



ELGAR

DDD

8.554409

Cello Concerto in E minor

Introduction and Allegro • Elegy
Serenade for Strings • Salut d'amour
Pomp and Circumstance: March No. 1

Maria Kliegel, Cello

Royal Philharmonic Orchestra • Capella Istropolitana

Michael Halász • Adrian Leaper



Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85

Introduction and Allegro, Op. 47 • Elegy, Op. 58 • Serenade for Strings, Op. 20
Salut d'amour • Pomp and Circumstance: March No. 1

Sir Edward Elgar enjoys a curious reputation in his own country. To many he is, above all, the composer of the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*, the celebrator of Edwardian Imperialism, the man who preferred the races to a rehearsal of his *Violin Concerto* with the young Yehudi Menuhin, who adds to the popular image by describing the composer as “a grandfatherly country gentleman who should properly have had a couple of hounds... at his heels.”

In fact Elgar deserves rather better than this, nearly qualifying for admission to the exclusive club that belongs to the greatest of the late romantic composers. He enjoyed the discerning esteem of his fellow-countrymen in his own time, and then, as now, was largely underestimated abroad, except in the United States of America. His oratorios have an interest that may now be unfashionable, although *The Dream of Gerontius* retains a place in English choral repertoire, but the two symphonies, the concertos for violin and for cello and the *Enigma Variations* remain firmly entrenched in English concert programmes.

Edward Elgar was born in the West of England, near Worcester, in 1857. His father was a piano-tuner, organist, violinist and shopkeeper, from whom Elgar acquired much of his musical training. The boy at first made his living as a freelance musician, teaching, playing the violin and organ, and conducting local orchestras and choirs. His marriage in 1889 to a piano pupil, daughter of a retired Indian army general and nine years his senior, had a marked effect on his career, allowing him to move to London, where acceptance at first proved difficult. In 1897 his *Imperial March* for the royal Jubilee won success, enhanced still further by the *Enigma Variations*, which he completed in 1899. The following years brought him increasing fame, culminating in the remarkable and introspective works of 1918 and 1919, the violin sonata, string quartet, piano quintet and cello concerto.

With the death of his wife in 1920 Elgar's creative urge seemed to diminish and he was to spend his final years in the West of England, in appearance the country gentleman that Yehudi Menuhin recalls, occupied in country pursuits, a figure seemingly from an earlier age that had now passed.

The *Cello Concerto*, written after the First World War, was influenced by the relative economy of means that the composer had discovered in his *String Quartet* and *Piano Quintet* of the preceding year. It differs from the *Violin Concerto* in particular in its intense concentration of material. He worked on the composition during the summer of 1918 with the collaboration of the cellist Felix Salmond, the cellist in earlier performances of Elgar's *Quartet* and *Piano Quintet* and later an influential teacher at the Juilliard School and the Curtis Institute. The first performance was grossly under-rehearsed, since the conductor of the rest of the programme, Albert Coates, described in her diary by Lady Elgar as "that brutal selfish ill-mannered boulder Coates", used rehearsal time allocated to the concerto for Scriabin's *Poem of Ecstasy*, keeping Elgar waiting for an hour. The public reception of the work was, in consequence, luke-warm, while some critics at least correctly apportioned the blame for the inadequate first performance of a major work by the greatest of living English composers.

The first movement opens with a grandiose statement by the soloist, leading, in almost improvisatory style, to a lilting melody announced by the violas. This is repeated by the soloist, who continues to dominate the movement. Plucked chords by the soloist lead to the second movement, a melancholy *Scherzo*, in which the soloist is again to the fore, with orchestration of the greatest economy. There is still greater poignancy in the brief slow movement, a continuous solo for the cello. The final *Rondo* opens with eight bars in which the first theme is suggested, to be interrupted by a declamatory statement from the soloist, before the movement is allowed to take its full course. Even then the excitement and joy of the principal theme are broken by references to earlier themes in the concerto and the mood of autumnal introspective melancholy that make this one of Elgar's greatest works. At the end of the score, where Haydn might have written *Deo gratias*, Elgar wrote the words *Finis. R.I.P.*, intentionally or not signalling the concerto as the end of his creative life, the end of a war but also the end of an age.

A former string-player himself, Elgar's writing for strings is, in consequence, idiomatic, although he explained his particular ability by claiming the example of a dominant figure in the history of music in England. "Study old Handel", he advised, "I went to him for help ages ago". The *Introduction and Allegro* for string quartet and string orchestra, completed in 1905, arose from earlier sketches. In particular he made use of a melody that had occurred to him during a holiday in Wales, a Welsh tune, incorporated in a work that he described as "a tribute to that sweet borderland" where he had made his home, and where, indeed, he had been born and bred.

The new work was first performed at the Queen's Hall in London by the London Symphony Orchestra under the direction of the composer, but only gradually won its lasting place in orchestral repertoire. It was dedicated to Professor S.S.Sanford of Yale University, which had recently awarded Elgar an honorary doctorate.

The *Introduction and Allegro* contrasts a small group, a string quartet, with the main body of the orchestra, a form suggested by the Baroque *concerto grosso*. The romantic texture is enriched by sub-division of the string sections of the orchestra and the characteristic sweep of the composer's writing for strings. The *Introduction* suggests the principal themes that are to follow in the *Allegro*, the opening providing the broad second theme and the first entry of the quartet proposing material for the first theme. The work moves forward to a brilliantly worked fugal section that leads back to the re-appearance of the first theme, the second theme, now appropriately changed in key, and a final triumphant reference to the *Introduction*. The *Elegy*, a work of great sensibility, scored for strings and harp, was written in 1909 and dedicated to the memory of the Reverend R.H. Hadden, Junior Warden of the Worshipful Company of Musicians. It was first performed at The Mansion House on 13th July, 1909.

The *Serenade for Strings* was written in 1892, shortly after Elgar's marriage, when he had decided to give up his attempt to gain a foothold in the musical world of London and return to the provinces. Its probable origin lies in an earlier work, *Three Pieces for Strings*, written in 1888 and first played at the Worcestershire Musical Union. The later *Serenade*, presumably a revised version of the *Three Pieces*, was probably first played in Worcester by amateurs, and had its first successful professional performances abroad, before becoming an established and popular element in English repertoire. The first professional performance took place in New Brighton in 1899 under the composer's direction. A work of characteristically sweet melancholy, the *Serenade*, in the key of E minor, opens with the pulsating rhythm of the viola. The expressive second movement leads to a final *Allegretto* that explores again the rich possibilities of divided string sections and the briefly contrasted sound of the solo violin.

The first of the *Pomp and Circumstance Marches* was written in 1901, the title taken from Shakespeare's *Othello* and very much answering the spirit of the time. *Salut d'amour*, familiar from many arrangements, was originally a piano piece, *Liebesgruss*, a greeting to his wife in the days before their marriage and written in 1888 while Elgar was on holiday in Settle. He orchestrated the work the following year.



ALL RIGHTS RESERVED. UNAUTHORISED PUBLIC PERFORMANCE, BROADCASTING AND COPYING OF THIS COMPACT DISC PROHIBITED.
 © 1998 HNH International Ltd.
 DISTRIBUTED BY: MVD MUSIC AND VIDEO DISTRIBUTION GmbH, OBERWEG 21-C, HALLE V, D-82008 UNTERHACHING, MUNICH, GERMANY.

8.554409

STEREO

DDD

 Playing
 Time
 70:52

 Edward
ELGAR
 (1857-1934)

Orchestral Works

Cello Concerto in E minor, Op. 85 (30:44)		Serenade for Strings, Op. 20 (11:38)	
1 Adagio – Moderato	8:53	7 Allegro piacevole	3:17
2 Lento – Allegro molto	4:38	8 Larghetto	5:49
3 Adagio	5:07	9 Allegretto	2:31
4 Allegro, ma non troppo	12:05	Capella Istropolitana Adrian Leaper (taken from NAXOS 8.550331)	
Maria Kliegel, Cello Royal Philharmonic Orchestra Michael Halász (taken from NAXOS 8.550503)		10 Salut d'amour	3:25
5 Introduction and Allegro, Op. 47	14:48	11 Pomp and Circumstance: March No. 1 Allegro con moto	6:01
6 Elegy, Op. 58	3:59	CSR Symphony Orchestra (Bratislava) Adrian Leaper (taken from NAXOS 8.550229)	

Recorded in Henry Wood Hall, London, from 8th to 10th November, 1991 (**1-4**); in the Moyzes Hall, Bratislava, Slovakia, from 12th to 16th April and 17th to 19th September, 1989 (**5-9**); in the Concert Hall of Czechoslovak Radio (Bratislava), from 9th to 15th January 1989 (**10-11**).
 Producers: Murray Khouri (**1-4**) and Günther Appenheimer (**5-11**)
 Music Notes: Keith Anderson

 Visit the Naxos Internet site:
<http://www.hnh.com>


Cover Painting: Pastoral scene in Herefordshire by David Cox

 MADE IN
 E.C.
