

29 - 31 OCTOBER 2021

# ELGAR FESTIVAL

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JULIAN LLOYD WEBBER PATRON

CONCERTS,  
TALKS, EXHIBITS  
AND ACTIVITIES  
FOR ELGAR FANS  
OF ALL AGES

*Elgar  
for  
Everyone*

OFFICIAL PROGRAMME



ENGLISH  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA



# FESTIVAL SUPPORTERS

The Elgar Festival is hugely grateful to the following organisations and individuals for their most generous support of the 2021 Festival:



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**Worcester City Council** is proud to support the 2021 Elgar Festival. The Festival provides a unique opportunity to celebrate Worcester's rich heritage, attracting national and international recognition.

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BOX OFFICE: [www.elgarfestival.org](http://www.elgarfestival.org) / Worcester Live 01905 611427 / on the door where available

# WELCOME



## **A warm welcome to the 2021 Elgar Festival, slightly delayed but still here!**

We hope that you will find plenty here that we have all been waiting for and that we have produced an accessible range of the man's music and music that he would enjoy – and we hope you do too. Our aim is always to bring Elgar to Everyone and this year we are also launching the opportunity for you to get more involved and become one of Elgar's Friends - more later in the programme.

The weekend, part of Worcester's Charter 400 celebrations, starts with the English String Orchestra in an opening night of music for strings, welcoming back Raphael Wallfisch after his mesmerising performance of the cello concerto in 2019. We feature songs by Vaughan Williams and Donald Hunt; pieces by Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, the first English black composer, championed by Elgar; and the Variations in full. We welcome the all-female Corra Sound singers; hold a discussion on Elgar in the context of the Suffragette movement; and bring new music in the form of Ian Venables' song cycle. In an exciting new venture, we bring you 'Club Elgar' – late evening jazz from Misha Mullov-Abbado – and finish in style with a concert for everyone, featuring young musicians alongside the ESO playing music from the Planets and Pomp and Circumstance!

This is our third annual Festival but should be the fourth. The pandemic has caused grief and upset, it has hit people in the pocket and changed lives. The arts and hospitality community have been amongst the worst affected economically and, arguably, the least supported to come back. We hope bringing Elgar back to you in 2021, and building towards 2022, goes some little way to balancing that equation.

**Dr Adrian Gregson**  
*Chairman*



## **It is a great joy to welcome you to the 2021 Elgar Festival.**

In some ways, it seems like only yesterday since we celebrated the 100th Anniversary of the Elgar Cello Concerto in Worcester Cathedral with Raphael Wallfisch. And yet, in other ways, May 2019 now seems like a different age.

Musicians love festivals, and I am no exception. Mastering an instrument or composing a symphony is largely solitary work, and almost every musician I know needs the sense of connection and communication that only a live concert can provide to justify those many hours of isolation and sacrifice. For performers, festivals offer an intensified atmosphere of immersion and community. These weeks are more than work for us - it is often at festivals where we refresh the love of our craft, and come together with friends, supporters and colleagues we might only see once a year.

Today, we arrive for this festival in an era when 'isolation and sacrifice' have become the currency of our time. This is why we have chosen Elgar's Enigma Variations, the centrepiece of this year's festival. It is a unique musical celebration of friendship and of place. As we emerge from long months of lockdown, Elgar's masterpiece reminds us of the enduring power of the forces of fellowship and love which connect us.

Thank you for joining us and enjoy the music.

**Kenneth Woods**  
*Artistic Director*



FRIDAY 29 & SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER

FREE

10AM - 3PM FRIDAY  
10AM - 5PM SATURDAY

*Henry Sandon Hall, Royal Porcelain Works, WR1 2NE*



## THE 2021 ELGAR FOR EVERYONE EXHIBITION

**Our friends at Faithful History are hosting this year's Elgar for Everyone Exhibition and Discovery centre.**

They've created a wonderful new film (about 30' on repeat throughout the day) about Elgar the man and his relationship to Worcestershire, and a series of informative displays you can check out throughout the festival.

*Free and open to the public! No need to book.*



ROYAL  
PORCELAIN  
WORKS

FRIDAY 29 OCTOBER

£15-£18

7PM

JOIN US AT 6PM FOR A PRE-CONCERT DRINK  
TO CELEBRATE THE OPENING OF THE FESTIVAL!

*Worcester Guildhall, High St, Worcester WR1 2EY*



OPENING CONCERT:  
**ELGAR'S STRINGS  
WITH RAPHAEL  
WALLFISCH AND  
THE ESO**

**Cellist Raphael Wallfisch, whose deeply-moving 100th Anniversary performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto was the undoubted highlight of the 2019 Elgar Festival, returns with a sequence of engaging miniatures for cello and strings arranged by Donald Fraser.**

The programme opens with Elgar's much loved Serenade, and concludes with the playful and witty "Little Music" for strings by the English String Orchestra's former "Composer-in-Association", Sir Michael Tippett. Finally, there's a musical after-dinner sorbet: Evan Chambers' virtuosic and hilarious setting of two Irish jigs, The Tall-Eared Fox and the Wild-Eyed Man. The programme also includes only the second UK performance of Harold Truscott's beautiful Elegy for Strings. It's an evening celebrating the best of English string music with one of the world's most admired string orchestras, Worcestershire's own English String Orchestra.



**Tickets:** £15 (concert only), £18 (concert + glass of wine at 6PM)

Book by phone via **Worcester Theatres - 01905 611 427**

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# PROGRAMME

## Serenade for Strings

- I. Allegro piacevole
- II. Larghetto
- III. Allegretto

## Seven Miniatures for Cello and Strings

*(live premiere)*

Chanson de Matin  
Chanson de Nuit  
Romance  
The Wild Bears  
Sospiri  
Salut d'amour  
Nimrod

Raphael Wallfisch – cello

**- INTERVAL -**

## Elegy for Strings

## Little Music for Strings

- I. Prelude -
- II. Fugue -
- III. Air -
- IV. Finale

## The Tall-Eared Fox and the Wild-Eyed Man

**Sir Edward Elgar  
(1858-1934)**

**Sir Edward Elgar  
arr. Donald Fraser -**

**Harold Truscott  
(1914-1992)**

**Sir Michael Tippett  
(1905-1998)**

**Evan Chambers  
(1963 -)**

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

### Edward Elgar – *Serenade for Strings*

Elgar's youthful *Serenade for Strings* almost certainly stands as the most often played work in the ESO's wide repertoire. At one point, it had become so ubiquitous on ESO programmes that when I joined the orchestra I suggested we give it a three-year break. Fortunately, that embargo has now run its course and we can return to this beloved little gem with fresh ears, new ideas and greater affection. Composed in 1892, it was first played, just around the corner from this venue, by the "Worcester Ladies' Orchestral Class" with the composer conducting.

© Kenneth Woods

### Edward Elgar arr. Donald Fraser – *Seven Miniatures for Cello and Strings (World Premiere)*

As the professional orchestra of Elgar's home city, and orchestra-in-residence of the Elgar Festival, the music of Elgar has long been a central part of the ESO's repertoire. Past ESO collaborators include some of the leading Elgar interpreters of the last 50 years, including conductors Yehudi Menuhin and Vernon Handley and soloists Nigel Kennedy, Nicola Benedetti and Alexander Sitkovetsky. Most recently, the English Symphony Orchestra was asked to give the official 100th Anniversary performance of the Elgar Cello Concerto under the auspices of the Elgar Society, Elgar Birthplace and Elgar Festival with Raphael Wallfisch in Worcester Cathedral.

It was at this concert that Wallfisch met composer Donald Fraser, whose choral arrangement of Elgar's *Sea Pictures* was being featured in the same concert. Wallfisch suggested that perhaps Fraser orchestrate a few of Elgar's shorter works for cello and strings, and over the following year the project expanded in scope to finally comprise the eleven movement suite heard in this concert. The pieces include several standalone miniatures from Elgar's catalogue, such as the much-loved *Salut d'Amour* and *Chanson de Matin*, but also includes excerpts from larger works, such as *Nimrod* from the *Enigma Variations*, and transcriptions from other concert pieces, like the *Romanza*, originally for bassoon and symphony orchestra.

*"Like Brahms, Dvorak and Schubert, Elgar was one of music's greatest miniaturists,"* says conductor Kenneth Woods. *"Each of these compact mini-masterpieces inhabits its own emotional world and tells its own story."*

© Kenneth Woods



### Harold Truscott – *Elegy for Strings* 13

What prompted Harold Truscott to compose the *Elegy* is not recorded, nor, indeed, are the reasons why he suppressed all knowledge of this highly charged and beautiful symphonic adagio for the remainder of his life. The manuscript score comments only on the deliberate quotation, fairly early on in the musical discourse, from George Butterworth's rhapsody *A Shropshire Lad*, though it gives no hint at the reason for the quote, other than that it is 'deliberate'. The *Elegy* dates to October 1943, just after Truscott had started attending—as a distraction from his wartime night-shift employment in the Post Office—the Royal College of Music as a part-time, adult student, thanks to a bequest from his favourite aunt who had died the previous year. Although at times undeniably emotional in character, the *Elegy* does not sound like a memorial, either to his aunt or, given the wartime date, to an old school friend who had perished at Dunkirk three-and-a-half years before.

The *Elegy* is a powerful, symphonic adagio in E flat that is outwardly, then, concerned with matters musical - particularly the music's attempt to cadence into A flat. The move is in vain; despite excursions into C major and E major, E flat stubbornly refuses to budge. The presence of the note D flat (the sub-dominant of A flat), however, undermines the home key to such an extent that when the *Elegy* concludes, the simplest tonic chord of E flat major in root position (cellos, violas, second violins) is made to sound unresolved and 'wrong'. A possible extra-musical cause may lie in the breakdown at about this time of Truscott's long-term engagement to a former student, Barbara Campbell. He was a convert to Roman Catholicism, she a Presbyterian (from North-West England) who tried but failed to accept Catholic dogma. Truscott would not marry outside his adopted faith so, caught in this irreconcilable impasse, they parted reluctantly. The music is at times extremely passionate and emotive, evoking a feeling of deep loss in that failure to resolve the tonal issue at the close.

Harold Truscott was born on August 23rd., 1914. During his lifetime, he was best known as a writer, teacher and broadcaster, who published books on the late Beethoven String Quartets (London, 1968) and Franz Schmidt's orchestral music (London, 1984). Truscott contributed to most of the major British music journals from the late 1940s through to the 1980s, as well as to Penguin's 2-volume symposium *The Symphony* (1967), writing the chapters on Haydn and Schubert in Volume 1, and Mahler, Sibelius, Franz Schmidt, Havergal Brian, Rubbra and Tippett in Volume 2. He was a noted champion of supposedly 'lost' causes several of which have now (e.g. Schmidt, Brian, the late piano works of Schubert) received much of their due directly because of his early informed advocacy. His principal legacy is his own music, however, ignored so totally while he was alive that much was left unfinished. His official worklist had numbered only fifty completed works, including one symphony (although he started eleven), chamber and many instrumental works. After his death, aged 78, on October 7th., 1992, however, consolidation of his manuscripts by the present writer more than doubled that total, including two string quartets—he at least once categorically denied having written any—and the *Elegy*. Most prominent amongst his output is the magisterial set





of twenty-two piano sonatas (ten of which were recorded on LP by Peter Jacobs in the 1980s for Altarus Records, others since by Ian Hobson for Toccata Classics), which the late Robert Simpson (1921-97) hailed as “the greatest set by an Englishman.”

**Guy Rickards**

### **Sir Michael Tippett – *Little Music for Strings***

Elgar’s youthful Serenade for Strings almost certainly stands as the most often played work in the ESO’s wide repertoire. At one point, it had become so ubiquitous on ESO programmes that when I joined the orchestra I suggest we give it a three-year break. Fortunately, that embargo has now run its course and we can return to this beloved little gem with fresh ears, new ideas and greater affection. Composed in 1892, it was first played, just around the corner from here, by the “Worcester Ladies’ Orchestral Class,” with the composer conducting. Some two decades before John McCabe and Philip Sawyers would form lasting affiliations with the ESO, Sir Michael Tippett became the first internationally significant composer to form a lasting bond with the ESO. My predecessor, William Boughton, and his colleagues at Nimbus Records, notably their Artistic Director, Adrian Farmer (who himself commissioned Philip Sawyers’ *Songs of Loss and Regret* which we just released on CD this week), had noted that Tippett, then approaching eighty years of age, was not getting nearly the attention in concert or on record that his music deserved. “It’s always problematic for a composer when their music gets spread across too many record labels, with no one company really taking responsibility for documenting and disseminating their work,” Adrian once told me. “For Tippett, it was a disaster. When you think of Britten’s long and exclusive relationship with Decca, compared to the haphazard handling Tippett’s work had on record, it is shocking.” In fact, it was the example of Tippett that Farmer cited to me in explaining his commitment to nurturing the music of Philip Sawyers on Nimbus. Farmer and Boughton put all their combined resources behind supporting Tippett, yielding memorable 80th and 85th birthday celebrations, a BBC TV documentary (“Tippett in Malvern”) and a series of important recordings with the ESO, including their fine recording of *Little Music*, this vivacious and inspired work.

- © Kenneth Woods





### **Evan Chambers - *The Tall-Eared Fox and the Wild-Eyed Man***

The Tall-Eared Fox and the Wild-Eyed Man was originally composed for string Quartet; I completed this version for string orchestra in 1994.

The piece grew out of my involvement with Irish traditional music, and consists of two Irish (or Irish-American!) jigs. In Irish dance music there is a tendency for tune titles to make rather prosaic reference to daily life; titles such as “Boiled Goat’s Milk” and “The New Toyota” abound. In my case, the composition was motivated by experiences that I had while traveling in western Wales, around St. David’s Head. I happened to see a fox with very tall ears standing with his nose to the wind in a field by the ocean. Later, while walking down a steep back road I was passed by a farm cart, in which was a man with the wildest eyes I have ever seen. He was standing up, facing the rear of the wagon with his head thrown back, his long, knotted hair streaming, swaying violently from side to side with his arms outstretched, looking right at me, and he was laughing --

It struck me as an admonition that we should live life like we make music, with love, a deep sense of the simple and overwhelming beauty around us, and with wild abandon.

©Evan Chambers

## **ABOUT THE ARTISTS**



### **RAPHAEL WALLFISCH CELLO**

The outstanding British cellist, Raphael Wallfisch was born in 1953 into a family of distinguished musicians, his mother the cellist Anita Lasker Wallfisch, and his father the pianist Peter Wallfisch. From an early age, Raphael was fortunate to be guided by the fine teaching of Amaryllis Fleming, Amedeo Baldovino and then Derek Simpson at the Royal Academy of Music. Subsequently, Raphael was given the unique opportunity to study with the great cellist Gregor Piatigorsky at USC in Los Angeles. Whilst there he was often invited to play chamber music with the legendary violinist Jascha Heifetz. During that period 1973-75, he was also honoured to be invited to play Aaron Copland’s solo cello pieces in the presence of the composer.

At the age of 24, Raphael won first prize at the International Cassado Cello Competition in Florence. He is the only British string player to have ever won an International Competition. Since then, he has enjoyed a world-wide career



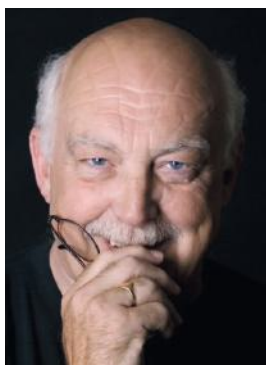
playing with such orchestras as London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia, Royal Philharmonic, BBC Symphony, English Chamber Orchestra, City of Birmingham, Halle, Royal Scottish, Konzerthaus Orchestra Berlin, Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Gewandhaus Leipzig, Minnesota Orchestra, LA Philharmonic, Indianapolis Symphony, Warsaw and Czech Philharmonic and countless others. Frequent appearances at International Festivals have included The BBC Proms, Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Spoleto, Prague Autumn, Prades, Oslo, Adelaide, and Schleswig Holstein.

Widely recognised as the world's most recorded cellist, his astonishing discography of more than eighty albums are on labels such as EMI, Chandos, Lyrita, Nimbus, CPO, ASV, Naxos and Dutton. Many of these highly acclaimed recordings are with his duo partner of more than thirty years, John York.

This extraordinary discography includes music by 46 British composers as well as Dvorak, Brahms, Beethoven, Schumann, Martinu, Shostakovich, Strauss, Dohnanyi, Bartok, Seiber, Vivaldi, CPE Bach, Spohr, Weber, Prokofiev, Schedrin, Respighi, Weinberg, Hindemith, Bloch, Caplet Khachaturian, Kabalevsky, etc.

Other leading British composers that have written for or worked closely with Raphael include, Richard Rodney Bennett, Giles Swayne, James MacMillan, Kenneth Leighton, Peter Maxwell Davies, John Joubert, Robert Simpson, Richard Blackford, Paul Patterson, John Taverner and Adrian Williams.

Raphael plays on the "ex Romberg" Montagnana 1733.



### **DONALD FRASER** ARRANGER

Donald Fraser first became involved in orchestrating Elgar's music at the request of the ESO's former Principal Guest Conductor, Yehudi Menuhin, in the early 1980s. More recent arrangements include the choral version of Sea Pictures, which has quickly become a favourite of choirs all over the world, and has been performed at a number of major festivals. In 2015, the ESO's premiere performance of Fraser's orchestration of the Elgar Piano Quintet was named Classical Music Magazine's Premiere of the Year, and Birmingham Post senior music critic Chris Morley called the performance one of the two "most exciting events I have experienced during a reviewing career approaching half a century. It deserves to be acknowledged immediately as a worthy addition to the Elgar canon." The CD release of the Quintet was immediately named Classic FM's Disc of the Month for May 2016. Fraser's most recent recording with the ESO was Songs for Strings, recorded under Fraser's baton in Abbey Road studios. That disc was Classic FM Disc of the Week when it was released, and chosen as Featured New Release on dozens of American radio networks.

FRIDAY 29 OCTOBER

£15

9.30PM *Bar available*

*Worcester Guildhall, High St, Worcester WR1 2EY.*



## *Club Elgar* WITH THE MISHA MULLOV-ABBADO GROUP

Another groundbreaking event, proving that the Elgar Festival really means Elgar For Everyone! Join us for the first of our new, sure to be hugely popular, late night concerts. We welcome one of the UK's most innovative and exciting jazz ensembles for an evening of genre-bending music, and surely a healthy dose of Elgar... as you've never heard him before.

Winner of the 2014 Kenny Wheeler Jazz Prize, **Misha Mullov-Abbado** is an in-demand bass player, composer and arranger based in London. He is a 2017 BBC Radio 3 New Generation Artist, a 2014 City of Music Foundation Artist and has released three albums on Edition Records as a band-leader and composer; *Dream Circus* (2020), *Cross-Platform Interchange* (2017) and *New Ansonia* (2015), all of which have been extremely well-received in newspapers and magazines across Europe and the latter of which has been included in "Best Jazz Albums of 2015" by The Telegraph and BBC Radio 3. His most recent album was produced by fellow Edition Records bassist and bandleader Jasper Høiby. As an experienced band-leader but also a versatile sideman Misha has performed at many of London's top venues such as Ronnie Scott's, the Vortex, 606 Club, Pizza Express and the Royal Albert Hall, as well as venues in the rest of the UK and around the world. Having won the 2014 Dankworth Prize for jazz composition Misha is an experienced composer and writes for various jazz groups as well as classical soloists and ensembles, and is influenced by a variety of jazz, classical and pop music. In November 2019 Matthew Barley along with the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by Michael Seal gave the world premiere of Misha's cello concerto at the Queen Elizabeth Hall at London's Southbank Centre as part of the EFG London Jazz Festival and commissioned by BBC Radio 3.



The Misha Mullov-Abbado Group is made up of some of the finest, multi-award-winning musicians in London, and under Misha's direction the group performs his original compositions and arrangements with a broad variety of influences. The band has performed at King's Place, the Barbican Centre, the Elgar Room as part of the BBC Late Night Proms series and has played at many of the UK's jazz venues. The band has also toured abroad in France, Switzerland, Belgium and Mexico. Having been signed to Edition Records the group has released its debut album "New Ansonia" that has been included in "Best Jazz Albums 2015" of both The Telegraph and BBC Radio 3. The band has released two more albums with Edition Records since, "Cross-Platform Interchange" and "Dream Circus".

The band's repertoire is influenced by a broad spectrum of music in the classical, jazz and pop genres as well as folk traditions from around the world, particularly from South America. The music contains chorale-based and contemporary-classical styles that are influenced by Bach and Brahms right through to Stravinsky and Bartok and beyond, and jazz musicians such as Bill Frisell. Misha's music is also heavily based on swing, funk and other groove-based styles influenced by Avishai Cohen, Ray Brown, Gareth Lockrane and Jasper Høiby, as well as pop giants Stevie Wonder and Earth, Wind & Fire.

Tonight the group will be performing a selection of Misha's compositions written for the band over the past 8 years, and also a specially arranged Elgar-inspired piece at one point.



**Tickets: £15**

*Book by phone via*

**Worcester Theatres – 01905 611 427**



SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER

FREE

to attendees of  
the Corra Sound  
Concert

1.30PM

PRE-TALK REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE TO  
PURCHASE IN CHURCH BETWEEN 1.00 AND 1.30PM

*St. Martin's Church, London Road, Worcester WR5 2ED*



## ELGAR IN THE AGE OF THE SUFFRAGETTES

A Talk by Dr. Leah Broad

On the 21 January 1911 at the Royal Albert Hall, Ethel Smyth conducted the first performance of her 'March of the Women', the choral piece that would become known as the suffragette anthem. Just three days later she led a small ensemble playing her March at a suffrage event — composer Rebecca Clarke was the violist. This talk explores the connections and friendships between the composers in this afternoon's concert, and the context that gave rise to their music.

**Dr. Leah Broad** is a Junior Research Fellow at Christ Church, University of Oxford. She is currently writing a group biography of four women composers — Ethel Smyth, Rebecca Clarke, Dorothy Howell and Doreen Carwithen — which will be published by Faber & Faber. She is regularly on BBC radio as a BBC/AHRC New Generation Thinker, and was winner of the Observer/Anthony Burgess Prize for Arts Journalism in 2015. She has academic writing published in journals including the *Journal of the Royal Musical Association* and *Music & Letters*. You can follow her on Twitter [@LeahBroad](#), and find out more about her work at [leahbroad.wordpress.com](#).



Free to attendees of the Corra Sound concert

SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER

£15

2.30PM

St Martin's, London Road WR5 2ED

## CORRA SOUND CONCERT IN ST. MARTIN'S CHURCH



One of Britain's most exciting professional chamber choirs, the all-female Corra Sound performs a vibrant, engaging and accessible programme of works by Gipps, Smyth, Poston, Clarke and Elgar. It's a rich and rewarding celebration of predominantly female composers from Elgar's era, alongside contemporary works of great appeal.



**Tickets: £15** Under 16s free (with accompanying adult)  
Book by phone via Worcester Theatres – 01905 611 427

### PROGRAMME

Ave Maria  
Lift thine eyes  
Goblin Market (extract)  
A song of flight  
As torrents in summer  
The Shepherd's Song  
Sanctus  
Benedictus (from Mass in D)

**Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979)**  
**Felix Mendelssohn (1809-1847)**  
**Ruth Gipps (1921-1999)**  
**Edward Elgar (1857-1934)**  
**Elgar**  
**Elgar**  
**André Caplet (1878-1925)**  
**Ethel Smyth (1858-1944)**

Balulalow,  
The water of Tyne  
I sing of a Maiden  
O my dear heart  
Sing my child  
A woman wearing  
bloomers on a wheel

**Elizabeth Poston (1905-1987)**  
**Poston**  
**Amy Bebbington (1975-)**  
**Eleanor Daley (1955-)**  
**Sarah Quartel (1982-)**  
  
**Jo Forbes L'Estrange (1971-)**

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## ABOUT THE MUSIC

### **Lift Thine Eyes**

Felix Mendelssohn was a favourite composer and personal friend of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort. Lift Thine Eyes is part of his second Oratorio, Elijah, composed in response to an invitation to write a new Oratorio for the 1846 Birmingham Festival. Mendelssohn himself conducted the first performance of Elijah to a two-thousand strong audience in Birmingham Town Hall. Despite its rapturous reception, Mendelssohn undertook major revisions of the work after the first performance, including to Lift Thine Eyes. Indeed it is said that it was while he was taking a walk after the premiere, that he was struck with the idea to change the chorus from a soprano and alto duet with orchestral accompaniment to the soprano and alto trio we perform today.

### **Ave Maria**

Rebecca Helferich Clarke was a British-American classical composer and violist. Internationally renowned as a viola virtuoso, she also became one of the first female professional orchestral players. She was born in Harrow and studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music in London. Stranded in the United States at the outbreak of World War II, she married composer and pianist James Friskin in 1944 and settled in the USA. Clarke died at her home in New York at the age of 93.

Although Clarke's output was not large, her work was recognised for its compositional skill and artistic power. The Rebecca Clarke Society was established in 2000 to promote the study and performance of her music. The Ave Maria we are singing today was one of her later choral works, but it was the first to be published by Oxford University Press in 1998. Its complex harmonies bring a sense of stillness and an ethereal quality to these well-known words.

### **Goblin Market (extract). Soloists: Lynda Benn and Rae Evans**

Sussex-born Ruth Gipps was a musical prodigy, concert pianist, oboist, conductor, prolific composer, and sports car enthusiast. She entered the Royal College of Music in 1937, where she studied composition with Gordon Jacob and Ralph Vaughan-Williams, and later went on to teach at Trinity College London, the Royal College of Music and Kingston University. Although she personally distanced herself from feminism, her life experience, personality, and musical career were at every turn conditioned by the resistance and discrimination she encountered as a female conductor and composer.

Gipps was an impresario of tireless energy and determination. She wrote 5 symphonies, 7 concerti, and numerous chamber and choral works. Remarkably, in 1945, she was the soloist in a piano concerto as well as playing cor anglais in the first performance of her own First Symphony. Gipps founded and directed the London Repertoire Orchestra and the professional Chanticleer Orchestra. She also served as the musical director for the City of Birmingham Choir. Later in her life she was awarded an MBE for services to music and also served as chairwoman of the Composers' Guild of Great Britain.

1954 saw the publication of the third musical setting of Christina Rossetti's complex poem, *Goblin Market*, and the first to be written by a female composer. Corra Sound have shared great delight in discovering and bringing to life Gipps' interpretation of this poem, which features tantalising hints of eroticism and holds a deep-rooted sense of temptation at its core, emotions that Gipps musically exploits to the full. We might conjecture that Gipps' deeply-felt experience of gender-based opposition is reflected in her selection of a poem that sets male goblins in opposition to two sisters.

Its first performance was in 1956, in Newcastle-under-Lyme, conducted by the composer. Corra Sound performed the same extract you will hear today with the Royal Philharmonic Chamber Orchestra at Boxgrove Priory, Sussex, in March 2020. We are very grateful to Lance Baker (Ruth's son) and Dr Victoria Rowe (Ruth's daughter-in-law) for their assistance in finding the original full score in her archive.

### **A Song of Flight – performed by Joanna Sleight and Caroline Page**

*A Song of Flight* is the second of two songs which comprise Elgar's Op. 31, first performed in 1900. The first song, *After*, meditates retrospectively on fleeting love and enduring bereavement. *A Song of Flight* sets a poem by Christina Rossetti. The two songs are connected by a consideration of the fleeting passage of moments in time, but in this song full of youthful optimism, there is a great sense of energy and expectation for the future. The lyrical, sea-swept romanticism of *A Song of Flight* is highly reminiscent of Elgar's better known song cycle for contralto, *Sea Pictures* (Op. 37), which was composed the previous year (and premiered by Clara Butt dressed as a mermaid!).

### **As Torrents in Summer**

Elgar was a great lover of the British countryside, and so perhaps it is unsurprising that this song contains poetic imagery inspired by nature. This piece, with text by Longfellow, comes from 'Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf' first performed in 1896. It speaks of divine love, suggesting a parallel between summer rivers which flood because of rains many miles away and people who are saved by a divine love that they cannot see. This version has been transcribed for upper voices and piano.

### **The Shepherd's Song – performed by Sarah Stroh and Caroline Page**

Elgar's *The Shepherd's Song* offers a bubbling, joyous setting of a symbolic pastoral scene. Setting text by Barry Pain, his shepherd is a symbol of nature representing themes beloved of the late Romantics and cramming them all into these verses - after all, how many shepherds usually dream of the sea?! In this hymn of rural praise the voice of the shepherd placed emphatically in the first person "I, the shepherd" expresses the longings and desires of the poet and no doubt the composer as both pianist and singer burst forth in vigorous acclamation of the delights of country life.

## Sanctus

Until the 21st century, Caplet's work as a composer had been relatively neglected, in part, due to his fame as orchestrator of some of Debussy's works and also his renown as a conductor. However in 2000, donated manuscripts to the French National Library enabled the publication of new editions of his compositions and a fresh audience. Caplet was particular that vocal melodies should serve the sensitivities of the words, without compromise. His compositions after the Great War feature a predilection for the higher sonorities of female voices, flute and harp, as well as reflecting his interest in Mysticism. All these aspects of his work shine through his *Trois Chants d'Eglise*, of which *Sanctus* is the middle movement.

## Benedictus, from Mass in D. Soloist – Lynda Benn

Ethel Smyth was a composer, writer and member of the Women's Social and Political Union. She received honorary doctorates from the Universities of Durham and Oxford and was the first woman ever to be awarded a damehood (1922). Her piece *The March of the Women* became the anthem of the suffragette movement, which she conducted with a toothbrush while leaning out of a prison window. Hailed as a Working composer (where she spent the latter part of her life, and died), she was alternately praised and panned for writing music that was considered too masculine for a "lady composer", as critics called her. However, her opera *The Wreckers* is considered by some critics to be the "most important English opera composed during the period between Purcell and Britten." Ethel Smyth's *Benedictus*, for soprano solo and upper voices, comes from her Mass in D, which was mostly composed during the summer of 1891 and dedicated to her friend Pauline Trevelyan.

Smyth gave a rendition at the piano of two movements of the Mass while staying on the estate at Balmoral, and the Queen invited her to the castle to play again. The Duke subsequently asked the Royal Choral Society to schedule the premiere, which took place in 1893 at the Royal Albert Hall.

The reception of the Mass was enthusiastic, as were some reviews: J. A. Fuller Maitland praised the work's structure and rich orchestration. George Bernard Shaw wrote that the Mass was a sign of the rise of woman composers, though he called the work "the light literature of church music". The Mass was not performed again anywhere for over 30 years, and Smyth blamed this on prejudice against female composers.

The Mass did see a revival in 1924 however, with performances in Birmingham and London - George Bernard Shaw now thought the Mass "magnificent"! Perhaps the most notable performance of it was to celebrate Smyth's 75th birthday at the Royal Albert Hall attended by Queen Mary, although the composer at the time was, sadly, profoundly deaf.

## Balulalow - The Water of Tyne

Elizabeth Poston was an English composer, pianist and writer. Born in Stevenage she then studied in York and with pianist Harold Samuel before attending the Royal Academy of Music. Having been encouraged at the Academy by Ralph Vaughan Williams, Poston then travelled abroad to collect folk songs and study architecture. During World War II Poston joined the BBC and became director of music in the European Service. She was also rumoured to have



worked as a secret agent, sending coded messages to allies in Europe via gramophone records. Poston composed over 40 scores for radio and many more for television, and collaborated with writers such as C.S. Lewis and Dylan Thomas. In total she composed over 300 works most of which are now housed at Hertfordshire Archives and Local Studies.

### **I sing of a Maiden**

*I sing of a Maiden*, by Amy Bebbington, is published in Multitude of Voyces' second book of sacred music showcasing works by female composers. This series of three volumes is revolutionary in that they are the first of their kind ever to be published. *I sing of a Maiden* sets this 15<sup>th</sup> century text to music that is very simple, pure and lyrical, with a structural design that is comforting and ever so gently revealed. The opening melody lines interweave lending an improvisatory, folk-like quality to the piece, and the different time signatures and subtle syncopation add to that sense of rhythmic fluidity. When the third voice enters the full beauty of the piece is revealed. *I sing of a Maiden* was chosen to be broadcast on Radio 3 this year by the BBC Singers, conducted by Owain Park.

### **O my dear heart**

Eleanor Daley sets this tender text, making liberal use of suspensions, excellent voice leading, and well-crafted, beautifully shaped phrases. She manages to meld tune and words into a seamless combination where one seems not to be able to exist without the other. Each verse is followed with haunting "Balulalows" which float in and out of the dorian reference.

### **Sing my child**

Canadian composer and educator, Sarah Quartel is known for her fresh and exciting approach to vocal writing. Inspired by the life-changing relationships that can occur while making choral music, Sarah writes in a way that aims to connect singer to singer, ensemble to conductor, and performer to audience. Her works are performed worldwide, with commissions from groups including the American Choral Directors Association, the National Children's Chorus of the USA, and New Dublin Voices.

Although this composition was originally commissioned for a choir of over 700 singers, it lends itself well to the agility of a small ensemble. Opening with a buoyant 7/8 metre, *Sing My Child* features a joyous melody that typifies the beauty and harmony so often found in Sarah Quartel's music. With a dynamic percussion line, the pace and transitions in metre and tempo keeps singers and audiences captivated.

### **A woman wearing bloomers on a wheel!**

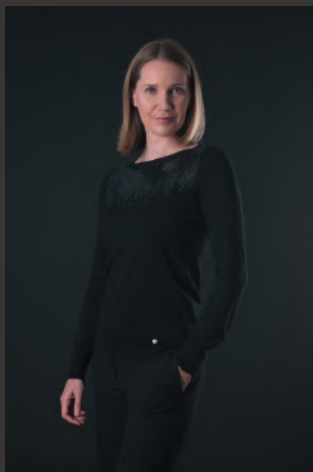
Written by Joanna Forbes L'Estrange and Alexander L'Estrange, this is a Victorian-style, witty part-song for three-part upper-voice choir, from the 40-minute cantata *Song Cycle: vive la vélorution!* Following the invention of the bicycle in the late 19th century many articles were published insisting that it would not be considered lady-like for a woman to be seen riding this new-fangled mode of transport. The reasons given were manifold (and not altogether pleasing) but one was a practical consideration: how could a woman in long skirts and petticoats possibly sit astride a bicycle? Answer: with the invention of the bloomer, of course! Thus the arrival of the bicycle unwittingly aided the women's emancipation movement.

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS

### **A celebration of women's music and the female voice**

Corra Sound is a newly established group of singers with a love for performing, discovering new repertoire and celebrating the works of remarkably talented and often little known female composers. Comprising a blend of professionally trained and high level amateur voices, we each have our own story to tell, but share a passion for music written by and for women, exploring the reach and versatility of the female voice. Individually, we have sung with over a hundred choirs and groups, performing countless works, and yet a tiny minority of those were written by women. As Corra Sound, our mission is to bring many of these works and composers out of the shadows and into the spotlight. Gaining a reputation for high quality performance across a wide range of repertoire, we long to celebrate these remarkable compositions alongside some better known works with you.

To find out more about Corra Sound, please visit [www.corrasound.co.uk](http://www.corrasound.co.uk)



### **Amy Bebbington**

As founder and director of Corra Sound, Amy is a passionate advocate for choral singing and conductor training, and is sought after for her engaging teaching style and wealth of choral pedagogical experience. After achieving her master's degree in piano performance, she combined her love of singing, leadership and movement by gaining a doctorate in choral conducting (in America).

Now, Amy is the director of training for the Association of British Choral Directors, co-founder of the London International Choral Conducting Competition and co-creator of Wavelength, an organisation designed to champion, educate, nurture and support women in choral leadership.

Amy is a published composer, and in great demand as a choral clinician, teacher trainer, adjudicator and mentor. When not conducting, Amy can often be found walking her dog in the woods, dancing or cycling!

### **Lynda Benn**

Having trained at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland as a classical soprano, Lynda went on to study opera at the Advanced Performers' Studio in Hammersmith. She is the founder of Big Bang Music and More, a studio dedicated to bringing high quality arts education to all. Lynda enjoys a busy life in Carshalton, Surrey, where she teaches voice, piano, and musicianship.

### **Rachel Burks**

Rachel grew up in a musical family and studied singing from a young age. Following a career with several bands in Manchester, she gained a Masters in Contemporary Vocal Performance from University of Salford. Rachel is a songwriter and composer and has performed her original works all over Europe and in the United States.

### **Cindy Frostick**

Growing up in a family of keen singers, Cindy learned to sing long before she could talk. She took up the violin at the age of four, the flute and bassoon a few years later, but it was singing that captured her heart. She now juggles work and family life while singing in a range of choral groups, not least Corra Sound.

### **Caroline Page**

Caroline's love of music surfaced at age 4 when she insisted on piano and violin lessons. The piano quickly became her passion and she was in demand as a soloist and chamber musician from a young age, performing her first piano concerto at 14 and regularly performing and competing across the UK. Caroline began singing as a Choral Scholar with the Christ's College Chapel Choir and hasn't stopped since. She is eager to learn more about and perform the works of the hundreds of 'unknown' female composers making Corra Sound the perfect fit!

### **Joanna Sleight**

Joanna particularly loves recording projects and features on the soundtrack of various films, TV and theatre productions. She has worked with the experimental theatre company Experience Vocal Dance, combining contemporary dance with opera and has been fortunate to premiere many new works by contemporary composers. Joanna has recently started seeking out underperformed song repertoire written by women, and is so excited to be working with Corra Sound on a similar celebration of women's choral works.

### **Sarah Stroh**

Sarah always loved to put on a show as a child and couldn't wait for Grandma's piano to come out so she could get to play! Eventually, lessons began and Sarah's love for music took flight. A pianist and flautist, it was as a singer that Sarah really found her feet. After gaining a First in music from Hull University, she was awarded a place at the Royal Academy of Music to study classical singing. She now fills her time teaching singing, directing choirs and running music classes for pre-schoolers.

### **Anna Tabbush**

Having grown up in a family of folk musicians, Anna started playing fiddle with her family ceilidh band at the age of 15. She studied soprano voice to degree level and gained a degree in Music & Technology from Kingston University, feeding her fascination of traditional music from around the world. Anna makes her living as a community choir conductor, composer, choral arranger, singer and multi-instrumentalist, also performing in a number of folk bands. Having set up more than 20 community choirs, she runs several choirs across West Sussex and Surrey and coordinates the events SingFest and Spring Sing.

### **Clare Wheeler**

Clare has always loved making music, especially when it comes to singing. Growing up in East Africa, she sang in church gospel choirs and theatre productions, before studying at Chethams School of Music where she trained as a violinist and also studied classical voice. Her singing career has brought her everywhere from La Scala and the Royal Albert Hall to Ronnie Scott's, and her teaching includes vocal coach and arranger on BBC One's Pitch Battle Show, to professor of vocal jazz at Guildhall School of Music and Drama. In 2007, Clare started singing with the internationally renowned a cappella group The Swingle Singers, only recently leaving the group to pursue her own career as a singer and composer.

### **Alice Wratten**

A keen singer from the outset, Alice joined her local children's choir at the age of 10, before singing with the Hampshire County Youth Choir and the National Youth Choir. While taking a social sciences degree, she took up private singing lessons and continued her studies with a post-graduate certificate in vocal performance in Birmingham, while singing with Ex Cathedra. This led on to a year at the Kodály Institute in Hungary, where she studied vocal pedagogy. Alice is also an accomplished conductor.

SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER

FREE

to attendees of  
the Gala Concert

5.45PM SPONSORED BY THE ELGAR SOCIETY

Henry Sandon Hall at RPW, Worcester WR1 2NE



## THE A.T. SHAW LECTURE WITH STEPHEN JOHNSON

The Elgar Festival is proud to welcome one of Britain's most admired and engaging advocates for classical music, the leading broadcaster, author, critic and composer Stephen Johnson, for a discussion of the many innovations to be found in Elgar's Enigma Variations and the First Symphony. The Elgar Society's A.T. Shaw Lecture is a biennial talk by one of today's leading Elgar Scholars.

Writer, composer and arranger **Stephen Johnson** studied at the Northern School of Music, Manchester, and composition under Alexander Goehr at Leeds University, then at Manchester University. Since then he has written regularly for The Independent and The Guardian, and was Chief Music Critic of The Scotsman (1998-9). He is the author of *Bruckner Remembered* (Faber 1998), and studies of Mahler and Wagner (Naxos 2006, 2007). As a BBC broadcaster he presented Radio 3's *Discovering Music* for 14 years, as well as a series of 14 programmes about the symphonies of Bruckner. He is also a regular contributor to the BBC Music Magazine. Stephen's radio documentary, *Shostakovich: Journey into Light*, was nominated for a Sony Award in 2007, and in 2009 his radio documentary *Vaughan Williams: Valiant for Truth* won a Sony Gold Award. His book about music and mental health, *How Shostakovich Changed My Mind* (based on the Shostakovich documentary) was published in Spring 2018, and in 2021 it won a Rubery Book Award (non-fiction category). It was followed in 2020 by a book about Mahler's Eighth Symphony, *The Eighth: Mahler and the World in 1910* (Faber). Stephen's orchestral work *Behemoth Dances* had its premiere in Moscow in April 2016, followed by its UK premiere in London in May. In January-February 2019 his Clarinet Quintet *Angel's Arc* was performed by Emma Johnson and the Carducci Quartet, with further performances at this year's Hatfield House Chamber Music Festival and in New York in November. The premiere of his String Quartet, to be performed by the Brodsky Quartet, is also planned for November of this year.



Free to attendees of the Gala concert

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SATURDAY 30 OCTOBER

£10-£25

7.30PM

Worcester Cathedral WR1 2LA

# FESTIVAL GALA CONCERT

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Kenneth Woods *conductor*  
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## PROGRAMME

### Overture to The Wreckers

**Ethel Smyth**  
(1858-1944)

### On Wenlock Edge

**Ralph Vaughan Williams**  
(1872 - 1958)

- I. XXXI "On Wenlock Edge"
- II. XXXII "From Far, from Eve and Morning"
- III. XXVII "Is My Team Ploughing"
- IV. XVIII "Oh, When I Was in Love with You"
- V. XXI "Bredon Hill" (first line: "In summertime on Bredon")
- VI. L "Clun" (Housman's title, and the first line: "Clunton and Clunbury")

Mark Wilde - tenor

- INTERVAL -

### Variations on an Original Theme, opus 36 "Enigma Variations"

**Sir Edward Elgar**  
(1857-1934)

- Theme (Enigma: Andante)  
Variation I (L'istesso tempo) "C.A.E."  
Variation II (Allegro) "H.D.S-P."  
Variation III (Allegretto) "R.B.T."  
Variation IV (Allegro di molto) "W.M.B."  
Variation V (Moderato) "R.P.A."  
Variation VI (Andantino) "Ysobel"  
Variation VII (Presto) "Troyte"  
Variation VIII (Allegretto) "W.N."  
Variation IX (Adagio) "Nimrod"  
Variation X (Intermezzo: Allegretto) "Dorabella"  
Variation XI (Allegro di molto) "G.R.S."  
Variation XII (Andante) "B.G.N."  
Variation XIII (Romanza: Moderato) " \* \* \* "  
Variation XIV (Finale: Allegro) "E.D.U."

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

### Ethel Smyth (1858-1944)

#### Overture to *The Wreckers*

Ethel Smyth's *The Wreckers* has 'something which does not meet you halfway, something which does not hold out soft arms to embrace you but conquers you with the sword.' So said one of Ethel Smyth's closest friends, author Maurice Baring, after hearing her third opera. In Smyth's lifetime *Wreckers* was largely considered to be her masterpiece. When it premiered in Leipzig in 1906 Smyth was already famous — she had two operas, a Mass, Serenade for String Orchestra, and several chamber works to her name. But *Wreckers* was the work that really put Smyth, according to the Grove Dictionary of Music in 1927, 'among the most eminent composers of her time.'

Smyth was inspired to write *Wreckers* after visiting the smuggler's cave Piper's Hole while on holiday in Cornwall. The plot revolves around a love triangle in a community that deliberately wrecks ships off the Atlantic coast, plundering their cargo for profit. She conceived the storyline over a number of years, and worked on the libretto with her lover, philosopher Henry Brewster.

Smyth and Brewster had a complicated relationship: Brewster had been married when they first met, and his wife would not agree to the *ménage à trois* that he proposed. Even when Brewster's wife died, Smyth would not agree to marry him. Marriage would have meant the end of her career and her independence, so she chose to remain unmarried all her life. Additionally, Smyth maintained other relationships with women while with Brewster. Smyth was unusually and explicitly autobiographical in her compositions — one of the other inspirations behind the *Wreckers* was the Princesse Winnaretta de Polignac, with whom Smyth was then in love. As was usual for Smyth, they had a tempestuous relationship. She labelled the first act of *The Wreckers* 'in nomine W', and after a row, Act III was written 'in spite of W'.

*Wreckers* has had a rocky performance history. Smyth sabotaged what could have been an extremely successful first run in Leipzig, because she took offence at cuts being made to her score despite the reception being overwhelmingly positive. She stole the parts from the opera house after the first performance, preventing the run from going ahead. A later production in Prague was a disaster. The first productions in the UK were a success, but it has fallen from the repertory since Smyth's death in 1944. The Overture and the Prelude to Act II were perennial favourites at the Proms in Smyth's lifetime, and remain the most well-known parts of the opera. *Wreckers* will finally be staged at Glyndebourne in 2022. Maybe it will be the start of realising Smyth's life-long dream: that the *Wreckers* would find a place in opera-goers' hearts.

- © Leah Broad



### **Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958)**

On Wenlock Edge

“The fate which Housman’s poems deserve, of course, is to be set to music by English composers, and sung by English singers”. Cyril Connolly’s comment wasn’t meant as a compliment - but he had a point. The sixty-three poems that A. E. Housman published in March 1896 as *A Shropshire Lad* have proved irresistible to musicians. On a current count, one poem, *Loveliest of Trees*, has been set by over 50 different composers, including Butterworth, Moeran and Gorecki. It might seem inevitable that the Gloucestershire lad Ralph Vaughan Williams would turn sooner or later to these Shropshire-set poems by a Bromsgrove-born poet - but when he did, it was at a crucial point in his career.

Along with his First String Quartet, Vaughan Williams’ six Housman settings were the first works he completed after his period of study with Maurice Ravel in France. Written in late 1908 and early 1909, they were first performed at the Aeolian Hall, London on 15<sup>th</sup> November 1909 under the title *On Wenlock Edge*. Ravel and Vaughan Williams became firm friends – in later years, Vaughan Williams would meet the Frenchman off the boat train at Victoria Station (the composer of *Boléro* and *Daphnis et Chloé* had developed something of a passion for steak and kidney pudding). And if there are hints of Ravel in Vaughan Williams’ original version for piano and string quartet, they’re unmistakable in his sumptuous 1923 orchestration.



But make no mistake – this is Vaughan Williams at his most personal. Part of the appeal of Housman’s poetry lies in the way that its classical proportions and rural subject-matter are undercut by passionate feeling; at its most powerful, an agonised pessimism that can verge on the savage. Vaughan Williams drives straight for the poems’ underlying emotions, sometimes tearing through Housman’s poised verse-forms in the process. He even cut two whole stanzas from *Is My Team Ploughing?*, to Housman’s fury (“I wonder how he would like me to cut two bars from his music?”). But the rawness of the feeling, the vivid tone-painting and the full-blooded artistic conviction that these poems drew from Vaughan Williams will astonish anyone who has him pigeonholed as merely “pastoral”.

The cycle opens with the swirling autumn gales of *On Wenlock Edge*: listen for the sudden squalls (or flashes of distant lightning?) from harp and woodwind, and the cruel bite of *sul ponticello* chill at the start of the last verse. *From far, from eve and morning* is a gentler meditation on the transience of life, with drifting woodwind chords supporting the two outer verses, and only the second verse quickening briefly into life with a warm string accompaniment. In contrast, in *Is My Team Ploughing?* Vaughan Williams gives Housman’s grimly ironic dialogue between man and ghost an impassioned, almost operatic setting.

*Oh, when I was in love with you* provides a light-hearted interlude - a deliciously wry *scherzo* to the cycle, over in less than a minute. *Bredon Hill* paints a rapturous Midland tone-picture: a heat-haze of strings, the tenor’s melisma, and the distant chime of woodwind church-bells evoke a summer Vale of Severn seen from a Cotswold hillside. The celeste adds an icy glitter before the whole orchestra peals out the song’s clangorous climax. And finally *Clun*, the cycle’s epilogue. The chiming of bells in the fifth song becomes the tread of a walker in this last, and although there’s still time to savour the sweetness of life (listen for the ecstatic key-change on the words “The quietest under the sun”) and the rivers still flow, the path leads only to silence. But at the last, the visionary agnostic Vaughan Williams turns Housman’s fatalism into something more hopeful - and the music moves on past the desolate final words, walking steadily towards those quiet western places.







## Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Variations on an Original Theme (Enigma), Op.36

### Happiness is a cigar called Enigma

After a long day of peripatetic violin lessons in October 1898, Edward Elgar lit a cigar and sat down at his piano. "I began to play, and suddenly my wife interrupted by saying 'Edward, that's a good tune...play it again, I like that tune'. I played, and strummed...and that tune is the theme of the Variations." He tried the tune differently, asking "Whom does that remind you of?" "That's Billy Baker going out of the room" she replied. From this parlour-game grew the greatest orchestral work yet written by a British composer. First performed in London on 19th June 1899, and repeated a month later at New Brighton Tower, the *Enigma Variations* marked a turning point not just in Elgar's career, but in the history of British music.

### Nuts and Bolts

Why? Well, there was the technical mastery. Elgar had never been to music college, but while his academically-trained peers had been learning their orchestration from textbooks, he'd been playing his violin in amateur operatic pit bands, local orchestral societies and music festivals. He knew, from within, exactly how an orchestra worked. This was the first piece of British orchestral music that sounded as if its composer actually liked the sound of an orchestra.

### Form and Feeling

And this practical know-how was allied to a brilliant musical vision. The work is a set of variations – one of the easiest musical forms to follow. But the way Elgar structured them, the *Enigma Variations* are virtually a miniature symphony. Yet, just as much, they're a set of 15 short, tuneful pieces, each capturing to perfection a particular mood or scene. You don't have to be a musicologist to enjoy the pictures of distant liners and bulldogs splashing in rivers, or to respond to the profound emotion of *Nimrod*.

### "My friends pictured within"

Music like this can't be faked, and, of course, in writing about his friends and family, Elgar didn't have to fake anything. The people – and places – he chose to include in the Variations were those that encouraged him through his troubled formative years. The whole piece, from beginning to end, glows with a sense of genuine love – for friends, for family, for home.



And the “Enigma”? Elgar loved “japes”, and it might be the counterpoint to another famous tune – perhaps *Auld Lang Syne*, or the National Anthem - or an abstract concept, like Friendship. Elgar’s only response to every suggestion was “No – nothing like it.” All we can go on are Elgar’s handful of clues, and his dedication: “To my friends pictured within”:

**Theme: Enigma**

The composer himself, hesitant and melancholy, then quietly hopeful.

*I (C.A.E.)*

Caroline Alice, the composer’s wife. Where the theme is hesitant, the variation is measured, tender and serene.

*II (H.D.S-P.)*

Hew Steuart-Powell, an amateur pianist – and the way he’d run his fingers over the keys while warming up to play.

*III (R.B.T.)*

Richard Townsend, a family friend, had an unusually high voice – but would make it exaggeratedly low for comic effect. Listen for the bassoons.

*IV (W.M.B.)*

Local squire William Baker barking the day’s plans at his bemused house-guests before accidentally slamming the door on the way out.

*V (R.P.A.)*

Richard Arnold was loved by Elgar for his serious and thoughtful conversation (strings) – which he’d break up with unexpected witticisms (woodwinds).

*VI (Ysobel.)*

Isabel Fitton, a viola pupil of Elgar’s. This variation is both a delicate portrait of a young Worcestershire lady, and a string-crossing exercise for the viola section. Conducting her in an amateur performance years later, Elgar noticed that Isabel still couldn’t play it...





- VII *(Troyte.)*  
The Malvern architect Arthur Troyte Griffith – Elgar tried to teach him the piano, and we hear him ham-fistedly pounding the keys.
- VIII *(W.N.)*  
Winifred Norbury's elegant Georgian house, Sherridge Court near Great Malvern. The oboes imitate her distinctive, genteel laugh.
- IX *(Nimrod.)*  
"Nimrod", was the "mighty hunter" of the Bible; Augustus Jaeger (German for "hunter"), was Elgar's German-born editor, and his most devoted and understanding musical supporter. This great slow movement was inspired by a summer evening's conversation about Beethoven.
- X *Intermezzo (Dorabella.)*  
A complete contrast - a deliciously-scored interlude portraying Dora Penny, a 24-year old Elgar enthusiast from Wolverhampton. The woodwinds imitate her slight stammer.
- XI *(G.R.S.)*  
Not so much George Sinclair, organist at Hereford Cathedral, as his bulldog Dan – tumbling down the banks of the River Wye and paddling furiously upstream.
- XII *(B.G.N.)*  
Basil Nevinson was a cellist, so this variation is an expressive and poignant elegy for the cellos, leading directly into -
- XIII *Romanza (\* \* \*)*  
Officially, the asterisks represented Lady Mary Lygon, then on a sea voyage, but the desolate clarinet solo over a quiet drum roll (representing the liner's engines) hints at a more tragic story. Yes – that's the theme from Schumann's piano concerto, but why? - Elgar never told.
- XIV *Finale (E.D.U.)*  
Elgar himself reappears, completely transformed – "Edu" was Alice Elgar's pet name for her husband. A stirring build-up leads to a sweeping and optimistic finale, which pauses only to recall C.A.E. and Nimrod before ending, transformed, in the confident splendour of the full orchestra.

© Richard Bratby



## ABOUT THE ARTISTS



### MARK WILDE TENOR

Born in Scotland, tenor **Mark Wilde** was a chorister at Dundee Cathedral before studying at the University of East Anglia and the Royal College of Music, London.

In opera, he has appeared at the Netherlands Opera, Pinchgut Opera and with English National Opera, English Touring Opera, Garsington Opera at Wormsley, Glyndebourne Festival Opera, Opera North and Welsh National Opera, his recent repertoire including Flute *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, The Cat in Jonathan Dove's *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, Berenice *Hipermestra*, Iro *Il ritorno d'Ulisse*, the title-role in *Idomeneo* and Monsieur Triquet *Eugene Onegin*.

A prolific recording artist, Mark Wilde sings regularly in concert, his engagements including performances with the Aalborg Symphony Orchestra, the Academy of Ancient Music, the Britten Sinfonia, the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, the City of London Sinfonia, the Finnish Baroque Orchestra, the Hanover Band, the Irish Chamber Orchestra, the Israel Camerata, the Lahti Symphony Orchestra, the Odense Symphony Orchestra and the Tokyo Symphony Orchestra.

He sings **Monsieur** on Resonus Classics' recently released recording of Arnold's *The Dancing Master* with the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by John Andrews, which won the 2021 BBC Music Magazine Best Opera CD Award, and repeated this role with Red Squirrel Opera at this year's Buxton Festival.

A Professor of Singing at London's Royal Academy of Music and a Trustee of Waterperry Opera Festival, Mark Wilde lives in Lincoln with his wife and family.







# KENNETH WOODS

## ARTISTIC DIRECTOR

Hailed by Gramophone as a “symphonic conductor of stature,” conductor, cellist, composer and author Kenneth Woods has worked with the National Symphony Orchestra (USA), Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, Budapest Festival Orchestra, Royal Northern Sinfonia and English Chamber Orchestra. He has also appeared on the stages of some of the world’s leading music festivals, including Aspen, Scotia and Lucerne.

In 2013, he took up a new position as Artistic Director and Principal Conductor of the English Symphony Orchestra. In 2015 he became the second Artistic Director of the Colorado MahlerFest, the only American organization other than the New York Philharmonic to receive the Gold Medal of the International Gustav Mahler Society.

Woods was appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Orchestra of the Swan in 2010 and during his tenure lifted that orchestra to a new level of international renown. With them, he recorded the first complete cycle of the symphonies of Hans Gál paired with those of Robert Schumann, among the most widely praised classical recording projects in recent years, highlighted in National Public Radio’s All Things Considered, Performance Today, BBC Radio 3, the Sunday New York Times, the Sunday Telegraph, Washington Post and was an Editor’s Choice in Gramophone. Among his other recordings are Schoenberg’s chamber ensemble versions of *Das Lied von der Erde* and *Lieder eines fahrenden Gesellen* (for Somn) by Gustav Mahler, which won the coveted IRR Outstanding rosette from International Record Review, and *Spring Sounds, Spring Seas*, a MusicWeb ‘Record of the Year’. His recordings with the English Symphony Orchestra and English String Orchestra include the Elgar Piano Quintet as orchestrated by Donald Fraser, and the complete piano concertos of Ernst Krenek, a Sunday Times “Best of 2016.”

A widely read writer and frequent broadcaster, Woods’ blog, *A View from the Podium*, is one of the 25 most popular classical blogs in the world. He has spoken on Mahler on NPR’s All Things Considered and BBC Radio 4’s Today Programme and is a frequent commentator on BBC Radio 3.

[www.kennethwoods.net](http://www.kennethwoods.net)





# THE ESO

## ENGLISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

The Worcestershire based English Symphony Orchestra, the International Orchestra of Elgar Country, is an ensemble which in recent years has become synonymous with artistic excellence, innovative and visionary programming, distinctive commissioning, ground-breaking recording, a welcoming and immersive concert experience, transformative youth programmes and service to the community.

Since the appointment of Kenneth Woods as the orchestra's Artistic Director and Principal Conductor in 2013, the orchestra has re-emerged as a major force in British musical life, presenting and recording the orchestra's first full-length opera (the world premiere of John Joubert's *Jane Eyre*) to overwhelming critical acclaim, presenting

the 2015 Classical Music Magazine "Premiere of the Year," and releasing a triumphant series of recordings including Donald Fraser's orchestration of the Elgar Piano Quintet (Classic FM Disc of the Week) and the Complete Piano Concertos of Ernst Krenek (Sunday Times Essential New Release).

Founded by William Boughton in 1978, the ESO have a long and distinguished history of collaboration with legendary figures of British music making. Vernon "Tod" Handley became the orchestra's second Principal Conductor in 2007, and led the orchestra until his death. Over the years, the ESO has worked with a distinguished list of instrumentalists, composers and conductors, including Nigel Kennedy, Stephen Isserlis, Daniel Hope, Michael Tippett, Nicholas Maw and Yehudi Menuhin, who was appointed the ESO's Principal Guest Conductor in 1991, and led the orchestra on a number of international tours.

British music has always been a central part of the orchestra's mission. Appropriately for an orchestra based in Elgar's home town, the ESO has made many acclaimed recordings of that composer's music, as well as that of major 20th century British composers including Vaughan Williams, Britten, Butterworth and Bridge. The ESO discography also highlights a commitment to the music of our time; in addition to the notable recordings which grew out of the orchestra's affiliation with Sir Michael Tippett, are recordings of music by John Metcalfe, John Joubert, and Michael and Lennox Berkeley. The ESO's discography also includes Baroque masters such as Boyce and Handel, and composers as diverse as Schnittke, Strauss, Shostakovich, Sibelius and Respighi. Kenneth Woods



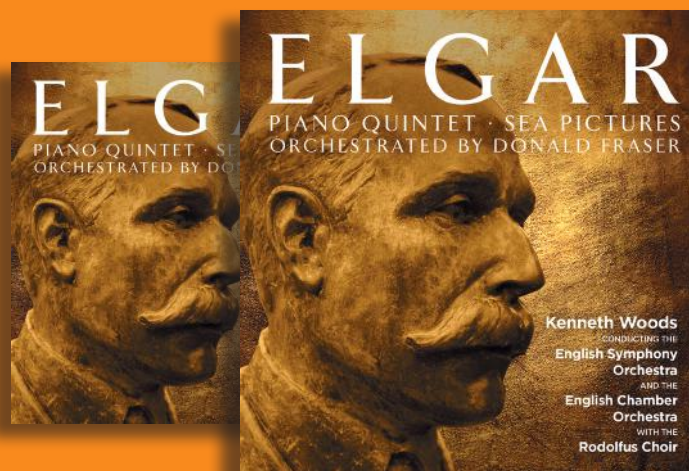
brings to the ESO a particular grounding in the core Central European and Russian repertoire alongside a life-long interest in British music, and the composers of his home country of America.

Woods is a noted advocate for the generation of composers killed or exiled during World War II, and works by composers including Hans Gál, Viktor Ullmann, Mieczyslaw Weinberg feature prominently in the orchestra's current concert offerings and upcoming recordings. John McCabe served as the orchestra's Composer-in-Association from 2013 until his death in 2015. Following McCabe's death in 2015, the ESO appointed Philip Sawyers as "John McCabe Composer-in-Association" who was succeeded by David Matthews in 2018.

Other recent recording projects include a disc of newly-commissioned works for trumpet, piano and strings with Simon Desbruslais and Clare Hammond for Signum, the Hans Gál Concertino for Cello and Orchestra with Matthew Sharp, new violin concerti by David Matthews, Paul Patterson, Rob Fokkens and Emily Doolittle with Harriet Mackenzie and the Third Symphony of Philip Sawyers. Highlights of recent seasons include triumphant debuts in LSO St Luke's, St John's Smith Square, Elgar Concert Hall, The Bridgewater Hall, King's Place and Cheltenham Town Hall.

One of our aims is to develop the audience and the musicians of the future. We run orchestra courses for children from Grade 1 and, when it is feasible, train talented young players to perform alongside the professional orchestra for a part of a concert. ESO has recently (April 2015) been appointed "Orchestra-in-Association" by Severn Arts Music and has very close links with the Elgar School of Music. In 2016-7, the ESO became "Orchestra in Residence" for Worcester Live. In Herefordshire, the ESO works in strategic partnership with the Herefordshire Music Hub and Hereford Sixth form College. Each year, the ESO presents dozens of concerts in care homes and hospices across the Midlands, bringing the comfort of live music to those who need it most.

**AVAILABLE  
ON CD AND  
SPOTIFY:**  
ELGAR FROM THE ESO



SUNDAY 31 OCTOBER

£12

11.00AM

Huntingdon Hall, Worcester WR1 2ES



## CELEBRITY CELEBRATION OF BRITISH SONG

### SONG RECITAL: FROM ELGAR TO VENABLES

Emerging superstar tenor Mark Wilde is joined by one of Britain's most loved and admired pianists and amateurs, David Owen Norris, for a concert celebrating the rich legacy of English song, from the Victorian stylings of Haynes, through the Edwardian mastery of Elgar, and on to a new cycle by Ian Venables, the man hailed by Musical Opinion Quarterly as "...Britain's greatest living composer of art songs..."

**Mark Wilde** *tenor*

**David Owen Norris** *piano*

This concert is kindly supported by **The Richard Hall Trust**



**Tickets: £12.00**

Book by phone via **Worcester Theatres - 01905 611 427**

WWW.ELGARFESTIVAL.ORG

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## PROGRAMME

### **Battison Haynes – Set one of ‘Elizabethan’ lyrics. (Novello 1897)**

Her hair the net of golden wire  
Adieu, sweet Amaryllis  
Fair is my love Now is my Chloris Heigh ho!  
Though my carriage be but careless  
Thine eyes so bright  
Thou sent'st to me a heart was crowned  
Come, O come, my life's delight

### **Ian Venables – ‘The Last Invocation’ – a cycle of four settings to poems by Walt Whitman (WORLD PREMIERE)**

1. Shine, Shine, Shine!
2. Out of May's Shows Selected
3. As At Thy Portals Also Death
4. The Last Invocation

### **Sir Edward Elgar – A song selection to include:**

In the dawn  
Speak, music  
Is she not passing fair?  
A Poet's Life  
Through the Long Days

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

**Walter Battison Haynes** (1859 to 1900) was born in Kempsey near Worcester and was educated as chorister at Malvern Priory under his uncle, William Haynes. In 1878 he went to study piano and composition at the Conservatory of Leipzig under Reinecke and Jadassohn. After a brief stint in Boulogne, he returned to England in 1883 where he built a career as an active musician, composer, and teacher.

He regularly collaborated with the renowned English baritone, Harry Plunket Greene, for whom these songs were most likely written. The songs themselves are miniatures of a most exquisite nature; exhibiting great flair for vocal and pianistic writing, word setting, melody, and harmony in abundance; music that is quintessentially English but with studied German polish! Published as ‘Elizabethan Lyrics’, many of the poems are in fact from the slightly later Jacobean era.

David Owen Norris





## The Last Invocation Op. 50

I first discovered Walt Whitman's poetry as a young man after hearing Vaughan Williams' *Sea Symphony*. Although, I was drawn to his mystical texts, I did not explore Whitman's poetry in any depth until his bicentenary in 2019: only then the idea of writing a song cycle took root. This decision was given further impetus when Richard Hall generously offered to commission the work.

In many ways, *The Last Invocation* evolved from ideas that were distilled from my *Requiem*, composed in 2018. Engaging with the liturgy and the texts of the Mass for the Dead, confronted me with questions about my own spiritual beliefs. Indeed, these same questions lie at the heart of Whitman's poetic vision and so when structuring the cycle I arranged the four poems in a particular sequence, in order to chart a musical narrative that, it is hoped, will bring the listener's personal experience within the realm of the transcendental.

The cycle opens with a setting of '**Shine! Shine! Shine!**'. The text is taken from the first section of Whitman's *Sea-Drift* collection entitled *Out of the Cradle Endlessly Rocking*. The poem describes a boy's growing maturity and his awakening experience of Love and Death. Whitman draws on his own childhood memories to portray an image of an idealised Love, as symbolised by two mockingbirds nesting near his home.

In the second setting '**Out of May's Shows Selected**' the poet observes nature in the full flush of spring, with its cornucopia of blossoms and colours. The song begins with a short introduction for piano that attempts to capture Whitman's vision of an iridescent scene, '*Apple orchards, the trees all cover'd with blossoms*'. The vocal melody is a long-breathed line that floats gently above a moving piano accompaniment, alternating the unusual time signatures of 4/16 and 5/16.

The poem '**As at Thy Portals also Death**' is taken from his collection *Songs of Parting*. It is in part an Elegy, but is also a tribute to his mother. The opening line, '*As at thy portals also death*', addresses the belief that after our earthly existence is over, the Soul joins the spiritual world that lies 'beyond the veil'. The mysterious and plangent atmosphere of the piano's opening music conjures up a sombre mood and acts as an introduction to the principal vocal melody sung to the words. '*To memories of my mother, to the divine blending, maternity*'. By contrast, the narrative of the central section is more celebratory in tone, '*To her, the ideal woman, practical, spiritual, of all of earth, life, love, to me the best*'. In the final section, Whitman expresses his hope that his life as a poet had not only honoured his mother's love, but it had also given her a lasting tribute '*I grave a monumental line before I go amid these songs and set a tombstone here*'. Similarly, it is my hope that I too have composed something worthy of my mother's cherished memory.

The cycle's final song is a setting of the transcendental poem, '**The Last Invocation**', taken from the collection, '*Whispers of Heavenly Death*'. While '*As at Thy Portals also Death*' explored Whitman's belief in the immortality of the Soul, *The Last Invocation* describes the soul's final journey to eternity. It begins with an ostinato figure in the piano accompaniment that evokes an atmosphere of tranquility but with a gentle feeling of 'drifting' or forward movement. However, Whitman's narrative changes abruptly at the line '*Set ope the doors O soul*'. Here, a new





accompanimental figure is introduced that culminates in the poem's denouement on the words '*tenderly be not impatient*'. Despite his unwavering belief in the Immortality of the Soul, Whitman implores us to '*be not impatient*' in leaving the temporal world behind. To express such thoughts I have incorporated a musical metaphor, formed from a group of slowly moving, oscillating quavers, combined with a modally inflected harmony. I hope that this metaphor will elicit a sense of timelessness. Above this accompaniment, the singer intones a wistful melodic phrase on the words '*tenderly, be not impatient*'. This is repeated three times in order to emphasise the Soul's reluctance to journey into the unknown. The song concludes with a piano postlude that reprises a fragment from the opening song *Shine! Shine! Shine!*, recalling a tender memory from the Soul's past life as the music drifts to a tranquil close.

### Ian Venables

**Elgar's songs** often carry an underlying tinge of nostalgia, speaking of paradises created only by the power of music. His last song is punningly entitled XTC. There are two sketches. The first has tune and skeleton chords, the second, words and an indication of the accompanimental style, along with significant piano counter-melodies, introduction and postlude. The musical text of the song can be established by combining the two sketches. At the end of the wordless sketch Elgar writes 'Fine del songs November 11th 1930'. The second sketch has one more story to tell us. As he invented words to fit his tune, Elgar got himself into some grammatical knots. Alternative words are supplied by a younger hand. Clearly, Elgar has settled down with a friend to see if the song can be finished. The most likely candidate is Vera Hockman, with whom he enjoyed a passionate if platonic relationship during the three years before his death on February 2nd 1934. Unfortunately, Vera's emendations remove some quintessentially Elgarian phrases ('gild the past', for instance), and have the lovers riding across a mountain rather than walking through a dark forest. We have decided to use all Elgar's words but two – for grammatical reasons we have changed an 'as' to another 'Ah!', and, at the very end, 'close' to 'us again'. (Elgar could think of no words for the last two notes). We use four of Vera's words ('heart with rapture o'erflowed') where Elgar left another blank.

### David Owen Norris





## TEXTS

### **The Cradle Endlessly Rocking**

Shine! shine! shine!  
Pour down your warmth, great sun!  
While we bask, we two together.  
Two together!  
Winds blow south, or winds blow north,  
Day come white, or night come black,  
Home, or rivers and mountains from home,  
Singing all time, minding no time,  
While we two keep together.

### **Out of May's Shows Selected.**

Apple orchards, the trees all cover'd with blossoms;  
Wheat fields carpeted far and near in vital emerald green;  
The eternal, exhaustless freshness of each early morning;  
The yellow, golden, transparent haze of the warm afternoon sun;  
The aspiring lilac bushes with profuse purple or white flowers.

### **As At Thy Portals Also Death.**

AS at thy portals also death,  
Entering thy sovereign, dim, illimitable grounds,  
To memories of my mother, to the divine blending, maternity,  
To her, buried and gone, yet buried not, gone not from me,  
To her, the ideal woman, practical, spiritual, of all of earth, life,  
love, to me the best,  
I grave a monumental line, before I go, amid these songs,  
And set a tombstone here.

### **The Last Invocation.**

AT the last, tenderly,  
From the walls of the powerful fortress'd house,  
From the clasp of the knitted locks,  
                        from the keep of the well-closed doors,  
Let me be wafted.  
Let me glide noiselessly forth;  
With the key of softness unlock the locks  
                        —with a whisper,  
Set open the doors O soul.

Tenderly—be not impatient,

## ABOUT THE ARTISTS



### DAVID OWEN NORRIS PIANO

David Owen Norris, the first winner of the Gilmore Artist Award, has played concertos all over North America and Australia, along with several appearances in the BBC Proms. A television programme entirely devoted to his work on the Elgar Piano Concerto, ending with a spectacular live performance of the whole work, has been shown frequently. He has recorded his own *Piano Concerto in C* with the BBC Concert Orchestra. His other concerto recordings include works by Lambert, Phillips, Horowitz & Arnell. Solo recitals, all over the world, have particularly featured the music of Brahms, Schubert, Poulenc, Bax & Elgar: he has recorded all Elgar's piano music, including his own reconstruction of the magnificent *Concert Allegro* of 1901, along with Karg-Elert's transcriptions of the First Symphony & the Symphonic Study: *Falstaff*, and his own transcriptions of the *Pomp & Circumstance* Marches. He began his career by accompanying such artists as Dame Janet Baker, Sir Peter Pears & Jean-Pierre Rampal. His ambitious complete Sullivan song project will soon be augmented by a third disc on the Chandos label.

His other early piano recordings include Schubert's *Winterreise* with David Wilson-Johnson, one of the earliest recordings (1984) of the piece on a contemporary piano (1826); Schubert's first song-cycle, the Kosegarten *liederpiel* of 1815, of which he gave the modern premiere in 1997; *Entertaining Miss Austen*, a comprehensive selection from Jane Austen's own music collection; the audio-guide to the Cobbe Collection, playing pianos formerly belonging to JC Bach, JB Cramer, Thalberg & Bizet; and, on Elgar's piano, a double disc of songs and piano pieces, including the first conception of what eventually became the Cello Concerto.



### MARK WILDE TENOR (SEE GALA CONCERT - PAGE 30)



SUNDAY 31 OCTOBER

£8

1.30PM

PRE-CONCERT LIGHT REFRESHMENTS AVAILABLE  
TO PURCHASE FROM 12 NOON IN THE CHURCH.

*St Martin's in the Cornmarket, Worcester WR1 2DJ*



## THE ELGAR CHORALE IN CONCERT

**Piers Maxim** *conductor*

The much-admired local choir which proudly bears the name of our featured composer returns with a concert that will include favourite part songs by Elgar and Coleridge-Taylor, including the latter's The Viking Song, as well as a selection of Vaughan Williams' choral works including A Dark-eyed Sailor and Valiant-for-Truth.

### PROGRAMME

#### 2 Part Songs – Elgar

O wild West wind  
Owls, an Epitaph

#### Three English Folk Songs – Vaughan Williams

The dark eyed sailor  
The spring time of the year  
Just as the tide was flowing  
2 Part Songs – Donald Hunt  
A Good-Night  
Now the crimson petal

#### The Lee Shore – Coleridge Taylor

#### The Viking Song – Coleridge Taylor

#### Two Part Songs – Elgar

As torrents in Summer  
How calmly the evening

#### The souls of the righteous – Vaughan Williams

#### Valiant-for-truth – Vaughan Williams

#### Shout, o ye winds! – Roderick Williams



**Tickets: £8.00**

Book by phone via **Worcester Theatres – 01905 611 427**

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## ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

**The Elgar Chorale** is a mixed voice choir of up to 40 singers. Many of us are professional musicians and we run a busy programme of concerts taking place across Worcester, Worcestershire and beyond.

Under the leadership of the founder and Musical Director, Dr Donald Hunt, the choir had gained a reputation for the quality and variety of its performances. It is particularly noted for its interpretations of music by the greatest English composer after whom it is named; Sir Edward Elgar. From January 2015 the choir is now under the directorship of Piers Maxim and we look towards enhancing this reputation.

Over the years we have raised thousands of pounds for good causes by hosting, and being invited to perform, on behalf of charities. We have taken leading roles in some of Worcestershire's most prestigious music festivals. We are also asked to perform at weddings and on civic occasions.

In between its active concert season the choir finds time to travel. We have completed highly successful tours to the South West and abroad to Germany, France and South Africa.





**Piers Maxim** was appointed Director of Music of the Elgar Chorale in January 2015. Working with many choirs as conductor, assistant conductor and chorus master during his career, singing, organ playing, composing and teaching are a large part of his life too. Piers began his musical career singing – as a boy chorister at St Paul’s Cathedral, London. An organist since his teens, he was Organ Scholar at his school, Christ’s Hospital. He continued to play during his time at Wells Cathedral and as a Choral Scholar at Clare College, Cambridge. After graduating, he continued his studies at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama, London.

In the field of opera, Piers has worked in European opera houses including Staatsoper Berlin, Le Théâtre des Champs Elysées Paris, and the Netherlands Nationale Reisopera. Chorus Master from 2002 to 2004 at Scottish Opera, Piers conducted *La Bohème* (Puccini) and *Aida* (Verdi). From September 2004 until 2009, he was Chorus Master at Le Théâtre Royal de La Monnaie in Brussels. There he worked on around 40 operas on stage and in concert.

From 1996 to 2012 Piers Maxim was Assistant Conductor to René Jacobs and worked on many Handel operas and oratorios. Piers made his USA debut conducting *Die Zauberflöte* (Mozart) in New York in April 2007. This same production toured South Africa in September 2007, where Piers received glowing critiques. In October 2010 Piers conducted the first performance of a staged baroque opera in China – Handel’s *Semele*.

Piers has conducted much of the choral repertoire while leading several choirs in England – *Messiah* and *Saul* (Handel), *Mass in B minor* (Bach), *Mass in C minor* (Mozart), *The Dream of Gerontius* (Elgar), *Sea Symphony* (Vaughan Williams), *A Child of our Time* (Tippett), to name but a few.

SUNDAY 31 OCTOBER

£5-18



3.30PM

*Severn Hall, Three Counties Showground, Malvern WR13 6NW*

## ELGAR FOR EVERYONE FAMILY CONCERT

For many attendees, the Elgar for Everyone Family Concert was the surprise highlight of the 2019 Elgar Festival. Over 130 young musicians, ranging in age from 7-21 joined forces alongside their English Symphony Orchestra mentors for a thrilling evening of music. This year's return of the E4E concert promises to be an even more moving and poignant concert, as these talented young musicians give their first performance for an audience since the March 2020 lockdown.

ESO Youth Orchestra  
ESO Intermediates Orchestra  
ESO Beginners Orchestra  
Members of the English Symphony Orchestra  
James Topp *conductor*



Tickets: £5-18

Book by phone via Worcester Theatres - 01905 611 427

*Elgar for Everyone*





## PROGRAMME (ANNOUNCED FROM THE STAGE) TO INCLUDE:

### **The Bamboula**

ESO Youth Orchestra

### **'Mars' from The Planets**

ESO Youth Combined Orchestra

### **'Earth'**

ESO Youth Combined Orchestra

### **Pomp & Circumstance March No.4**

ESO Youth and Intermediate Orchestras

### **Short pieces by ESO Beginners and ESO Intermediates**

**Samuel Coleridge-Taylor**

**Gustav Holst**

**Hans Zimmer**

**Edward Elgar**

The **ESO Youth orchestras** are very pleased to be involved with Elgar Festival 2021 and to perform at the Elgar for Everyone Family Concert again. ESO Youth continued to provide as many opportunities as possible for children and young people throughout the last 18 months of lockdowns and restrictions through providing online coaching sessions and creating virtual orchestra performances. Our 'live' workshops and courses re-started in April 2021 with a record number of children and young people attending them.

Today, we proudly present to you our three orchestras - Beginners (ages 6-12, grade 0-3), Intermediates (ages 8-16, grade 4-7), and Youth (ages 11-19, grade 7+).

“

# ATTENTION CHORAL SINGERS!

Are you an experienced  
choral singer with  
good sight-reading  
and vocal skills?

”

Join the all-new Elgar Festival Chorus to sing my work  
The Spirit of England with the English Symphony Orchestra  
and conductor Kenneth Woods at next year's Jubilee Edition  
of the Elgar Festival 2 -5 June 2022

- concentrated rehearsal period during April and May 2022 with Festival Chorus Master, Stephen Shellard
- rehearsals held at St. Andrew's Methodist Church, Worcester (vocal scores provided)
- free of charge to take part (though singers are invited to make a donation of c. £20 pp to help support costs)
- register your application to join us NOW! (deadline end of December, please)

Please email our Chorus Administrator stating your voice part, and details of the choir/s you currently sing with.

**Email:** [outreach@elgarfestival.org](mailto:outreach@elgarfestival.org)





# WILL YOU BE ONE OF ELGAR'S FRIENDS?



You can join a long and illustrious line of Edward Elgar's friends and help us to sustain the Elgar Festival for the future with an annual subscription of £25.



**The Friends group is being launched this year as part of plans to support and continue the Festival as an annual event in the national music calendar. The Covid pandemic has hit live performances hard as we know, but there are simple steps that can help to bring back the music, arts heritage, and cultural life that we all want to enjoy.**

The Friends of Elgar Festival will do two things – it will demonstrate the enduring love and interest in Elgar's life and music, and support quality performances of his music, the music and culture of his era... and beyond. Secondly, it will help directly to support our ethos of Elgar for Everyone, offering accessibility and inclusivity for all, in particular, to provide educational and performance opportunities for young people. ...and these are the benefits you will receive in return :

- **20% discount off a Festival event**
- **Free programme book**
- **Invitation to an EF Reception over the annual weekend**
- **Twice yearly E-newsletter updating you with all the information you need about the Elgar Festival**
- **The opportunity to attend EF events held outside the annual Festival**

All you have to do to join is visit: <https://elgarfestival.org/join-the-friends/>

**Thank you!**

The Elgar Festival is a Registered Charity No. 1186804

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## THE OFFICIAL ANNUAL CELEBRATION OF THE LIFE AND MUSIC OF SIR EDWARD ELGAR IN HIS HOME CITY OF WORCESTER.

THE FESTIVAL IS A REGISTERED CHARITY NO. 1186804. THE ORGANISATION IS MANAGED BY A VOLUNTEER TEAM OF MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES.

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Laura Ingham – Festival design

Matthews Construction – for loan of 'Eddie' the giraffe

Helen Mole – Economic Development, Worcester City Council

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...and our Festival Volunteers, acting as stewards at our venues - Thank you!



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2 - 5 June, 2022

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**Elgar - Symphony No. 1**

Introduction and Allegro

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**Ian Venables - Requiem**

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# Elgar for Everyone



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**ARTS COUNCIL  
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