Edward Elgar
1857-1934

Ave verum corpus Op 2:1
Ave Maria Op 2:2
Ave Maris Stella Op 2:3
Intende voci Op. 64
Great is the Lord. Psalm 48 (Op. 67)
Early years

Edward Elgar was born in the small village of Lower Broadheath outside Worcester to William Elgar, a piano tuner and music dealer, and his wife Anne (née Greening). The fourth of six children, Edward Elgar had three brothers, Henry, Frederick and Francis, and two sisters, Lucy and Susannah. His mother, Anne, had converted to Catholicism shortly before Edward’s birth, so Edward was baptised and brought up as a Roman Catholic.

Surrounded by sheet music and instruments in his father’s shop in Worcester’s High Street, the young Elgar became self-taught in music. On warm summer days, he would take manuscripts into the countryside to study them (he was a passionate and adventurous early cyclist from the age of 5). Thus there began for him a strong association between music and nature. As he was later to say, “There is music in the air, music all around us, the world is full of it and you simply take as much as you require.”

Having left school at the age of 15, he began work for a local solicitor, but after a year embarked on a musical career, giving piano and violin lessons. At 22 he took up the post of bandmaster at the Worcester and County Lunatic Asylum in Powick, three miles south-west of Worcester. He composed here too; some of the pieces for the asylum orchestra (music in dance forms) were rediscovered and performed locally in 1996.

In many ways, his years as a young Worcestershire violinist were his happiest. He played in the first violins at the Worcester and Birmingham Festivals, and one great experience was to play Antonín Dvořák’s Sixth Symphony and Stabat Mater under the composer’s baton.

At 29, through his teaching, he met (Caroline) Alice Roberts, daughter of the late Major-General Sir Henry Roberts and a published author of verse and prose fiction. Eight years older than Elgar, she became his wife three years later against the wishes of her family. As an engagement present, Elgar presented her with the short violin and piano piece Salut d’amour. The Elgars moved to London to be closer to the centre of British musical life, and Edward started composing in earnest. The stay was unsuccessful, however, and they were obliged to return to Great Malvern, where Edward could earn a living teaching.

Growing reputation

During the 1890s Elgar gradually built up a reputation as a composer, chiefly of works for the great choral festivals of the Midlands. The Black Knight, King Olaf (1896), The Light of Life and Caractacus were all modestly successful and he obtained a long-standing publisher in Novello and Company. He also generously recommended the young composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor to the Three Choirs Festival for a concert piece, which helped establish the younger man’s career.

In 1899, at the age of 42, his first major orchestral work, the Enigma Variations, was premiered in London under the baton of the eminent German con-
Elgar's Symphony No. 1 (1908) was given one hundred performances in its first year, the violin concerto (1910) was commissioned by the world-renowned violinist Fritz Kreisler, and in 1911, the year of the completion of his Symphony No. 2, he had the Order of Merit bestowed upon him.

Elgar’s musical legacy is primarily orchestral and choral, but he did write for soloists and smaller instrumental groups. His one work for brass band, The Severn Suite (later arranged by the composer for orchestra), remains an important part of the brass band repertoire. This work was dedicated to his friend George Bernard Shaw. It is occasionally performed in its arrangement by Sir Ivor Atkins for organ as the composer’s second Organ Sonata; Elgar’s first, much earlier (1895) Organ Sonata was written specifically for the instrument in a highly orchestral style, and remains a frequently-performed part of the English Romantic organ repertoire.

Later years

During World War I his music began to fall out of fashion. He himself grew to hate his ‘Pomp and Circumstance’ March No.1 with its popular ‘Land of Hope and Glory’ tune, which he felt had been made into a jingoistic song, not in keeping with the tragic loss of life in the war. This was captured in the film Elgar by Ken Russell. After the death of his wife in 1920 he wrote little of importance. Shortly before her death he composed the elegiac Cello Concerto, often described as his last masterpiece.

Elgar lived in the village of Kempsey from 1923 to 1927, during which time he was made Master of the King’s Music.

Elgar and the young Yehudi Menuhin discuss the violin concerto, recorded in 1932 (HMV)

Elgar’s recordings of his violin concerto and the Enigma Variations have been reissued on CD by EMI. He was the first composer to make extensive recordings of his own compositions. HMV (His Master’s Voice) recorded much of his music acoustically from 1914 onwards and then began a series of electrical recordings in 1926 that continued until 1933, including his “Enigma Variations,” “Falstaff,” the first and second symphonies, his cello and violin concertos, all of the “Pomp and Circumstance” marches, and other orchestral works. Part of a 1927 rehearsal of the second symphony with the London Symphony Orchestra was also recorded and later issued.

In the 1932 recording of the violin concerto, the aging composer worked with the American violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who was then only 16 years old; they worked well together and Menuhin warmly recalled his association with the composer years later, when he performed the concerto with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. Menuhin later conducted an award-winning recording of Elgar’s Cello Concerto with the cellist Julian Lloyd Webber and much of the major orchestral music.

Elgar’s recordings usually featured such orchestras as the London Symphony Orchestra, the Royal Albert Hall Orchestra (which reverted in 1928 to its earlier name, New Symphony Orchestra) and, in 1933, the newly-founded London Philharmonic Orchestra. Elgar’s recordings were released on 78-rpm discs by both HMV and RCA Victor. In later years, EMI reissued the recordings on LPs and CDs.

In his later years, Elgar befriended young conductors such as Adrian Boult and Malcolm Sargent who championed his music when it was out of fashion.

At the end of his life Elgar began work on an opera, The Spanish Lady, and accepted a commission from the BBC to compose a Third Symphony. His final illness prevented their completion.

He died on 23 February 1934 and is buried at St. Wulstan’s Church in Little Malvern. Within four months, two more great English composers - Gustav Holst and Frederick Delius - were also dead.
Ave Verum

Edward Elgar
(Op.2:1)

1 Volta Soprano solo
2 Volta Choir

Soprano

Alt

Tenor

Bas

Ave verum corpus, natum Ex Maria a Virgi-

ne, Vere pas sum, immo la tum In cru ce pro ho mi-

ne. Ave ne. Cujus latus perforatum Ver}

ne. Ave ne. Cu jus lat us perforatum Ve ro
flu - xit san - gui - ne; Es - to no - bis praeg - gu - sta - tum, Mor - tis

Piu lento

in ex - a - mi - ne. Cu - jus ne. O Cle - mens,

Ave Maria

Edward Elgar
(Op.2:3)

Soprano

Alto

Tenor

Bass

Ave, Ave, Mar-i-a, gra-ti-a pl-e-na; Do-mi-nus te-
cum: be-ned-ic-ta, be-ned-ic-ta tu in mu-li-
cum: be-ned-ic-ta, be-ned-ic-ta tu in mu-li-
cum: be-ned-ic-ta, be-ned-ic-ta tu in mu-li-
cum: be-ned-ic-ta, be-ned-ic-ta tu in mu-li-
Mater Dei. Ora pro nobis

Mater Dei. Ora pro nobis

Mater Dei. Ora pro nobis Ora pro

Mater Dei. Ora pro nobis

Più lento

ora pro nobis nunc et in hora mortis nostrae,

ora pro nobis nunc et in hora mortis nostrae,

ora pro nobis nunc et in hora mortis nostrae,

ora pro nobis nunc et in hora mortis nostrae,

ora pro nobis nunc et in hora mortis nostrae,


3. Sol-ve vin-cla-re-is, Pro-fer lu-men.

Mu-tans He-vae no-men.

caecis, Ma-la nos-tra pel-le, Bo-na cunc-ta po-sce.

A-ve ma-ris stel-la! A-ve ma-ris stel-la!
5. Virgo singularis, Inter omnes mitis, Nos culpis solutos,

6. Vitamin praesta puram, Inter para

Mi-tes fac et ca-stos.
Intende voci orationis meae

Edward Elgar Op. 64
Bearb.för kör a. cap. Christian Ljunggren

Soprano

Alt

Tenor

Bass
Rex me-us, Rex me-us, et

De-us me-us, De-us me-us, Quo

ni-am ad te ad te o-
ra - bo, mf ad te o - ra - bo
ra - bo, mf ad te o - ra - bo,
ra - bo, mf ad te te o - ra - bo
ra - bo, ad te o - ra - bo

solenne.
Do - mi - ne, ad te o - ra --
Do - mi - ne, ad te o -
Do - mi - ne, ad te o -
Do - mi - ne, ad te o -

molto rit.
bo Do - mi - ne.
ra - bo Do - mi - ne.
ra - bo Do - mi - ne.
ra - bo Do - mi - ne.
Great is the Lord (48th Psalm)

Edward Elgar (Op. 67)

Great is the Lord and greatly to be praised, in the city of our God, in the mountains of His holiness; beautiful in elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, on the sides...
of the north, beautiful in
of the north, Great is the Lord and
Great is the Lord and

elevation, the joy of the whole earth, is mount Zion, mount
greatly to be praised in the city of our
greatly to be praised in the city of our

Zion, on the sides of the north, the city the
God, in the mountains of His holiness;
God, in the mountains of His holiness;
God, in the mountains of His holiness;
The city of the great King.

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

For, lo! The kings assembled themselves,

Allegro moderato
they pass-ed by to-ge-ther; they saw, then were they a-
they pass-ed by to-ge-ther; they saw, then were they a-
they pass-ed by to-ge-ther; they saw, then were they a-
they pass-ed by to-ge-ther; they saw, then were they a-

they pass-ed by to-ge-ther; they saw, then were they a-
they pass-ed by to-ge-ther; they saw, then were they a-
they pass-ed by to-ge-ther; they saw, then were they a-
they pass-ed by to-ge-ther; they saw, then were they a-

they saw, then were they a-
they saw, then were they a-
they saw, then were they a-
they saw, then were they a-

they were dis-may'd,
they were dis-may'd,
they were dis-may'd,
they were dis-may'd,

they were dis-may'd,
they were dis-may'd,
they were dis-may'd,
they were dis-may'd,

they hast-ed a way;
they hast-ed a way;
they hast-ed a way;
they hast-ed a way;

they hast-ed a way;
they hast-ed a way;
they hast-ed a way;
they hast-ed a way;
trembling took hold of them there,

woman in travail, as with the

east wind that breaketh the ships of Tarshish,

east wind that breaketh the ships of Tarshish,
that break-eth the ships of Tar-shish.

lo! The kings as-

sem-bled them-selves, they pass-ed by to-ge-ther; they saw, then were they a-

maz-ed; they were a-maz-ed; they were dis-

maz-ed; they were dis-may’d, they were a-maz-ed; they were dis-

Poco allargando
they were dismay'd, they were dismay'd, they hast'ed a
may'd, they were dismay'd, they were dismay'd, they hast'ed a
they were dismay'd, they were dismay'd, they hast'ed a
they were dismay'd, they were dismay'd, they hast'ed a
may'd, they were dismay'd, they were dismay'd, they hast'ed a
way; they hast'ed a way; they hast'ed a way;
way; they hast'ed a way; they hast'ed a way;
way; they hast'ed a way; they hast'ed a way;
way; they hast'ed a way; they hast'ed a way;

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

Let mount Zion be glad,
Let mount Zion be glad, glad, because of Thy judgments; glad, because of Thy judgments; glad, be cause of Thy judgments; glad, because of Thy judgments; glad, because of Thy judgments; glad, because of Thy judgments; glad, because of Thy judgments; glad, because of Thy judgments; glad, because of Thy judgments; glad, because of Thy judgments; glad, because of Thy judgments; glad, because of Thy judgments;
glad, be glad, because of Thy judgments;

let the daughters of Judah rejoice,

Let mount Zion be glad, let the daughters of Judah rejoice,

walk about Zion and go round about her.

Zion Tell the towers there-of,
this God is our God for ever and ever; For

Moderato (come prima) più maestoso

For

tell it to the generation following. For

tell it to the generation following. For

tell it to the generation following. For

this God is our God for ever and ever; For

a - tion fol - low - ing. For

tell it to the generation following. For

this God is our God for ever and ever; For

this God is our God for ever and ever; For

for ever and ever; For
this God is our God for ever and ever;

this God is our God for ever and ever;

this God is our God for ever and ever;

this God is our God for ever and ever;

He will be our guide; He will be our guide;

He will be our guide; He will be our guide;

He will be our guide; He will be our guide;

For this God is our God. He will be our guide even unto death, He will be our guide;

For this God is our God. He will be our guide;

For this God is our God for
For this God is our God

guide e - ven un - to death, e - ven

ev - - - - - - - - - - - - er and

ev - - - - - - - - - - - - er and

Tranquillo

is our God

He will

un - to death, He will

er - er; He will

er - er; He will

be our guide e - ven un - to

be our guide e - ven un - to

be our guide e - ven un - to

be our guide e - ven un - to
death, unto death. For

dead, unto death. For

dead, unto death. For

this God is our God.

Allargando

A-men

A-men A-men

A-men A-men

A-men A-men