



ELGAR REMASTERED

Elgar's recordings remastered by Lani Spahr
including STEREO reconstructions and unissued takes

The set, on four Compact Discs, includes
comprehensive notes and the following:

SOMMCD 261-4

CD 1 – stereo except where noted 71:07

Cello Concerto in E minor, Op.85 as published
Cockaigne (In London Town), Op.40 (in stereo & mono)
Prelude to The Kingdom, Op.51 (in stereo & mono)
Rosemary (That's for Remembrance)
Mazurka, Op.10 No.1 (from Three Characteristic Pieces)
May Song
Serenade Lyrique
Wand of Youth Suite No.2, Op.1 – March
CROFT – *O God our help in ages past*

CD 2 – stereo & mono 75:26

Cello Concerto previously unissued alternative takes
Cello Concerto abridged, acoustic recording 1920
Cello Concerto– Adagio
Beatrice Harrison *cello*, HRH Princess Victoria *piano*

CD 3 – previously unissued mono alternative takes 74:41

Symphony No.1 in Ab major, Op.55 complete with alternative takes
Symphony No.2 in Eb major, Op.63, mvt 3 side 1
Violin Concerto in B minor, Op. 61, 4 alternate takes
Enigma Variations, Op.36, Variations V-VI-VII

CD 4 – previously unissued mono alternative takes 57:39

Triumphal March & Woodland Interlude from *Caractacus*, Op.35
Dream Children, Op.43 No.1
Rosemary
Serenade Lyrique
Severn Suite, Op.87 – No.2 *Tournament*
Mazurka, Op.10 No.1 (from Three Characteristic Pieces)
Wand of Youth Suite No.1 & No.2 – excerpts
It comes from the misty ages from *The Banner of St George*, Op.33
God save the King (arr. Elgar)

In gratitude to Arthur Reynolds, Chairman of the North America Branch of the Elgar Society, for his generosity in allowing Lani Spahr and SOMM Recordings the use, in this CD compilation, of pressings from his collection of Elgar's personal library and HMV recordings.

Front cover photo: Elgar – from the Arthur Reynolds collection
Design & Layout: Andrew Giles

© & © 2016 SOMM RECORDINGS · THAMES DITTON · SURREY · ENGLAND
Made in the EU

4 CDs

Elgar Remastered

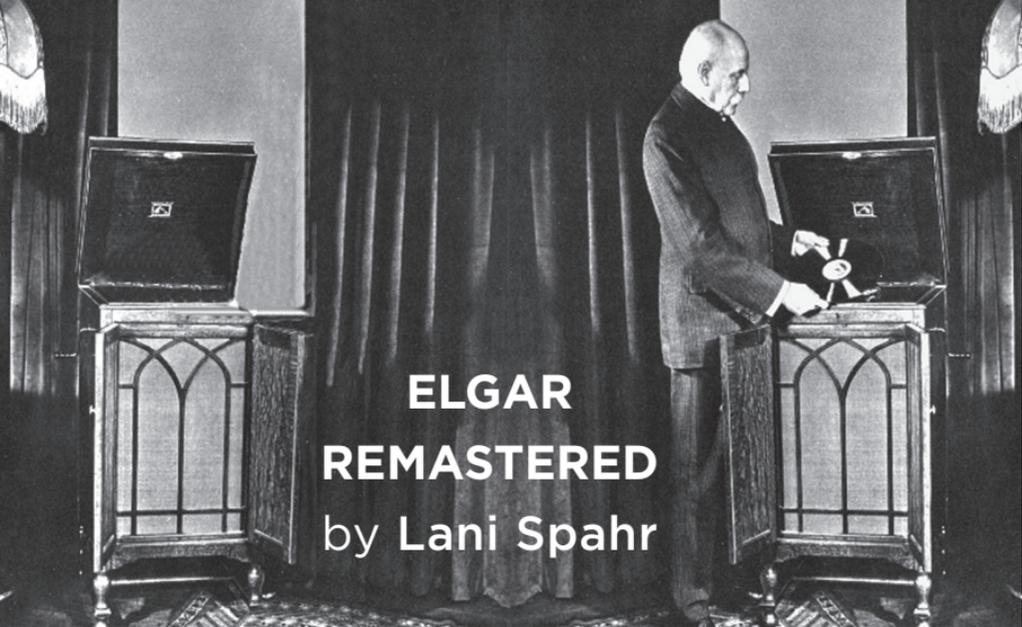
by Lani Spahr

Test pressings from Elgar's private
library with STEREO reconstructions
and NEW PERFORMANCES of the
Cello Concerto & Symphony No.1



ADD

COMPACT
DISC
DIGITAL AUDIO



ELGAR REMASTERED by Lani Spahr

What exactly do we have here? This is a question I suppose will be answered differently by each person who listens to these recordings. Stereo? Accidental stereo? Binaural? Out-of-phase mono?

First, a little background. When I joined the Elgar Society in 1996 I quickly became acquainted with Arthur Reynolds and his large collection of original Elgariana, not least of which were the records from Elgar's personal library. These

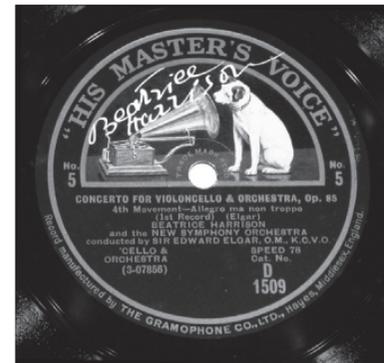
included copies of all of Elgar's recordings that he conducted for HMV from 1914 through 1933. It had always been my desire to prepare new transfers of Elgar's acoustic recordings that were originally issued by Pearl on seven LPs, c. 1975, and later on CD. While a valuable document, they left much to be desired considering the large advances in audio processing that have taken place in the intervening years. In fact, no signal processing whatsoever had been done by

Pearl. I had been working for Music & Arts since 2007 and it seemed that a new set of acoustic transfers would be of interest to the company, given their specialisation in historical recordings. After many discussions with Arthur I made a proposal to the owner, the late Fred Maroth, and in 2011 Music & Arts issued *Elgar conducts Elgar: The complete acoustic recordings 1914-1925* (CD-1257), with my transfers from Arthur's (and Elgar's) discs. In addition to the published HMV discs that Arthur had, there were six sides of unpublished takes from the *Wand of Youth Suites*. These existed as test pressings that Elgar had kept. To assist me with the notes for the set, I consulted Jerrold Northrop Moore's indispensable book on Elgar's recording activity, *Elgar on Record, the Composer and the Gramophone*. With data from EMI's archive he compiled a "virtually complete listing of Elgar matrices, together with the decisions taken in each case: D – Destroy, H 30 – Hold for 30 days, H I – Hold indefinitely, M – Master, Rej – Reject." Moore's book, sheds valuable light on the nature of the surviving test pressings and their place in Elgar's recorded output.

While working on the acoustic recordings, I referred to Moore's book to see what it had to say about the test pressings for the *Wand of Youth Suites*. Interestingly, for each disc it

said "destroyed". Elgar's copies surely would have been destroyed as well, had he returned them to HMV. And, as we shall see, we can be very thankful that he did not return all the test pressings he had been sent because a hidden quality from a number of his electrical recording sessions can now be revealed.

But how did I get to the present point? After I finished the acoustic recordings I asked Arthur if he would let me digitise the electric recordings for archival purposes, and he agreed that I should. Among the first group that I brought to my studio was the 1928 recording of his



Cello Concerto with Beatrice Harrison as soloist (she was also the soloist for the 1919 acoustic recording). Arthur had a set of published HMV

discs with Beatrice's signature plus several boxes of test pressings, thirty-four in all. As I started to digitise these discs I consulted Dr. Moore's book and was surprised at the percentage of test pressings that survived. In fact, here was a nearly complete set of takes from the two sessions in which the Cello Concerto was set down – there was missing only one out of a total of twenty takes, plus a missing test pressing that plays a crucial role in the present set.

I was excited at the prospect of issuing several different versions, all taken from alternative takes, but I was confused with the matrix numbering. Each section was given a unique number; the 1st movement (the beginning to rehearsal number 8) was CR1754 and each take of the same material was indicated by a suffix number: the first take as CR1754-1, the second take as CR1754-2, and so on. But there was also a matrix number CR1754-2A. What was this? Another take? After a cursory listen it seemed identical to CR1754-2.

Then in one of those serendipitous moments I pulled from my shelf the Naxos recording (8.111022) of Elgar's *Enigma Variations*, *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* and *Cockaigne Overture*, engineered by Mark Obert-Thorn. On

the back of the booklet is listed a "Bonus Track": Side 3 of the *Cockaigne Overture* in "Accidental Stereo". I turned to the Producer's Note and read the following:

"A word is in order about this last track. From early on in the electrical recording era, it was not unusual to have two turntables running during the cutting of wax recording master discs. One might be kept as a safety for backup purposes; it could be recorded at a lower volume level in case the other matrix exhibited overload problems during playback. Sometimes both the original take and the backup were released, either to replace a worn-out master or for foreign issue. In almost all known examples, both turntables were fed from the same single microphone, recording monaurally from one position.

In a handful of instances, however, two microphones appear to have been used, one to feed each turntable. Why this was done remains a mystery; perhaps there were mechanical problems with the usual equipment, or the engineers may have wanted to try out different microphones. Something like that was the case for a particular ten inch, long-playing 1932

Duke Ellington recording for Victor: one matrix was given a prefix of "LBVE" for the older technology then in use, while another was given "LBSHQ" for their new "High Quality" recording process. In the early 1980s, [Californian] record collectors Brad Kay and Steven Lasker noticed differences in the proximity of particular instruments on the issued version and an unissued test pressing of this recording. By synchronizing them on two tape tracks, they discovered that the discs had been recorded simultaneously but miked separately. They were, in fact, the left and right channels of a true stereo recording."

Interesting, I thought, but the penny really dropped when I read the track information on the back of the booklet:

"Matrices: 2B 4176-1A (left channel) and 4176-1 (right channel)"

Were all these test pressings with the A suffix really miked separately as Mark Obert-Thorn describes? And could they be combined with the analogous side to produce what he describes as "Accidental Stereo"? The only way to answer that was to try to synchronise two

sides. I chose CR1754-2 (the test pressing) and CR1754-2A (the published side) as an experiment. This is the first part of the first movement of the Cello Concerto.

I quickly discovered that this would be no easy task. Several important factors had to be dealt with and resolved; first, the speed of the separate cutters. If it were just a matter of a constant difference in speed it would not be too difficult to sync things up, but the minute changes in speed of each cutter add up over time and result in two sides that are of different length and pitch. I addressed the pitch difference first. When I had the pitch of both sides matched throughout the side I had hoped that this was all that was needed, but on the first playback of the joined sides it was obvious that the synchronisation was still off. When I examined the files on the computer I was able to see the synchronisation wandering back and forth throughout the side. Next came the hard part – to adjust the timing of one channel (stretching or shortening) so that obvious large musical events happened at the same time. Of course, everything from this point to the end was out of sync by the amount of adjustment just made. Eventually (many hours later) I was able to get things relatively matched and I auditioned the results again.

I was immediately struck by the sense of space surrounding the orchestra and the ability to place various instruments within the sound field. But, disconcertingly, the solo cello seemed to wander back and forth across the sound stage. I quickly discovered that this was because even finer synchronisation was necessary, so I started again. This time, every 10 seconds, more or less, I had to check the sync and adjust accordingly. I listened to the results of the first minute and found that the cello was more stable (slightly to the left of centre) and the sense of space and localisation of instruments was still evident.

Now, even though the results were much more stable, I found on occasion a swirling of the image and still some slight movement of the cello from its position, left of centre. What I found to be the cause was some gain riding by the engineers on the test pressings plus momentary pitch discrepancies between the sides I was working with, caused by the physical condition (warping etc.) of the pressings. This caused the image to move slightly around in the sound stage. Normally, on a project like this, restoration engineers like to get the best pressings available. In this case this was absolutely not possible. These test pressings are the only copies in existence so I had to work with what I had. Once I was able to stabilise the

pitch and equalise the gain on both channels I was able to achieve my final result. The condition of the discs also caused some sides to be much noisier than others. Not wanting to use excessive noise reduction, listeners will notice noise levels varying at some side joins in the alternative versions of the cello concerto, both channels being taken from test pressings. Again, I had to work with the material at hand.

Of the Cello Concerto pressings available, there were fifteen pairs of sides (i.e. -1, -1A, etc), enough to make several versions with alternative takes in stereo plus a version of the released recording in stereo. However, there was one fly in the ointment. I had in my possession pairs of sides for all but three takes of the complete recording session. One of the missing A's was from the published second side (take 2) of the first movement, CR1755-2. In fact, in Dr. Moore's book this test pressing side isn't listed. Did it ever exist? And although I had the unused take 1 of the same material, 1755-1A, another missing test pressing was 1755-1. This meant I couldn't substitute a stereo unpublished take 1 for the published take 2. So, what to do? My hope was to issue a complete version of the published recording in stereo but I couldn't because of this one missing side. My solution is to present the second half of

the first movement in pure mono. This allows for a dramatic illustration (especially when listening with headphones) of the soundstage collapsing into mono at the side join between the published first and second sides and expanding again at the beginning of the third side, the second movement.

Listeners will notice, as I have mentioned several times, the position of the solo cello – left of centre. It was necessary to keep the balance that way because I found if I increased the amplitude in the right channel to move the cello closer to the centre, the right channel became too loud – another indication that the cello was closer to one microphone than the other, and another illustration of the accidental nature of these reconstructions.

The practice of making pairs of sides was by no means routine. According to Dr. Moore's book, the practice was in place for Elgar's first electrical recording session of 27 April 1926 and continued until 15 July 1927 when it was not used. The method appears again on 4 September of that year and continues uninterrupted until the sessions of 15 September 1930 when again it was not used. On 23 May 1931 it is used in Elgar's sessions for the famous premier performance and recording in Kingsway Hall of

the *Nursery Suite*, "Dedicated by Permission to their Royal Highnesses The Duchess of York and the Princesses Elizabeth and Margaret Rose." A photograph from the second session on 4 June show the royal family in attendance and, interestingly, the microphone placement.

In the uncropped photograph (over, page 8) of this session (from Arthur Reynold's collection) we see three microphones; two hanging to Elgar's right and a third hanging further to his right and positioned further toward the rear of the orchestra. It is impossible to determine the spacing of the two mics closest to Elgar but the picture on page 9, taken at a different angle at the first session on 23 May, helps in determining how close together they were. Pairs of sides were made at these sessions but, sadly, none have survived.

Elgar made no further recordings until 11 November 1931 when the first recording sessions in the new Abbey Road Studios took place. The repertoire was *Falstaff* and for the following day, which was the official opening, *Land of Hope and Glory*. This event was recorded on film by British Pathé and can be viewed on YouTube: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=kgBJUv_50KY. Note the multiple microphones in use – one each to



Elgar's right and left, and one in the centre, further to the rear of the orchestra.

Pairs of sides were made sporadically at Abbey Road for Elgar's subsequent sessions until 14 July 1932, when, over two days, the 16 year old Yehudi Menuhin recorded the Violin Concerto with Elgar conducting the London Symphony Orchestra. Of the twenty three takes that were set down, five takes, according to Dr. Moore's book, were without an analogous

pair, but of the nineteen that do, we have four of those sides. After my success with the Cello Concerto I was extremely excited to discover if it would be possible to hear four sides of Yehudi Menuhin in 1932 in stereo, but, sadly and despite my great expectations and hopes, when I did even the most preliminary of tests it was obvious when using headphones that the result was still monaural. Photos from that session show one microphone in front of Menuhin but it is impossible to see any others.



If the same microphone configuration that was used in the Pathé film had been used in the Violin Concerto sessions, and had a separate cutter been used, the stereo result would have had a very wide spread.

Other sides that proved not to be stereo were the test pressings made of *The Dream of Gerontius* in 1927. In this instance we have -A, -B, -C and -D sides, but again, syncing the sides yielded mono.

As I made my way through these test pressings, syncing the sides proved to be either difficult or relatively easy, depending on when the recordings were made. The hardest to sync, by far, was the Cello Concerto which was recorded in 1928. As I moved to more recent material it became easier and by the time I arrived at the *Cockaigne Overture* and *The Kingdom Prelude* (which came from the same session in 1932) it was much easier. In fact these last two examples went together with one pass – no micro adjustments were needed to keep things synchronised. Clearly, equipment (or power mains regulation?) had improved to the point where both cutters were more closely synced in 1932 than in 1928.

So, again, what do we have here? Can we realistically use the word “stereo” since the word had no meaning in 1928 and if two microphones and cutters were used (I say “if” because there is plenty of doubt, which we shall see later in this essay) they certainly would not have been placed in any standard “stereo” configuration as we know it today (see the photo above). Accidental Stereo? This is the term that has been adopted because it indicates two sound sources without specifying where the microphones were placed – only that there were two of them and that no design

was considered in their placement for anything other than making another copy with different balances. It was an accidental byproduct of this recording technique. In any case, a recording exhibiting stereo qualities occurs because sound is captured by two microphones with the sound reaching each mic out-of-phase, i.e. a sound reaches one mic before it reaches the other merely because of the space between them and their different distances from the sound source. So, you may ask, can you not create the illusion of stereo just by taking a monaural recording and shifting the phase slightly in one channel? Yes you can, and that has been done by the industry in the not-too-distant past to “modernize” monaural recordings. You may also ask, isn’t that a possible answer for the results here? Again, yes it is, but I will address that issue with more evidence from the Elgar test pressings that these are not recordings from the same cutter/microphone combinations.

I immediately began a hunt through Arthur Reynolds’s collection to see how many of these paired test pressings there were. Of the 131 extant test pressings, 48 remain unpublished, with 26 possible pairs that could conceivably be combined into stereo. The works that ultimately proved to be stereo are the Cello Concerto

(including the published version and most of the unissued takes), *Serenade Lyrique*, *Rosemary*, *May Song*, *Mazurka*, *March* from *The Wand of Youth Suite No. 2*, *Cockaigne Overture* (the third of three sides), *Prelude to The Kingdom* (the second of two sides) and *Croft’s O God our help in ages past*, conducted by Elgar. This last work is the only known example of a recording by Elgar of a work he neither composed nor arranged and demonstrates the most dramatic example of stereo recording in this set.

There are a number of knowledgeable people who have stated, some more strenuously than others, that HMV never did use two cutters with separate microphones. The most well known refutation comes from Keith Hardwick of EMI who dismisses this “Californian idea” out of hand. It can be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fmr4x1V40JY> (I find it curious, however, that when mentioning the engineer in charge of the sessions, he says “he asked me not to mention his name”.) This is also what was told to me by Dr. Jerrold Northrop Moore. This sounds like it should settle the matter altogether.

Or does it? What do our ears tell us? In instance after instance we hear groups of instruments coming from specific places in the sound stage.

With the violins placed on the left you often hear the brass coming from the right and woodwinds from the center and sometimes the left. But always, when the violins are placed on the left, the cellos and basses are on the right. You may ask if this was a product of equalisation? All I can say is that both sides of each pair were equalised with the same curve. I did not raise the low frequencies on the right to make it seem as if the basses were over there. It is more a product of how close the violins and basses were to one microphone than the other.

Since we have little photographic evidence to examine, we can only guess what the microphone configuration was. In the *Nursery Suite* photo shown above it’s interesting to see the one microphone hanging at the back of the orchestra. I think this configuration had a part in the *Wand of Youth March* stereo pair that is included here. Originally, when I joined these two sides, it seemed to me that it was similar to the Violin Concerto where, even with the existence of -1, -1A pairs, the result didn’t have the sense of separation that other examples did. But a second listen and computer examination of the frequencies on the two sides showed that the amplitude of the bass on the right channel was approximately 6db louder than the left. Let me reiterate again that the equalisation curve

was the same on both channels. This led me to wonder if this right channel was from one of those microphones hanging at the back of the orchestra? I decided to include this reconstruction for your consideration.

Through all my work on these recordings I was continually impressed with the directionality of the results. In the *Cockaigne Overture* you can hear low brass and low strings on the right, while the oboe and clarinet are in the centre. In the *Kingdom Prelude* final chords you hear the brass on the right followed by string pizzicati on the left. In *May Song* and *Rosemary* you hear winds in the centre and celli on the right. In the *March* from the *Wand of Youth Suite* the cymbal crashes at 2:55, 3:30 & 3:32 come from the right. By far the strongest example is from *O God our help in ages past*. Listening to the *a cappella* section you hear voices coming from distinct areas on the stage – from left to right – sopranos, altos, tenors, basses. In the final tutti verse there is a very wide sound stage with both the orchestra and chorus spread widely from left to right.

We can never discount the evidence put forth by eyewitnesses, in this case the HMV engineers who say there was only one cutter and when there were two, both were fed by the same

signal. But can we say “always”? As I discovered, much to my disappointment, not every -1, -1A pair yielded a stereo result, but many of the ones I had, did, and several, spectacularly so. The most compelling being *Oh God our help*, the *Cockaigne Overture* and the *Kingdom Prelude*. Interestingly, it was the *Kingdom Prelude* that was slated for inclusion in EMI’s Elgar Edition of 1992-93 in their own stereo reconstruction but was eventually rejected by Keith Hardwick as not possibly being stereo. What would he have said, I wonder, if EMI’s engineers had had more of our recent tools at their disposal and heard the results?

It’s obvious, at least to me, that given the evidence in Dr. Moore’s book, we can assume that this practice of making pairs of sides, some with separate microphones and cutters and some not, was not unique to Elgar’s recording sessions. It was most likely standard procedure throughout the period represented here, 1928-1932.

Of course, as I said at the outset, we each will have our own answer because it seems we cannot answer the primary question definitively – were two cutters fed by two separate microphones? Some eyewitnesses have said no. But, what do our ears say?

Recording the Cello Concerto by Terry King

With the discovery of the 1928 recording session of the Cello Concerto, a whole new world is revealed. One senses the presence of soloist and conductor as never before. We can “see and feel” the room with a deeply committed soloist and an alert but imprecise composer-conductor. The full emotional range of expression emerges with the immediacy of a live concert, not a restrained recording session. There are orchestral details not heard in past releases. Their interpretation is more “Romantic” in the tension and relaxation of lines than in 1919.

Their earlier account is a bit quicker, but even though the Gramophone Company insisted that the recording take up only two discs, there is no sense of rushing to manage it. Elgar gave it careful consideration and had special parts made for the session; no disc reaches its time limit. The cuts made are as effective as can be for the time limit. The third movement was left untouched while the outer movements sustained significant abridgement. The fourth movement was the most severely cut – a total of 221 bars out of only 352 bars total.

The orchestration was slightly altered, most notably with the addition of the tuba doubling

the bass line, a common feature of acoustic orchestral recordings. The resultant intonation is unfortunate however. At the close of the first movement, six bars from the end, Elgar adds the flute line from the parallel phrase (3 bars after No. 14) and composed a bassoon inflection complimenting the seconds and violas.

To compare both the old and new recordings it is useful to see Elgar’s 1919 cuts:

I *Adagio: Moderato* 4:10 [34 bars cut]

From No. 7 to No. 8 (8 bars)

From No. 10 to No. 12 (8 bars)

From No. 14 to No. 17 (18 bars)

II *Allegro molto* 3:52 [6 bars cut]

From bar 3 to No. 19

IV *Allegro, ma non troppo: Poco più lento:*

Adagio: Allegro molto 4:08 [221 bars cut]

Begins at No. 44 to 7 bars after No. 46, downbeat (first 19 bars cut) to

5 bars before No. 62, second beat (183 bars cut) to

2 bars before No. 67, 4th beat to

5 bars after No. 67, 4th beat (6 bars cut) to

No. 68, 3 bars before No. 69 (5 bars cut)

From No. 73 to No. 74 (8 bars cut)

The 1919 recording was done on one day, as Alice Elgar notes in her diary 22 December, “E left for studio before 9 and was home by 3 – quite a nice day – Mr Gaisberg drove back in the car with him.” Elgar, upon listening to the playbacks on 19 January 1920 determined that the Adagio had to be re-recorded; this took place on 16 November that same year.

With the 1928 recording we have the benefit of several years together on the platform – there is an atmosphere of high energy in Kingsway Hall. It is easy to see why Elgar preferred to conduct the concerto with Harrison after their completed recording in 1920. Though a more precise performance could be achieved through the perfection of details – the orchestral intonation, the lagging bass section, precision in the flexible areas as well as a few notes from the soloist – but emotionally and sympathetically a model.

Harrison relates the composer’s mood before the 1928 recording: “I remember he was very gay, and he told me it really did not matter what happened to the orchestra as all the faults could be put onto the soloist! How we laughed (at least I did not laugh as much as he did!)” The composer was overheard saying to her, “Give it ‘em, Beatrice, give it ‘em. Don’t mind about the notes or anything. Give ‘em the spirit.”

It is telling to observe the differences these performances have as opposed to what is written and not written in the score.

The first to consider is the solo part. Harrison plays different rhythms in cadenza passages, and is rather consistent between 1919 and 1928. At bar 7 in the first movement, the *ad lib.* is treated as an *accelerando* and the *rit.* observed later as augmentation. Example A opposite shows this tighter view.

The second movement *Lento* at bar 9 also moves along, almost twice as fast as written but pulls back. (Example B)

A Mvmt. I, m. 7

The image shows two staves of musical notation for Example A, Mvmt. I, m. 7. The top staff is labeled 'ad lib.' and 'Moderato'. It features a piano (*p*) dynamic at the start, followed by a crescendo leading to a pianissimo (*pp*) dynamic. A 'rit.' (ritardando) marking is placed above the notes. The bottom staff is also labeled 'ad lib.' and 'Moderato'. It includes performance markings: '[poco a poco accel.]' (poco a poco accelerando) and '[ca. ♩=90]' (approximately quarter note = 90 bpm). It also shows a 'rit.' marking and a 'Moderato' tempo marking.

B Mvmt. II, m. 9

The image shows two staves of musical notation for Example B, Mvmt. II, m. 9. The top staff is labeled 'Lento, ad lib.', 'accel.', and 'rall.'. It features dynamics of *ff*, *sf*, *p espress.*, and *mf*. The bottom staff is labeled 'Lento, ad lib.' and shows a different performance approach.

The fourth movement cadenza at No. 43 (bar 18) again almost doubles speed as well as contradictory dynamic at the *a tempo* (*piano* vs. *fortissimo*)

Mvmt. IV, No. 43, m.18

Pianist Ivor Newton recalled when he and Menuhin played the concerto for the composer. "There was a passage at the beginning of the finale that prompted Menuhin to ask Elgar, 'Can I make a slight *rallentando* where I go into octaves' the soloist asked. 'No,' replied the composer. 'No *rallentando*; the music must rush on. 'If you want it to rush on, why did you put it in octaves?' asked Yehudi. Most of the time Elgar sat back in a chair with his eyes closed, listening intently, but it was easy to see the impression that Yehudi had made on

him. I remember, however, that he referred to the punctiliousness with which he had written directions into his scores. 'Beethoven and Brahms,' he said, 'wrote practically nothing but *allegro* and *andante*, and there seems to be no difficulty. I've done all I can to help players, but my efforts appear only to confuse them.'" There seems to be some truth to Elgar's observation as illustrated below. There may be too many specific indications of pace. Tempo fluctuation and conflicting directions abound. Here are some general observations, to wit:

- I *rit.* at bar 65 becomes a *subito meno mosso* then *rit.* one bar before No.16 is definitely in tempo (no traditional *ritard*) bass plays *arco* at bar 104
- II second bar downbeat and parallel bars are treated as *fermata* *luftpause* to bar 38, then *largamente* at No.22 and *molto rit.* (almost twice slower than written) before a *tempo*, etc.
molto allargando at bar 75
No.29 timpani plays D
- III tempo starts faster than marked but becomes slower at bar 9.
bar 15 moves forward to opening tempo.
molto ritard bar 19 and bar 20 is almost twice as slow as written (ditto bars 23 and 24...)
No.38 *appassionato* is actually "*molto più mosso*"
- IV No.42 is faster than indicated and the 1919 recording even faster
bar 34 *animato* becomes *accelerando*
No.44 strings seem to be mostly *pizzicato* then *arco* one bar before No.45 [1919 is much faster than written at No.44]
Gradual slowing to No.47
strong forward motion starting at No.49
Largamente two bars before No.50 is only a continuation of *allargando*
no tempo changes from No.50, only a slight *ritard* before bar 108 (bar 98 no *allargando* at all)
accelerando begins at No.52, no *animato* bar 115
allargando at bar 118 continues to No.53
bar 195 *poco rit.* becomes *molto rit.*
bar 252 *accelerando* to No.64 (no *poco rit.*)

calando stops at bar 277 (no *rall.*)

No.66 is the same tempo as bar 277 (faster than the written *poco più lento*)

[bar 286 first violins slide down with Beatrice. The following solo glissandi are quite heartfelt, especially her touching shift up the D string just before No.72.]

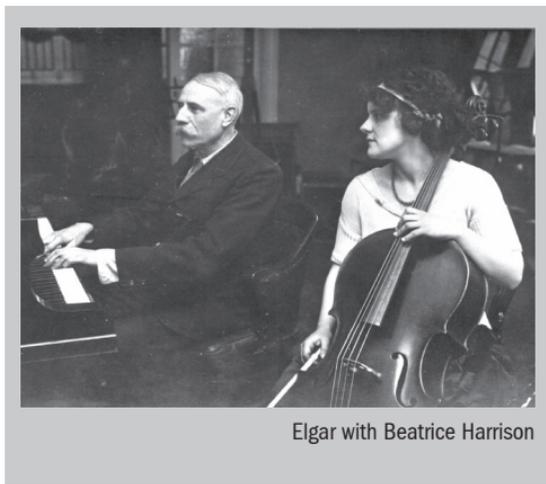
(Elgar sings with Beatrice just before No.68 (on CD 2 alternative stereo, take 1)!

bar 295 faster, not *più lento*

No.69 “*subito molto meno mosso*” rather than *molto allargando* and the orchestral responses, “*poco più mosso*”

bar 343 “*subito molto meno mosso*” rather than *rit.*

The tempo fluctuations they explore always heighten emotion. Had these variants been printed one wonders if the music would have had the same meaning – spontaneity and communication. All too often a composer’s instruction can become a commandment of biblical import, sometimes losing its natural simplicity and sensibility. Though the cello and piano reduction was published only a month after the premiere and the orchestral score by four months, their performance proves that the score is a living thing, as if the ink was still wet (to quote composer Lukas Foss).



Elgar with Beatrice Harrison

BACKGROUND

The idea of a cello concerto emerged after the successful premieres of Elgar’s String Quartet and Piano Quintet with the British String Quartet on May 21 1919. The opening melody had already come to him in March 1918, following a tonsillectomy operation in London. Upon awakening from sedation, he asked for pencil and paper, and wrote down first theme from the concerto. The composer was on the lookout for a cellist and heard Suggia on May 31, but was unimpressed. Conductor and pianist Landon Ronald came by Elgar’s secluded cottage, Brinkwells, near Fittleworth, Sussex just as he began the work. Ronald had recently conducted the Brahms Double Concerto with May and Beatrice Harrison and recommended the cellist to him.

However, Elgar decided to invite the British String Quartet’s cellist, Felix Salmond to work with him that summer. They began in early June and by the end of the month most of it was completed. Salmond was immediately taken with it and returned to Brinkwells on July 31, after Elgar had completed the orchestration and the piano reduction. They played the work after tea and after dinner. (Elgar mentioned to his handyman, “Mark, that gentleman

who came to-day with the big case is a very famous musician, a great ‘cellist, a very important person, you know.”) Salmond was thrilled to premiere the piece and could not sleep that night. On August 1 they again played it after breakfast. Feeling joyous about their work, they went fishing, and played the piece once more after dinner. On August 2 they had more walks and felt that they had polished the concerto.

The premiere was slated for October 27 with the London Symphony. The conducting of the concert was shared with conductor Albert Coates and Elgar. On October 26th Elgar, waiting off stage to rehearse his own work, uncharacteristically exploded when Coates consumed an hour of Elgar’s rehearsal time. Elgar said later that had Salmond not have been conscientiously working on the concerto for months, he would have withdrawn the work from the concert. Alice Elgar wrote, “Wretched hurried rehearsal. An insult to E. from that brutal, selfish, ill-mannered bounder A. Coates. E. wanted to withdraw, but he did not for Felix S’s sake.”

Unfortunately for Salmond, executives from the Gramophone Company were present at the ill-prepared premiere, and in less than a

week following the concert decided to engage Beatrice Harrison for the recording. She had already made recordings in New York for Victor beginning in 1914 while Salmond did not until much later. (Suggia was briefly considered but they determined that her fee was too high.) Salmond also gave the work its second performance, with the Hallé in Manchester on 20 March 1920 – even though he must have known that the concerto was basically recorded, but had not been released. Despite the rocky start, performances followed by Harrison and others including a young cellist and future conductor who had been in the orchestra at the premiere, John Barbirolli. The work soon became part of the repertoire and today competes with the Dvorak concerto as the most beloved.

THE MONAURAL DISCS CD3 · CD4

Included in Arthur Reynolds's collection are many test pressings owned by Elgar and never returned to HMV. Many of these were given away to friends and relatives by Elgar during his lifetime and by Carice, his daughter, after his death. Still, many were in Elgar's estate at the time of

Had Elgar refused to go on with the performance, perhaps Salmond would have been the concerto's champion. But Salmond's performance must have suffered along with the poor orchestral playing, as it would have only been sensible to continue what had been up to then, a most cordial and friendly collaboration. The shame of the incident must have scarred him for life for he never mentioned or taught the work. However, Salmond went on to a fine performing and teaching career, establishing a legacy of great cellists in America at the Curtis Institute. Among his pupils were Orlando Cole, Leonard Rose, and Channing Robbins, Bernard Greenhouse, Daniel Saidenberg, and Frank Miller. Cole, Rose and Robbins became highly influential teachers as well, having taught, among others, Yo-Yo Ma and Lynn Harrell.

his death. By Carice's own admission, she and her friends treated them rather cavalierly and used them as playthings (Frisbees?). That being the case, we are lucky to have any at all!

The last two discs in this set are the first issue of these surviving test pressings, although some in the collection have been issued previously.

Music & Arts issued the surviving acoustic test pressing in my restorations for *Elgar conducts Elgar: The complete recordings, 1914-1925* (CD-1257), and EMI issued a few of these alternative takes in *The Elgar Edition: The Complete Electrical Recordings of Sir Edward Elgar*. Most notably was the first take of the Symphony No.2 Rondo (side 1 of 2), the published version being the second take. Presented here on CD3 for the first time is the third take. Also on the same disc are 4 unused takes from the Violin Concerto with Yehudi Menuhin as soloist. More

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

I want to offer my thanks to Mark Obert-Thorn for graciously giving me access to his set of *Cockaigne Overture* and *Kingdom Prelude* sides for my transfer here and for offering pertinent observations and encouragement as the project progressed.

Also, thanks go to Michael Gartz for supplying 2 test pressings for *Mazurka*, which came to light near the end of the project. One pressing resulted in another valuable stereo reconstruction and the other added one more unpublished alternative take.

important, however, are 7 unused sides from Symphony No.1. Since the complete symphony comprises 11 sides, I found it possible to assemble a complete, nearly unique performance of the symphony by combining these 7 unused sides with 4 of the published sides. Also surviving is the first take of variations V-VI-VII from the Enigma Variations.

The last disc, CD4, contains first publication of alternative takes of some of Elgar's best known miniatures and excerpts from larger works.

Longtime friend and colleague Terry King deserves special thanks for his exhaustive research on the Cello Concerto recording session. His insight as a professional cello soloist sheds much light on the process of recording and performing this cornerstone of the cello literature.

Of course, none of this would have been possible without Arthur Reynolds's zeal and foresight in seeking out and saving these recordings from oblivion and for giving me unrestricted access to them. Not only is our knowledge of Elgar's recorded legacy greatly enhanced but also our insight into the early days of the electric recording industry.

LANI SPAHR

Lani Spahr is an award-winning audio restoration engineer, writer and producer. His work can be heard on the Naxos, Chandos, Music & Arts, West Hill Radio Archives, Boston Records and Oboe Classics labels. He spent 31 years as a software/hardware engineer for Hewlett-Packard. Also, a leading performer on period oboes, he is a member of Boston Baroque and The Handel & Haydn Society Orchestra of Boston. In addition, he has appeared with many of North America's leading period instrument orchestras, including Tafelmusik, Philharmonia Baroque, The American Classical Orchestra, The Washington Bach Consort, Philadelphia Bach Festival and the Boston Early Music Festival Orchestra.



TERRY KING

King is a cellist, teacher and author. He teaches at the Setnor School, the Hartt School and the Longy School of Bard College, Cambridge, Massachusetts. His biography on his mentor has been met with high praise: *Gregor Piatigorsky: The Life and Career of the Virtuoso Cellist*.

King has produced several historical discs surveying Emanuel Feuermann and Piatigorsky. King is also Co-Director of LyricaFest, a biannual chamber music intensive for talented musicians.

ELGAR REMASTERED

P = Published side
TP = Test Pressing

R = Right Channel
L = Left Channel

O God our help in ages past

CROFT
Recorded 3 February 1928
in Queen's Hall
London Symphony Orchestra
and Philharmonic Choir
CR1660-2A (P-L) and
CR1660-2 (TP-R)

Serenade Lyrique

Recorded 7 November 1929
in the Small Queen's Hall
New Symphony Orchestra
Cc18137-2 (P-L) and
Cc18137-2A (TP-R)
Cc18137-1 (TP) mono

Rosemary

Recorded 7 November 1929
in the Small Queen's Hall
New Symphony Orchestra
Cc18138-2 (TP-L) and
Cc18138-2A (P-R)
Cc18138-1 (TP) mono

May Song

Recorded 7 November 1929
in the Small Queen's Hall
New Symphony Orchestra
Cc1840-1A (P-L) and
Cc1840-1 (TP-R)

Mazurka

Recorded 8 November 1929
in the Small Queen's Hall
New Symphony Orchestra
Bb18152-2 (P-L) and
Bb18152-2A (TP-R)
Bb18152-1 mono (TP)

The Wand of Youth Suite No. 2

Recorded 20 December 1928
in Kingsway Hall
London Symphony Orchestra
March – Cc15067-1 (P-L) and
Cc15067-1A (TP-R)
Little Bells, Moths and Butterflies
Cc15068-1 mono take 1 (TP)
Little Bells, Moths and Butterflies
Cc15068-2A mono take 2 (TP)
Tame Bear, Wild Bears
Cc15070-2 mono (TP)

The Wand of Youth Suite No. 1

Recorded 19 December 1928
in Kingsway Hall
London Symphony Orchestra
Fairy Pipers
Cc15064-2A mono (TP)
Minuet, Sun Dance
Cc15063-2 mono (TP)

The Kingdom – Prelude

Recorded 11 April 1933
in Studio No.1, Abbey Road
BBC Symphony Orchestra
2B4178-2A (P) mono
2B4179-1A (P-L) and
2B4179-1 (TP-R)

Cockaigne Overture

Recorded 11 April 1933
in Studio No.1, Abbey Road
BBC Symphony Orchestra
2B4174-1A (P) mono
2B4175-2 (P) mono
2B4176-1A (P-L) and
2B4176-1 (P-R)

Cello Concerto

Complete Published Version
Recorded 23 March and
*13 June 1928 in Kingsway Hall
Beatrice Harrison *cello*
New Symphony Orchestra
(aka Royal Albert Hall
Orchestra)
CR1754-2 and CR1754-2A
CR1755-2 (mono)
CR1756-6 and CR1756-6A*
CR1757-5 and CR1757-5A*
CR1758-1 and CR1758-1A
CR1759-2 and CR1759-2A

Cello Concerto – Movements
II – III – IV

All Test Pressings
CR 1756-3 and CR 1756-3A
CR 1757-1 and CR 1757-1A
CR 1758-3 and CR 1758-3A*
CR 1759-1 and CR 1759-1A

Cello Concerto – Movements
II – III- IV (first part)

All Test Pressings
CR 1756-2 and CR 1756-2A
CR 1757-4 and CR 1757-4A*
CR 1758-2 and CR 1758-2A*

Cello Concerto – Movement II
(take 4)

All Test Pressings
CR 1756-4 and CR 1756-4A

Cello Concerto – Movement II
(take 5)

All Test Pressings
CR 1756-5 and CR 1756-5A*

Cello Concerto – Movements
I – II – III (Mono)

CR 1754-1 (TP)
CR 1755-1A (TP)
CR 1756-1 (TP)
CR 1757-2 (TP)

Cello Concerto – Abridged
(Acoustic Recording)

Recorded 22 December 1919 and
*16 November 1920 at Hayes
Beatrice Harrison *cello*
New Symphony Orchestra
HO4197AF (take 2)
HO4194AF (take 1)
HO4607AF-2 (take 2)*
HO4198AF (take 1)

Cello Concerto – Movement III

HMV Private Record
made for H.R.H. Princess Victoria
Recorded 20 August 1928
Beatrice Harrison *cello*
H.R.H. Princess Victoria *piano*
Cc 14165-1a

Symphony No. 1 in Ab major,
Op.55

Recorded 20 November 1930
in Kingsway Hall
London Symphony Orchestra
Cc20675-1 (P)
Cc20676-2 (TP)
Cc20677-1 (TP)

Recorded 21 November
Cc20682-2 (P)
Cc20683-1 (TP)
Cc20684-1 (TP)
Cc20685-1 (TP)
Cc20686-1 (TP)

Recorded 22 November
Cc20687-1 (P)
Cc20688-1 (TP)
Cc20689-1 (P)

Symphony No. 2 in Eb major,
Op.63

Recorded 1 April 1927
in Queen's Hall
London Symphony Orchestra
Movement IIIa
CR1275-3 (TP)

Violin Concerto in B minor,
Op.61

Recorded 14 July 1932
in Studio No.1, Abbey Road
London Symphony Orchestra
Yehudi Menuhin – Violin
Movement Ib –
2B2969-1A (TP)

Movement Id –
2B2971-1 (TP)

Movement IIb –
2B2973-1 (TP)

Recorded 15 July 1932
Movement IIIa –
2B2975-3 (TP)

Variations on an Original
Theme, Op.36 “Enigma”

Recorded 28 April 1926
in Queen's Hall
London Symphony Orchestra
V, VI, VII
CR341-1 (TP)

Caractacus – *Triumphal March*

Recorded 22 January 1934
in Studio No.1, Abbey Road
Lawrance Collingwood conducting
the London Symphony Orchestra
Relayed by Telephone Office lines
to Elgar in South Bank Nursing
Home, Worcester
2B4759-1 (TP)
2B4760-2 (TP)

Severn Suite – *Tournament*

Recorded 14 April 1932
in Studio No.1, Abbey Road
London Symphony Orchestra
2B 2849-1 (TP)

Caractacus – *Woodland Interlude*
Dream Children No.1

Recorded 22 January 1934
in Studio No.1, Abbey Road
Lawrance Collingwood conducting
the London Symphony Orchestra
Relayed by Telephone Office lines
to Elgar in South Bank Nursing
Home, Worcester
2B4757-2 (TP)

The Banner of St George –

It comes from the misty ages
Recorded 3 February 1928
in Queen's Hall
London Symphony Orchestra
and Philharmonic Choir
CR1661-2A mono (TP)

National Anthem –
God save the King

(arr Elgar)
Recorded 3 February 1928
in Queen's Hall
London Symphony Orchestra
and Philharmonic Choir
CR1659-2A mono (TP)

CD 1 - stereo except where noted 71:07**Cello Concerto** published version stereo

- | | | |
|----|--|------|
| 1 | <i>Adagio-Moderato</i> | 7:10 |
| 2 | <i>Allegro molto</i> | 4:26 |
| 3 | <i>Adagio</i> | 4:05 |
| 4 | <i>Allegro, ma non troppo</i> | 9:27 |
| 5 | Cockaigne <i>mono</i> | 8:41 |
| 6 | Cockaigne <i>transition to stereo</i> | 4:58 |
| 7 | Kingdom <i>Prelude mono</i> | 4:07 |
| 8 | Kingdom <i>Prelude transition to stereo</i> | 4:39 |
| 9 | Rosemary | 3:38 |
| 10 | Mazurka | 3:21 |
| 11 | May Song | 3:51 |
| 12 | Serenade Lyrique | 4:20 |
| 13 | Wand of Youth Suite No.2 – March | 3:57 |
| 14 | CROFT: O God our help in ages past | 4:20 |

CD 2 - stereo/mono 75:26**Cello Concerto**

previously unissued alternative takes

Cello Concerto mvts 2-3-4 *stereo*

- | | | |
|---|-------------------------------|------|
| 1 | <i>Lento-Allegro molto</i> | 4:31 |
| 2 | <i>Adagio</i> | 4:02 |
| 3 | <i>Allegro, ma non troppo</i> | 9:19 |

Cello Concerto mvts 2-3-4 part 1 *stereo*

- | | | |
|---|---------------------------------------|------|
| 4 | <i>Lento-Allegro molto</i> | 4:29 |
| 5 | <i>Adagio</i> | 3:58 |
| 6 | <i>Allegro, ma non troppo, part 1</i> | 5:00 |

7 Cello Concerto mvt 2 take 4 *stereo* 4:458 Cello Concerto mvt 2 take 5 *stereo* 4:35Cello Concerto mvts 1-2-3 *mono*

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|------|
| 9 | <i>Adagio-Moderato</i> | 7:00 |
| 10 | <i>Lento-Allegro molto</i> | 4:26 |
| 11 | <i>Adagio</i> | 4:06 |

Cello Concerto – *acoustic*

- | | | |
|----|-------------------------------|------|
| 12 | <i>Adagio-Moderato</i> | 3:58 |
| 13 | <i>Lento-Allegro molto</i> | 3:51 |
| 14 | <i>Adagio</i> | 3:52 |
| 15 | <i>Allegro, ma non troppo</i> | 4:04 |

Cello Concerto – *private disc*

- | | | |
|----|---------------|------|
| 16 | <i>Adagio</i> | 3:22 |
|----|---------------|------|

Beatrice Harrison *cello*
HRH Princess Victoria *piano*

CD 3 - mono 74:41previously unissued *mono* alternative takes**Symphony No.1** complete with alternative takes

- | | | |
|---|------------------------|-------|
| 1 | <i>Andante-Allegro</i> | 17:16 |
| 2 | <i>Allegro molto</i> | 7:25 |
| 3 | <i>Adagio</i> | 10:17 |
| 4 | <i>Lento-Allegro</i> | 11:22 |

5 **Symphony No.2** mvt 3a 4:206 **Violin Concerto** mvt 1b 4:45

7 Violin Concerto mvt 1d 3:58

8 Violin Concerto mvt 2b 4:43

9 Violin Concerto mvt 3a 3:57

10 **Enigma Variations** V-VI-VII 4:32

R.P.A.

Ysobel

Troyte

CD 4 - mono 57:39previously unissued *mono* alternative takes**Caractacus**

- | | | |
|---|--------------------|------|
| 1 | Triumphal March | 6:52 |
| 2 | Woodland Interlude | 1:52 |

3 **Dream Children** No.1 2:464 **Rosemary** 3:435 **Serenade Lyrique** 4:166 **Severn Suite – Tournament** 4:037 **Mazurka** 3:18**Wand of Youth Suite** No.1

- | | | |
|----|--------------|------|
| 8 | Fairy Pipers | 4:11 |
| 9 | Minuet | 2:12 |
| 10 | Sun Dance | 2:27 |

Wand of Youth Suite No.2

- | | | |
|----|----------------------------|------|
| 11 | Tame Bear | 2:12 |
| 12 | Wild Bear | 2:16 |
| 13 | Little Bells take 1 | 2:32 |
| 14 | Moths & Butterflies take 1 | 2:24 |
| 15 | Little Bells take 2 | 2:30 |
| 16 | Moths & Butterflies take 2 | 2:05 |

17 **It comes from the misty ages**
from **The Banner of St George** 4:3818 **God save the King** 3:11