on which *BBC Music Magazine* commented: "All told, this is another feather in the cap for the increasingly impressive Vann–Royal Hospital Chelsea partnership". (chelsea-pensioners.co.uk)

After the death of Sir Edward Elgar in 1934, his reputation as England's premier composer suffered a sharp decline. Apart from a few chosen works, his music was largely ignored in the concert hall and new recordings rarely appeared. In 1951 at the suggestion of Sir Adrian Boult, who had done much to keep Elgar's music alive through broadcast performances, a group of like-minded devotees of the composer formed a committee with a view to founding a society to promote the appreciation of the life and work of Sir Edward Elgar. It was from this committee that **The Elgar Society** emerged, under the patronage of Sir Adrian and the chairmanship of A.T. (Bertie) Shaw.

In the intervening years Elgar's music and reputation have been significantly restored both nationally and internationally, to the point where performances of his works are both frequent and varied and his recorded legacy is assured. During this time the Society too has developed and thrived and has made a significant contribution to the continuing popularity of the music and the development of Elgar scholarship. The Society's work continues through its promotion and support of performances, recordings and publications.

In 2026 the Elgar Society celebrates its 75th anniversary with a series of events. For more details on these and on how to become a member go to elgarsociety.org



The Light of Life, Op.29

CHORUS

☐ **Light out of darkness** Thou hast brought!
Within the shadow of Thy cross
Now burns a light, and we are taught the truer
truths of human loss.
Wast Thou a sinner? Thou hast borne
The sinner's sentence and his shame;
Thy side was pierced, Thy forehead torn.
Thy sad heart broken by our blame.
But so a beacon light Thou sent
To signal thro' our night of grief;
How Love upon His mission went
Crowned with sorrow's sharp-set wreath.
Enough it was we needed Thee,
Our misery alone did pray
And Mercy answer'd eagerly.
And trod for us steep Calvary's way.
So let us answer sorrow's cry!
The past is dead; search not its grave
For hidden faults! The remedy
Is ours to seek, to find and save.

Edward Capel-Cure, after Biblical text

The Apostles, Op.49

CHORUS

☐ **The Spirit of the Lord is upon me**, because He
hath anointed me to preach the Gospel to the poor:
He hath sent me to heal the broken-hearted, to
preach deliverance to the captives and recovering
of sight to the blind – to preach the acceptable year
of the Lord;

To give unto them that mourn a garland for ashes,
the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise
for the spirit of heaviness;

That they might be called trees of righteousness,
the planting of the Lord, that He might be glorified.

For as the earth bringeth forth her bud, and as
the garden causeth the things that are sown in it
to spring forth;

So the Lord God will cause righteousness and
praise to spring forth before all the nations.

The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, because He hath
anointed me to preach the Gospel.

Edward Elgar, after Biblical text

Psalm 51

☐ Have mercy upon me, O God, after thy great
goodness: according to the multitude of thy
mercies do away mine offences.

Wash me thoroughly from mine wickedness;
and cleanse me from my sin.

For I acknowledge my faults: and my sin is ever
before me.

Against thee only have I sinned, and done this evil
in thy sight: that thou mightest be justified in thy
saying and clear when thou art judged.

Behold, I was shapen in wickedness: and in sin hath
my mother conceived me.

Behold, lo thou requirest truth in the inward parts:
and shalt make me to understand wisdom secretly.

Thou shalt purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: thou shalt wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.

Make me to hear of joy and gladness: that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.

Turn thy face from my sins; and put out all my misdeeds.

Make me a clean heart, O God: and renew a right spirit within me.

Cast me not away from thy presence: and take not thy holy spirit from me.

O give me the comfort of thy help again: and stablish me with thy free spirit.

Then shall I teach thy ways unto the wicked: and sinners shall be converted unto thee.

Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God, thou art the God of my health: and my tongue shall sing of thy righteousness.

Thou shalt open my lips, O Lord: and my mouth shall shew thy praise.

For thou desirest no sacrifice; else would I give it thee: but thou delightest not in burnt offerings.

The sacrifice of God is a troubled spirit: a broken and a contrite heart, O God, shalt not despise.

O be favourable and gracious unto Sion: build thou the walls of Jerusalem.

Then shalt thou be pleased with the sacrifice of righteousness, with the burnt offerings and oblations: then shall they offer young bullocks upon thine altar.

Glory be to the Father and to the Son and to the Holy Ghost.

As it was in the beginning is now and ever shall be: world without end, Amen.

[4] Praise ye the Lord on ev'ry height,
Songs to His glory raise;

Ye angel hosts, ye stars of night,
Send forth your voice of praise:
For His word that gave you birth
And majesty and might;
Praise to the Highest from the earth,
And let the deeps unite.

O fire and vapour, hail and snow,
Ye servants of His will;
O stormy winds, that only blow
His mandates to fulfil:
Ye mountains, rocks, to heaven that rise,
Fair cedars of the wood;
All things of life that wing the skies,
Or track the plains for food:

Ye judges, rulers, kings, whose hand
The sceptre waves on high;
O youths and virgins of the land;
O age and infancy;
Praise ye His name, to Whom alone
All homage should be given,
Whose glory from the eternal throne
Spreads wide o'er earth and heaven.

Felicia Dorothea Hemans

⑤ **Great is the Lord** and greatly to be praised in
the city of our God, in the mountain of His holiness.

Beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth,
is mount Zion, on the sides of the north, the city
of the great King.

God hath made Himself known in her palaces
for a refuge.

For lo! the kings assembled themselves, they
passed by together;

they saw, then were they amazed; they were
dismay'd, they hasted away;

trembling took hold of them there, pain as of
a woman in travail,

as with the east wind that breaketh the ships
of Tarshish.

As we have heard, so have we seen in the city
of the Lord of hosts, in the city of our God:
God will establish it for ever.

We have thought on Thy loving kindness, O God,
in the midst of Thy temple:

as is Thy name, O God, so is Thy praise unto the ends
of the earth; Thy right hand is full of righteousness.

Let mount Zion be glad, because of Thy
judgements, let the daughters of Judah rejoice;
walk about Zion and go round about her, tell
the towers thereof, mark ye well her bulwarks,
consider her palaces, that ye may tell it to
the generation following.

For this God is our God for ever and ever;
He will be our guide even unto death. Amen.

Psalms 48

4 Part Songs, Op.53

II.

⑥ **Deep in my soul** that tender secret dwells,
Lonely and lost to light for evermore,
Save when to thine my heart responsive swells,
Then trembles into silence as before.

There, in its centre, a sepulchral lamp
Burns the slow flame, eternal – but unseen;
Which not the darkness of despair can damp,
Though vain its ray as it had never been.

George Gordon, Lord Byron
(*The Corsair: Canto I, XIV:1–2*)

III.

⑦ **O wild West Wind, [...]**

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet tho' in sadness.

Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe,
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

Percy Bysshe Shelley
(*Ode to the West Wind: I, V*)

2 Choral Songs, Op.73

I. Love's Tempest

Ⓔ Silent lay the sapphire ocean,
Till a tempest came to wake
All its roaring, seething billows
That upon earth's ramparts break.
Quiet was my heart within me,
Till your image, suddenly
Rising there, awoke a tumult
Wilder than the storm at sea.

*adapted by Rosa Newmarch
from the Russian of Apollon Maykov*

II. Serenade

Ⓕ Dreams all too brief,
Dreams without grief,
Once they are broken, come not again.

Across the sky the dark clouds sweep,
And all is dark and drear above:
The bare trees toss their arms and weep,
Rest on, and do not wake, dear Love.

Since glad dreams haunt your slumbers deep,
Why should you scatter them in vain?

Happy is he, when Autumn falls,
Who feels the dream-kiss of the Spring;
And happy he in prison walls
Who dreams of freedom's rescuing;

But woe to him who vainly calls
Through sleepless nights for ease from pain?

*adapted by Rosa Newmarch
from the Russian of Nikolai Minsky*

Go, Song of Mine, Op.57

Ⓙ Dishevell'd and in tears, go, song of mine,
To break the hardness of the heart of man:
Say how his life began
From dust, and in that dust doth sink supine:
Yet, say, th'unerring spirit of grief shall guide
His soul, being purified,
To seek its Maker at the heav'nly shrine.

*adapted by Dante Gabriel Rossetti
(The Early Italian Poets: XXIX. Canzone
"A Dispute with Death", final stanza)
from the Italian attrib. (dubious)
Guido Cavalcanti (Rime Inedite: Canzone XI)*

⓫ **How calmly the evening** once more
is descending,
As kind as a promise, as still as a prayer;
O wing of the Lord, in Thy shelter befriending,
May we and our households continue to share.

We come to be soothed with Thy merciful healing;
The dews of the night cure the wounds of the day;
We come, our life's work and its brevity feeling,
With thanks for the past, for the future we pray.

Lord, save us from folly; be with us in sorrow;
Sustain us in work till the time of our rest;
When earth's day is over, may heaven's tomorrow
Dawn on us, of homes long expected possess.

Thomas Toke Lynch

12 **Stabat mater** dolorosa
juxta Crucem lacrimosa,
dum pendebat Filius.

Cuius animam gementem,
contristantem et dolentem
pertransivit gladius.

O quam tristis et afflicta
fuit illa benedicta
mater Unigeniti!

Quae mœrebat et dolebat,
pia Mater, dum videbat
nati pœnas inclyti.

Quis et homo qui non fleret,
matrem Christi si videret
in tanto supplicio?

Quis non posset contristari
Christi Matrem contemplari
dolentem cum Filio?

13 **Ecce sacerdos magnus** qui in diebus
suis placuit Deo, et inventus est iustus.

Ecclesiasticus

14–16 **O salutaris hostia**
Quae caeli pandis ostium:
Bella premunt hostilia,
Da robur, fer auxilium.

Uni trinoque Domino
Sit sempiterna gloria,
Qui vitam sine termino
Nobis donet in patria. Amen.

Thomas Aquinas

*At the Cross her station keeping,
stood the mournful Mother weeping,
close to Jesus to the last.*

*Through her heart, His sorrow sharing,
all his bitter anguish bearing,
Now at length the sword has passed.*

*O how sad and sore distressed
Was that Mother, highly blest,
Of the sole-begotten One!*

*Christ above in torment hangs,
She beneath beholds the pangs
of her dying, glorious Son.*

*Is there one who would not weep,
whelmed in miseries so deep,
Christ's dear Mother to behold?*

*Can the human heart refrain
from partaking in her pain,
in that Mother's pain untold?*

transl. Edward Caswall

*Behold a great priest, who in his days
pleased God, and was found to be just.*

*O saving victim
who opens the gate of heaven:
oppressive war threatens,
give strength, bring help.*

*To the Lord, three and one,
be eternal glory,
who shall give to us life without end
in his land. Amen.*

The Light of Life, Op.29

CHORUS

[17] Light of the World, we know Thy praise

The angels and archangels raise
And all the host of Heav'n
More worthily than our faint hymns,
Whose jarring sound that glory dims,
Which God to Thee has giv'n.

But Thou didst not disdain to take
Our low estate, or e'en to make
The tomb Thy resting place;
So Thou might bring into our night
The dawn of Thine eternal light,
To shine upon our face.

Nor death, nor hell, nor sin is Lord,
But Thou, O Son of God. Thy Word
Is now our sov'reign law.

Therefore we thank Thee, and we pray
Thy Light may shine unto the Perfect Day,
On us for ever more.

*Edward Capel-Cure,
after Biblical text*

God Save the King

[18] God save our gracious King!
Long live our noble King!

God save the King!
Send him victorious,
Happy and glorious,
Long to reign over us,
God save the King!

O Lord our God arise,
Scatter his enemies,
And make them fall.
Confound their politics,
Frustrate their knavish tricks,
On thee our hopes we fix;
God save us all.

Thy choicest gifts in store,
On him be pleased to pour;
Long may he reign.
May he defend our laws,
And ever give us cause,
To sing with heart and voice,
God save the King!

SOMM would like to thank the Elgar Society for its generous support and encouragement from 1998 to the present day. Many widely acclaimed recordings of the music of Sir Edward Elgar have enhanced the catalogue since then, several of which are first recordings.

In addition to the present album, SOMM Recordings offers a reissue (digital download only) and an archival release this month, in celebration of the Elgar Society's 75th anniversary

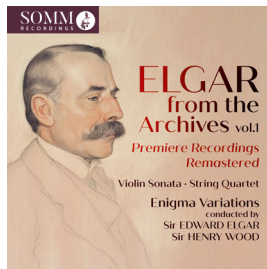


SOMMCD 0715 **The Songs of Edward Elgar**

Catherine Wyn-Rogers · Neil Mackie

Christopher Maltman · Malcolm Martineau

The 1999 recording with a new liner note by Julian Rushton



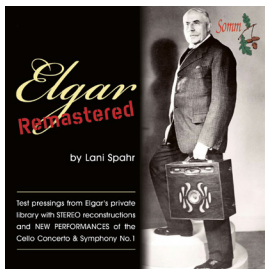
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EDWARD ELGAR 1857–1934

Light out of Darkness

CHAPEL CHOIR OF THE ROYAL HOSPITAL CHELSEA

^a CALLUM KNOX *Organ* · WILLIAM VANN *Director*

SOMMCD 0714



The Light of Life, Op.29

- ① Chorus: Light out of darkness ^a 5:14

The Apostles, Op.49

- ② Prologue (Chorus):
The Spirit of the Lord is upon me ^a 7:12

- ③ Psalm 51* ^a 5:35

- ④ Praise ye the Lord* ^a (hymn tune in C) 2:23

- ⑤ Great is the Lord, Op.67 ^a 9:44

4 Part Songs, Op.53

- ⑥ 2. Deep in my soul 4:45

- ⑦ 3. O wild West Wind! 3:25

2 Choral Songs, Op.73

- ⑧ 1. Love's Tempest 3:03

- ⑨ 2. Serenade 2:10

- ⑩ Go, Song of Mine, Op.57 4:32

- ⑪ How calmly the evening 3:10

- ⑫ Stabat Mater* (hymn) 3:03

- ⑬ Ecce sacerdos magnus ^a 3:08

- ⑭ O Salutaris Hostia in G* ^a 4:13
(for mezzo-soprano solo)

- ⑮ O Salutaris Hostia No.1 in E flat ^a 3:55

- ⑯ O Salutaris Hostia No.2 in E flat* ^a 4:00
(for baritone solo with chorus)
accompaniment partially reconstructed

The Light of Life, Op.29

- ⑰ Chorus: Light of the World,
we know Thy praise ^a 4:48

- ⑱ God Save the King ^a (arr. Elgar) 3:06

Total Duration

77:29

* world-premiere recordings

Sung texts inside

Recording: Holy Trinity Sloane Square, Upper Chelsea, London,
16–18 February 2025

Executive & Recording Producer: Siva Oke

Recording Engineer: Adaq Khan

Front Cover: Bust of Edward Elgar (1905) by Percival Hedley [copy]

Commissioned by Frank Schuster, it won the sculpture prize in the Royal Academy's Summer Exhibition of 1905 and was considered by Elgar's daughter, Carice Elgar Blake, to be one of her father's finest likenesses.

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