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UNIVERSITY OF NORTHERN COLORADO

Greeley, Colorado

The Graduate School

EDWARD ELGAR'S *THE MUSIC MAKERS*: A CHORAL
CONDUCTOR'S ANALYSIS AND SCORE
PREPARATION GUIDE

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree of
Doctor of Arts

David Klement

College of Performing and Visual Arts
School of Music
Choral Conducting

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This Dissertation by: David Klement

Entitled: *Edward Elgar's The Music Makers: A Choral Conductor's Analysis And Score Preparation Guide*

has been approved as meeting the requirement for the Degree of Doctor of Arts in the College of Arts and Sciences in School of Visual and Performing Arts, Music

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ABSTRACT

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Edward Elgar's *The Music Makers*, op 69, a cantata for full choir, mezzo-soprano soloist and orchestra, was debuted and conducted by the composer on October 1, 1912 at the Birmingham Festival in England. Based on the now familiar poem by late nineteenth-century English pre-Raphaelite poet Arthur O'Shaughnessy (1844-1881), and beginning with the phrase "We are the music makers and we are the dreamers of dreams", the work is considered by some historians to be a personal requiem by the composer. Written at Elgar's peak of compositional creativity, this extended, almost forty-minute cantata, is a choral work of deep personal meaning and reflection.

The Music Makers was criticized by his contemporaries on two counts. Elgar set the entirety of O'Shaughnessy's "Ode" as his libretto whereas in other works, such as *The Dream of Gerontius*, he chose only those poetic lines that best suited the drama of the work. In the late nineteenth century, O'Shaughnessy's poems were briefly in fashion, but by the time Elgar set the "Ode" only a few years later, they came across as being dated and of questionable literary quality. In addition, Elgar included numerous musical

quotations from earlier compositions, including his own *Symphonies #1 and #2*, *Sea Pictures*, *The Dream of Gerontius*, and the “*Enigma*” *Variations*. As a result, many reviews critiqued the work as lacking compositional originality and creativity.

With its debut in the years leading up to England’s entry into World War I, and with less than stellar public reviews, the work did not receive the number of early public performances which other Elgar works tended to enjoy. This pattern has continued to this day. *The Music Makers* tends to be performed for its curiosity value and recorded only by large orchestra choruses in conjunction with professional orchestras, and the few live performances tend to be limited to ones in England. However, *The Music Makers* deserves greater visibility as it is actually more accessible to a broader level of choral ensemble, including college and larger community choirs, than is assumed. This study will show that with an informed understanding of the history, form, and interpretive opportunities of *The Music Makers*, combined with strategies to addressing some of the pedagogical, vocal and conducting challenges, Elgar’s magnum opus is a worthy work to perform at almost any choral level.

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CHAPTER I

PURPOSE OF STUDY AND ELGAR BACKGROUND STUDY

Purpose of Study and Elgar Background

I was in my last semester at Oberlin Conservatory, when Director of Choral Activities Daniel Moe, having just returned from his sabbatical to England, announced that we would be performing a work that he had just “discovered” that was of such quality and beauty that he wanted to share it with his students. While abroad, he had attended a performance of Edward Elgar’s *The Music Makers*, a work with which he was not previously familiar. Over the course of that last semester, the Oberlin Musical Union, a choir consisting of community, college and conservatory students, would be introduced to this special piece that would eventually become one of my favorite extended choral works.

The Music Makers, op. 69 choral cantata, was written at the end of a period that saw the culmination of Edward Elgar’s most successful and popular period of composition. Since 1904, Elgar had publicly announced his intent to set Arthur O’Shaughnessy’s 1874 poem “Ode” from his *Music and Moonlight: Poems and Songs* collection. The poem’s central conceit, focusing on the “artist” and their role in society, no doubt resonated with Elgar. In 1912, following the less than

successful debut of his Symphony #2, Elgar was also emotionally affected by the loss of several close friends, concerned by the looming entrance by England into active participation in World War I and deeply saddened by the terrible disaster of the sinking of the Titanic.¹ Facing continuing poor health, of which he suffered much of his life, he likely too was considering his own mortality and the nature of his own artistic legacy.

Like his Symphony #2, *The Music Makers* received underwhelming reviews at its debut and since then has often been criticized on two counts. First and foremost for the overall quality of O'Shaughnessy's poem itself and secondly because Elgar chose to self-quote quite frequently in the work, re-using melodies from many of his most popular pieces of music, even including a work that had not even yet debuted, his *Cello Concerto*.² For these two reasons, combined with the all-consuming impact of World War I which led to a sharp decline in musical performance, *The Music Makers* garnered few performances immediately following its debut, especially on the European continent. After the war, *The Music Makers* was performed occasionally, but generally received a much less honored place in the Elgar choral canon, particularly in comparison to groundbreaking choral works such as the oratorios *The Dream of Gerontius* and *The Apostles*.

¹ In April 1912, Elgar wrote Alice Stuart-Wortley and admitted that I "have felt this terrible Titanic disaster acutely, & I have been lonely." Kennedy, Michael. *Portrait of Elgar* (London, Oxford University Press, 1982), 252.

² Douglas Hunt, "Thoughts on *The Music Makers* - a conductor's viewpoint," *The Elgar Society Journal*, XVII/6 (December 2012), 9.

This study proposes to counteract this legacy of omission by analyzing *The Music Maker's* history, form and text within the context of the composer's biography to show that it is perhaps the most personal and moving of Elgar's choral works. It will then address the choral and orchestral pedagogical challenges in order to assist future conductors in more completely understanding the work and its history. This knowledge will help them prepare to teach and perform the work effectively. This relatively unknown choral work by Elgar is rarely included within the repertoire lists of choral orchestral works by well-known composers, despite the fact that *The Music Makers* plays a unique role in Elgar's oeuvre.

To understand the importance of the cantata and its place in Elgar's choral output it is important to understand Elgar the man and how his life influenced his composition. A background study of Elgar's life, his complicated feelings of inadequacy and how these two affected him during the time leading up to and after the composition of *The Music Makers* will be crucial to understanding why he set the work the way he did, and why he might have been moved by O'Shaughnessy's poem. Elgar's personality, hopes, dreams, and the outside influences illuminate how they ultimately affected his setting. By charting how Elgar's compositional style evolved over the years leading, this document will touch briefly on Elgar's overall approach to composition and the influence that Richard Wagner had on him, including the role the leitmotif held in his choral and orchestral works.

Summary of Relevant Research

By the time of Elgar's death in 1934, a fair amount had already been written about the composer, his life and music.³ Much of this had been in the form of memoirs written by people who had either personally known him, as in the case of Dora Powell and Rosa Burley, or were written by musicians who had worked closely with him professionally, although these biographical notices tended to be tactfully constrained as befitting a living subject.⁴ Scholarship on Elgar increased by the mid-1950s and lengthy biographical tomes, such as those by Diana McVeagh, Jerrold Northrup Moore and Robert Anderson, illuminated the fascinating history of Elgar from his working class Catholic roots in Worcester, England to his being honored as a knighted musician of the highest order. These sources increasingly intertwined analysis of Elgar's music alongside biographical and personal detail.

Moreover, Elgar and his loving and extremely supportive wife Alice were avid writers, chronicling their lives in the form of daily diaries and in letters to friends, family and professional acquaintances. This treasure trove of personal documents, now available through the published collections mostly edited by

³ *Edward Elgar: Memories of a Variation* and Rosa Burley in her *Edward Elgar: The Record of a Friendship* and William H. Reed's *Elgar As I Knew Him*, and *Elgar and his music, an appreciative study* by John Porte.

⁴ As Julian Rushton points out "Elgar's earliest biographers were properly constrained by the tact appropriate for a living subject, or his remaining contemporaries." Julian Rushton, "Elgar's biography, Elgar's repute: themes and variations", in *Elgar, an anniversary portrait*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (London: Continuum, 2007), 36.

Moore, further illuminate Elgar's emotions, personality and reactions to events and experiences. Particularly illuminating are the letters Elgar exchanged with his editor, August Jaeger, at his primary publisher Novello and Company. These contribute insightful personal and professional information regarding his published music, while his correspondence with the administrators of His Majesty's Voice label of the Gramophone Record Company contribute to understanding his performance practices as heard in recordings of his music which he himself conducted.

Elgar research from the last decade of the twentieth century onward has expanded tremendously and is no longer focused on personal relationships between the authors and Elgar. Lengthy biographies have declined as edited collections, such as *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar* (eds. Grimley and Rushton) and *Elgar Studies* (eds. Harper-Scott and Rushton) offer more analytical approaches to the material. They are supplemented by articles, frequently published in *The Elgar Journal* of The Elgar Society, many of which are now available in pdf form online. These newer publications are often written primarily by English and American musicologists and theorists who have analyzed the formal aspects of his music more deeply, focusing less on biographical context (though such details are still scattered amongst their arguments) and more on the external influences on his music, such as Wagner and the leitmotif and the compositional styles of Dvořák, Schumann, Brahms and Strauss, with whom Elgar felt strong connections. Most recent writings tend to

analyze within the framework of hermeneutics or gender criticism, or concentrate on one facet of Elgar's life, such as the impact of his Catholic faith on his music.

Despite the expansion of scholarship on Elgar and his music, comparatively little attention has been paid to *The Music Makers* and its specific historical context or to the formal analysis of its score and to related performance practice. There are approximately only ten detailed articles or expanded sections in monographs that focus specifically on the work, the most valuable of which are the more recent articles by Aidan Thomson, Douglas Hunt, Diana McVeagh, and Martin Bird, which bring much focus on the form, key structure, and analysis of Elgar's self-quoting. However, as yet there has been little analysis of the pedagogical issues that *The Music Makers* poses for choral and orchestral performance practice nor suggestions for concrete ways to address these. Such an analysis would surely make the work more accessible to conductors.

This study will include thoughts derived from Elgar's original manuscript score of *The Music Makers*. This is held in the Cadbury Library of the University of Birmingham where Elgar briefly taught, and most of his additional personal markings have already been added to the Elgar Complete Edition. A few sketches that found their way into the cantata are also housed at the Bodleian Library in Oxford, England. Understanding of Elgar's own performance practice has been aided not only by access to Elgar's own recordings with The Gramophone Company in general, but also by documents such as Norman Del Mar's *Conducting Elgar*, Robert Anderson's *Elgar in manuscript* and *Elgar's Interpretations* by Edgar Day. Further illumination on performance practice

strategy is offered by the live recordings of Elgar himself conducting *The Music Makers* in 1927, which can be compared to later recordings of the work conducted by Adrian Boult, who worked with Elgar, and more recently a recording by conductor Mark Elder and the Hallé Orchestra which specializes in the duplication of period practices of early twentieth century music. By referencing performance practice resources such as Rory Boyle's *Interpreting Elgar: A Conductor's Thoughts*, issues of orchestral size, stage placement, instrument types, dynamics and balance and more will be addressed. Adding to this performance practice review will be sources that may not directly refer to *The Music Makers*, but whose ideas may tangentially be applied to the work by extension of their use in Elgar or other period orchestral and choral performances of the day.

A Brief Elgar Biography

Edward Elgar (1857-1934), the third of six children, was born to Catholic parents William, a musician and owner of a Worcester music shop, and Mary a homemaker. Born in a home in Lower Broadheath⁵ the family moved back to a working-class neighborhood of Worcester not long after to be closer to the family business. Though perhaps mainly self-imposed, Edward's feelings of inadequacy which would haunt him throughout his life began at an early age. David

⁵ Now called the Edward Elgar Birthplace and Research Center, also called "The Firs".

Cannadine succinctly summarizes Elgar's feelings of inadequacy into three facets:

The first... was that of the artist as a "a skillful man": the jobbing practitioner of a serious but essentially prosaic craft which enabled him to turn an honest penny and even to earn a decent living, but which had nothing to do with genius or greatness or God... The second identity ...was that of the artist as a worldly, courtly, established figure: the client of kings, princes and potentates, who was acclaimed, rewarded and honoured by powerful rulers, grateful patrons and, in later times, by an appreciative state... The third was the image of the artist as the isolated, suffering, misunderstood hero, possessed of God – given insights denied a lesser, comfortable, conformist mortals – an image originally deriving from the Renaissance, but more recently embodied in the romantic movement...⁶

Elgar felt defined by limitations, both real and imagined, partly due to his family's Catholic denomination in a mostly Anglican country and to his social status, being born into a working-class society. That some of this was not imaginary on Elgar's part is revealed by fellow composer Charles Villiers Stanford's somewhat disparaging comment:

Cut off from his contemporaries by the circumstances of his religion and his want of regular academic training, he was lucky enough to enter the field and find the preliminary plowing already done.⁷

⁶ David Cannadine "Orchestrating His Own Life: Sir Edward Elgar as an Historical Personality", in *Elgar, an anniversary portrait*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (London: Continuum, 2007), 1.

⁷ Described thusly in Charles Villiers Stanford's *History of Music*, published in 1917.

While Stanford's statement may partly have been a manifestation of the jealousy of a "less talented" colleague, it does underline the "anti-Catholicism which was still part of English life at the time."⁸

Although limited by a lack of options for music teachers, Elgar nonetheless showed an affinity for instrumental music, excelling on the piano and violin early on, and later embracing the organ and bassoon as well.⁹ These would greatly aid him in his future career as a composer and would influence his compositional style. Though his parents attempted to guide Edward into being a lawyer (much like the parents of his musical inspiration Schumann did) he too made it clear that this was not a direction in which he wanted to go, so he began instead to work in his father's music shop. While there, access to music of all genres, styles and nationalities were available to him and no doubt accounted for the early breadth of musical knowledge that influenced him. Edward's mother, though not a musician, whetted his appetite for fine literature by introducing him to poetry of largely English and German writers, and to sacred and secular genres in literature.

As a young child, Elgar desired to go to Leipzig to study at the Hochschule that Mendelssohn had founded, but due to family financial limitations this dream did not come to fruition. As a mostly self-taught or "autodidact"¹⁰ composer, and without access to formal composition teachers available at the more prestigious

⁸ Stephen Hough "Elgar the Catholic", in *Elgar, an anniversary portrait*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (London: Continuum, 2007), 66.

⁹ Like many things in his life, it appears bassoon was also self-taught.

¹⁰ Byron Adams, *Edward Elgar and His World* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), 369.

universities, Elgar, a voracious reader, instead made use of treatises such as Anton Reicha's orchestral primer and Ebenezer Prout's *Instrumentation*. These and other manuals were found in his library after he died and were sometimes mentioned in discussion and interviews given by the composer over his lifetime.¹¹

Overall, his schooling did not include any formal concentration on music, so he was limited to taking lessons on violin and piano¹² and by taking advantage of opportunities to listen, play and lead music in the community. As a teen, he was appointed assistant organist at St. George's Catholic Church in Worcester where his father presided as organist for thirty-seven years. He played violin and piano at local events and began to compose regularly for a group of friends (including his brother Frank on oboe) where they debuted his “shed” music.¹³ Many of these tunes ultimately found their way into later works such as his *The Wand of Youth*. Edward also took on a variety of musical leadership positions where he gained valuable experience composing and conducting. He conducted the Worcester Glee Club, led the Worcester Instrumental Society and in 1879 became bandmaster for the County Lunatic Asylum at Potwick for which he also composed music. He continued to play in the first violin section of the orchestra of Three Choirs Festival, a position which allowed him not only to learn a great deal about orchestration, but also exposed him to the music of continental

¹¹ Robert Anderson, *Elgar in manuscript* (Portland, OR: Amadeus Press, 1990), 5.

¹² For a time with the renowned violinist Adolphe Pollitzer in London.

¹³ Robert Anderson, *Elgar*, Master Musicians Series (London: Dent, 1993), 11.

composers who often came and conducted their newest works at this and other English choral festivals.

On May 8, 1889, at the age of thirty-one, Elgar married Carol Alice Roberts, a woman nine-years his senior. The daughter of a Major-General in the British Army earlier posted in India, Alice (as she was called) was respected for her artistic ability as a poet and as a talented pianist.¹⁴ Both talents would inspire and benefit Elgar during his many years of marriage and her organizational skills would prove invaluable to him both as a composer and chronicler of his life.¹⁵ Considered to have married beneath her station, Alice's family was not in favor of this union. Edward's parents were also concerned due to the separation in age. A quiet, low-key wedding was held, after which Alice converted to Catholicism, and one year later their one and only child Carice was born.¹⁶

Though not content to do so, Elgar continued to hold on to the aforementioned jobs, supplementing his income with the private teaching of violin and piano, despite never aspiring to be a teacher. He taught at The Mount school for girls under the headmistress-ship of Rosa Burley who would become a close and respected family friend.¹⁷ Always with an eye towards becoming a full-time

¹⁴ Edward set a number of Alice's poems to music, including *In Haven* (Capri) in his *Sea-Pictures*.

¹⁵ Alice was instrumental in writing out the basic layout of his scores (such as staves, measure numbers, instrumentation, etc.) whilst Edward was composing and orchestrating.

¹⁶ A conflation of the beginning of Alice's two first names Carol and Alice. Carice also was ultimately responsible for the creation of the Edward Elgar Birthplace Museum and Research Center in Lower Broadheath.

¹⁷ An interesting book by Ms. Burley, written in 1972, is a telling source for a personal look at Elgar as a younger man with a unique personality. Rosa Burley

composer, Elgar was quick to look for ways in which to support his family and to further his compositional career. In time they moved to London, the first of an extraordinary number of moves during their marriage, and he eventually found ways to let go of teaching.

Though Elgar always maintained certain feelings of inadequacy, over the course of many decades as his stature as a composer grew, many high honors were bestowed upon him. Of special note, he was knighted in 1904 and in 1911 received the Order of Merit from King Edward VII, with whom Elgar became personally familiar. Among his academic honors was the reception of multiple honorary doctorates, including ones from Cambridge and Yale universities. One honor, which he ultimately regretted accepting, was the November 1904 title whereby he became the first Professor of Music at the University of Birmingham. Though Elgar would regularly bemoan the fact that he was not an “academic” like his fellow contemporary composers Hubert Parry and Charles Villiers Stanford, his feelings of discomfort stemmed from a sense of not being worthy due to his humble working-class beginnings and due to the informal approach to his musical training.¹⁸ This professorship, though only for a limited three-year period, proved to be controversial and only further added to his feelings of inadequacy and of generally being misunderstood.¹⁹

and Frank Carruthers, *Edward Elgar: The Record of a Friendship* (London: Barry and Jenkins, 1972).

¹⁸ Probably best known today for their choral works “I Was Glad” and “Beati quorum via” respectively, both men would assist Elgar in gaining recognition earlier in his career. Later ill will between Elgar and Stanford is well documented.

¹⁹ Several of Elgar’s lectures contained stances on music that were considered problematic.

Though Alice kept the composer focused through her constant support and gentle coaxing through the years, Elgar also found time to enjoy hobbies that occasionally took him away from important composition jobs that needed to be completed. A lover of dogs, he was also often lured away from his work by his canine companions in addition to the joys of biking and billiards.²⁰ These diversions became even more of a hurdle in the years after Alice died in 1920, but this only partly explains his limited output during the last fourteen years of his life.

Elgar's Personality and Maladies

Through review of Edward and Alice's diaries and letters, it is obvious that Elgar was a complicated man. Though on one hand, a man who appeared confident and not afraid to express himself, he was also an overly sensitive soul who could be terribly shy and quite insecure.²¹ His shyness often presented itself as disinterest or even boredom. According to Alice, he had considered the idea of suicide on multiple occasions.²²

²⁰ Being an inquisitive person and a lover of science, Elgar often spent time in his lab conducting chemistry experiments. He even held a copyright for his "new Sulphuretted Hydrogen Machine." Leopold May, "The Lesser Known Chemist Composers, Past and Present," *The Catholic University of America*, Vol. 33, No. 1, http://www.scs.illinois.edu/~mainzv/HIST/bulletin_open_access/v33-1/v33-1%20p35-43.pdf (2008), accessed 17 January 2018.

²¹ Particularly when feeling insecure, his often-brusque attitude got him into trouble on multiple occasions, both personally and professionally.

²² A suicide mention as related to critic Earnest Newman: "I remember distinctly a dinner at Rodewald's at which Mrs Elgar tactfully steered the conversation away from the topic of suicide that had suddenly arisen; she whispered to me that Edward was always talking of making an end to himself." Christopher Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work; a study of his creative processes as seen*

The feelings of rejection and often rather self-indulgent helplessness grew rather than diminished with his fame. Throughout his life he used to reiterate the cry that nobody understood or wanted his music, which for much of the time was patently untrue. Composing, though, is an exhausting mental process and Elgar undoubtedly used his friends to share the emotional strain that was in an inevitable part of his work.²³

Over the course of his lifetime he was diagnosed with an array of chronic illnesses, including Menière's disease in 1912, however, these are now considered to likely have been mostly psychosomatic in nature.²⁴ Most of his maladies seemed to have occurred when he was particularly emotionally fragile, unsure about a composition he was working on or how a debut had been received. For him, the role of composer was a revered one. With his increasing popularity, which was accompanied by ever-enlarged public expectations, the bar would be set higher and higher and provide Elgar even more reason for angst and self-doubt. This trend only grew worse the more successful he became.²⁵

Critic Ernest Newman, who also wrote detailed program notes for several of Elgar's choral works, visited Elgar and later summed up these gloomy and foreboding sides of his character

He gave me the impression of an exceptionally nervous, self-divided and secretly unhappy man; in the light of all we came to know of him in later life I can see now that he was at this time

through his sketches and proof corrections, Vol. 1 (Ph.D. Diss., Kings College London, 1978), 147.

²³ Simon Mundy, *Elgar: his life and times* (Kent: Midas Books, 1980), 12.

²⁴ The diagnosis of Menière's disease was likely inaccurate. A doctor consulted by Moore suggests said that it might have been "chronic tonsillitis in fearful combination with worry and profound unhappiness about himself and the changing world." Jerrold Northrup Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life* (Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1999), 698.

rather bewildered and nervous at the half-realisation that his days of spiritual privacy - always so dear to him - were probably coming to an end; while no doubt gratified by his rapidly growing fame, he was in his heart of hearts afraid of the future.²⁶

Elgar himself also wrote in his letters quite vividly about some of these feelings.

Elgar's Compositional History

Elgar's passion for composition began at an early age. In addition to the afore-mentioned "shed" compositions, he also made a practice of taking works by well-known composers like Beethoven and Mozart and re-arranging and orchestrating them to learn more about the art of writing for instruments.²⁷

The Three Choirs Festival, which took place at the end of each summer in rotation in Worcester, Hereford and Gloucester, provided many opportunities for Elgar to witness other composers and conductors introduce their music. Though repertoire tended to be comprised of the standard Mendelssohn, Handel and Gounod oratorios, the festivals always included some contemporary works by living composers. In 1884, Elgar played violin under Dvořák, who conducted his own Symphony #6, op. 60 and *Stabat Mater*, op. 58 and was greatly moved by the melodious nature of the melodies and fine orchestrations.²⁸ In addition to Dvořák, music by German composers Brahms, Schumann and Richard Strauss

²⁶ *The Sunday Times*. 30 October 1915. Cited in Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 147.

²⁷ In 1873 and 1880 respectively, Elgar took works by Beethoven (Symphonies 5, 7, 9) creating a "new" *Credo* setting and a work by Mozart (*Allegro* movement of the *Violin Sonata* in F Major, K547) creating a setting of the *Gloria* text.

²⁸ Anderson, *Elgar*, 15.

were personal favorites and their styles inspired his own compositions. The festivals would eventually provide opportunities for Elgar to promote his early works and later would become a regular source of paid new commissions which resulted in some of his most well-known compositions.

Elgar's passion for the music of other composers, particularly those from the European mainland, was strong. He not only voraciously consumed scores by composers who visited the festival circuit, but he also took advantage of opportunities to go to Italy, France, and especially Germany. Accompanied by his wife, and often in the company of other friends of the family who supported him, he developed a strong connection to the music of Richard Wagner and Richard Strauss. Over the years, multiple holiday visits to Bavaria and Bayreuth exposed him to performances of Wagner's operas. This exposure further cemented the concept of the leitmotif, which he began to incorporate into his own music more deliberately (though he did purport that he had learned of this concept much earlier).²⁹ His use of the leitmotif, which will be elaborated below, would come to be strongly identified as a mainstay of both his own orchestral and choral music, allowing him to utilize themes that the listener could identify as characters, emotions and concepts.

²⁹ Elgar was quoted saying: "I became acquainted with the representative-theme long before I had ever heard a note of Wagner, or had seen one of his scores. My first acquaintance with the light-motive was derived in my boyhood and from Mendelssohn's *Elijah* and the system elaborated from that, as my early unpublished things show." *The Musical Times*, October 1900,

Though Elgar is considered to have communicated a certain “Englishness” in his music,³⁰ he, unlike many of his colleagues such as Ralph Vaughan Williams and John Ireland, was not at all interested in the use of folk songs which were so effectively captured in their music. In fact, Elgar felt little kinship with English composers of the past five centuries.³¹ His goal was ever to be looking forward.

The earliest compositions that brought him into the limelight were works for orchestra, like his concert overture *Froissart* (1890) and *Imperial March* (1897), and his early choral cantatas, *The Black Knight*³² (1893) based on a German poem by Uhland and translated by Longfellow and *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* (1896) also with text by Longfellow. These four works, though differing in topic, are strong examples representative of the first of his three compositional phases.³³ Imperialist in nature and written during the reign of Queen Victoria (1819-1901), these works were clearly influenced by his desire to be popularly accepted as a composer and were ones that resonated strongly with the public. His approach to setting these cantatas was clearly inspired by those

³⁰ For a very thought-provoking discussion of this “Englishness” and Elgar’s sense of nostalgia, see Matthew Riley, *Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007).

³¹ William Reed has testified, the composer “had no great affection for the Elizabethan composers ... He liked Purcell, but would not join in the furore about Tudor music that arose amongst a certain set of young composers ... He would not rave about folk-tunes ... he held that the business of a composer is to compose, not to copy.” William Reed *Introduction* in *Edward Elgar and His World*, ed. Byron Adams, (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2007), xvi-xvii.

³² Opus numbers for all choral works can be found in Appendix A.

³³ His second phase is considered to have begun around 1904 and ended around 1914. Most musicologists consider this to be his early modernist phase.

written by other English composers that he would have heard and played at the choral festivals, but they also point towards a newer and more modernist style that would soon become his hallmark. In general, this second style made use of techniques more closely aligned to those of Wagner, particularly in his use of the leitmotif.

In 1899, Elgar was commissioned by the Birmingham Festival to write a new choral oratorio. Immediately following the rave reviews of his recently debuted op. 36 "*Enigma*" *Variations*, he chose to set Cardinal John Henry Newman's text *The Dream of Gerontius*. Alice and Edward had earlier received a copy of this poem as a wedding gift.³⁴ It was ultimately this sizeable second oratorio that garnered him the most praise both in England and on the mainland. Despite its rocky debut, within the first few years *The Dream of Gerontius* had been performed over one hundred times, both in English and German, and under the batons of well-known conductors like Julius Butts in Düsseldorf and Walter Damrosch in New York City.

This second oratorio, which makes regular use of the leitmotif, is still considered to be his strongest and most memorable. In this and other works of this period, Elgar made use of a variety of types of musical themes (or musical motives) which acted as "reminiscence" themes. Examples of these leitmotiven included the "light" theme used in *The Light of Life* which was used during theological moments of the drama, the motifs of "despair" and "judgment" used

³⁴ Interestingly, Dvořák had also previously considered setting this poem as an oratorio for the same festival but had abandoned the idea as perhaps being too Catholic. Anderson, *Elgar*, 211.

as emotion or action themes in *The Dream of Gerontius* and finally the "silver pieces" leitmotif iterated when attention was redirected to the meaningful act of Judas and its implications in *The Apostles*. Though sometimes hidden in the orchestration, these themes, which at times were combined or merged with other themes, could convey a specific sentiment or concept to the listener and created a depth of characterization throughout the work.³⁵

Though it was his *The Dream of Gerontius* that introduced him to a broader public, the years between 1904-1913 would usher in his second, and so called "modernist" phase, which is considered by most contemporary writers to be the most successful years of his composing life. This period not only saw the creation of some of Elgar's most beloved compositions, including his Symphony #1, op. 55, *Violin Concerto*, op.61 and *Falstaff*, op. 68, but the mood of his music became less generally grand and more introspective. It is to this period that *The Music Makers* belongs.

After this "modernist" period his compositional style took a turn from the concert hall to the theatre and then back again. Some scholars, such as Harper-Scott, suggest that this modernist style "failed" due to lack of public reception of his new music and due to death of his wife Alice, who had such an impact on him and his compositions of that period. Others, though, suggest it was "rather in

³⁵ According to August Jaeger, Elgar knew "what it was like for reminiscence themes to enter, one right after another, or even the same time as others, delivering powerful juxtapositions of meaning that the listener must work to absorb. Patrick McCreless, "Elgar and theories of chromaticism", in *Elgar Studies*, eds. J.P.E. Harper-Scott, Julian Rushton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 43.

response to the new embraces by England of music by composers like Schoenberg, and Stravinsky.”³⁶ ³⁷ Perhaps both are true. Looking at his third phase, Harper-Scott suggests that it is

...no less 'modern' than the second, but certainly seems more backward-looking. If this was to be his 'late style', there would be ample precedent for atavism; but the other side of 'the late style' in such classic exemplars as Beethoven is that at the same time as the music looks backwards in its language, it looks forwards in its form, technique, or philosophy, perhaps in a way that bewilders contemporary audiences.³⁸

Like Beethoven, in some ways Elgar appears to have been writing more for himself than for his audiences. Whether intended or not, the loss of audience support ultimately worked against his strong need for popular approval.

The Composer's Approach to Composition

Elgar's initial writing style reflects those of his fellow countrymen whose music he would regularly have heard at the festivals. Though his approach to writing music would evolve a bit over time, his use of sketches would remain a constant. Elgar made perpetual use of such books in which he would regularly jot down either sketches of music for a specific composition which he was then

³⁶ J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *Elgar: An extraordinary life* (London: Associated Board of the Royal Schools of Music, 2007), 109.

³⁷ “Elgar's last modernist work, *Falstaff*, was premiered in 1913, the same year as *Guerrelieder*, and its reception was as cool as Schoenberg's was warm.” J. P. E. Harper-Scott, *Edward Elgar, modernist* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2006), 20.

³⁸ Harper-Scott, *Elgar: An extraordinary life*, 110.

composing or simply listing random ideas that would come to him as he was traveling or dreaming.³⁹ Throughout his career it was not unusual for him to frequently go back to even the oldest of sketch books to retrieve ideas for a new piece he was then composing.⁴⁰ Examination of these sketch books shows that he often wrote in a three-part texture, usually comprised of a melody on top, a filled in harmony in the middle voice and then a short-hand use of a figured bass style numeration, a concept that he gleaned and adopted from the theoretical treatises and manuals he had perused as a child.⁴¹ Elgar's contact with figured bass influenced his particularly exuberant bass lines "which establish a strong rhythmic polarity between melody and bass, as is often shown clearly in his first sketches."⁴² Elgar's approach to composing, by his own admission, tended to be based more on the inspiration of the moment whereby he would borrow and or compose themes on which he would then elaborate harmonically and explore the themes using augmentation, inversion and other variations.⁴³

Elgar had an affinity for the music of nineteenth-century Germanic composers. Though primarily a diatonic composer, Elgar, like Wagner, later

³⁹ There are primarily three sets of sketch books in which Elgar wrote his ideas and are mostly housed in the British Library.

⁴⁰ When he finally did use one of his sketched fragments in a new work, he would mark "K" over that section, a consistent short-hand meaning "koppid" or copied. Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 21.

⁴¹ It is assumed that he elaborated on information gleaned from studying Leopold Mozart's *A Treatise on The Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing*.

⁴² *Ibid.*, 8.

⁴³ Gerald Neufeld, "Structure, Symbolism, and Thematic Transformation in Edward Elgar's "The Dream of Gerontius"." *The Choral Journal*, XXXVI/8 (March 1996), 13.

made imaginative use of chromaticism to create sounds that evoked certain moods. As Moore notes, “the contrast of diatonic and chromatic was to be used throughout Edward’s creative life as a paradigm of good and evil, hope and doubt.”⁴⁴ In addition to his use of chromaticism, Elgar also played with the use of contrasting rhythms, causing different voices to be set in opposition to one another, which created a texture that left the time signature feeling ambiguous and even unsettling. He also made use of chromatic third relations (using root progressions by thirds instead of by the fifth), harmonic substitutions (by using a substituted chord for an anticipated harmonic function) and ambiguous sonorities.⁴⁵

Elgar’s music is comprised of long-phrased melodies often containing regular use of repetitive sequences, composed at an interval of a fourth or fifth, that create melodies that often arch upwards and downwards quite quickly and dramatically. In much of his later music “an accelerating pace would ally itself with sequential repetition to shape its melody.”⁴⁶ His phrase structures tend to be periodic and the harmonic rhythm relatively regular. He often also juxtaposes the use of more chromatic sections to creatively “slide” from one key into another, creating an “otherworldly” quality. This is sometimes accomplished by employing sequences at the 4th, 5th or by using a sequence of whole tones.⁴⁷

⁴⁴ Moore, *Edward Elgar: a creative life*, 163.

⁴⁵ Higo Henrique Rodrigues, *Edward Elgar’s Extended Tonal Procedures—An Inquiry into Elgar’s Chromatic Realm* (Ph.D. Diss., University of Kentucky, 2014), 5.

⁴⁶ Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 41.

⁴⁷ Peter Neufeld, *A conductor’s analysis of Edgar Elgar’s “The Dream of Gerontius.”* (D.M.A. Diss., University of Iowa, 1990), 94.

Though immersed in a more traditional harmonic framework, Elgar became quite creative with his use of keys and the ways in which he segued from one to another. It was not unusual for him to employ the use of “incompletely established keys in quick succession” and to even make use of two primary key areas at one time. By utilizing the "Neapolitan" chord he also juxtaposed keys that were related by a semi-tone.⁴⁸ Harper-Scott also astutely refers to Elgar utilizing the concept of one key “immuring” or nestling itself in another at the same time.⁴⁹

In addition to the use of the leitmotif, Elgar’s harmonies also grew to include other modernist techniques often associated with Wagner, such as the heavy use of appoggiaturas, daring enharmonic reinterpretations of scale-degree functions, and suspensions by which Elgar enhanced the chromatic tendencies of the harmonies. Elgar was fond of creating a sound that was less diatonically grounded. This was sometimes accomplished using first inversion chords, often with the root pitch only being implied through surrounding contexts. As Banfield puts it “when a note is missing from a chord, the sense of tonal function is made ambiguous, and the music instead feels modal - archaic and unconstrained.”⁵⁰ Though chromaticism can be found regularly in the music of his second and third compositional phases “...his chromaticism never undermines the overall

⁴⁸ Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 34.

⁴⁹ Harper – Scott, *Edward Elgar, modernist*, 14.

⁵⁰ Stephen Banfield, “Elgar's Counterpoint. Three of a Kind,” *The Musical Times*, CXL/1867 (Summer, 1999), 36.

structure and stability of a work; areas of considerable chromaticism are kept within the gravitational field of their home keys.”⁵¹

Elgar often used specific keys to reflect specific moods. Byron Adams notes that Elgar owned a copy of Ernst Pauer's *Vom Musikalisch-Schönen* (On the beautiful in music) which delineates how various music keys evoke certain moods such as innocence (C major) sadness (C minor) dreamy melancholy (G minor), and so forth.⁵² Elgar was particularly fond of the key of E-flat minor, which he used quite frequently to evoke the mood of loss or, as in some of his oratorios, it appears at important theological and structural points.⁵³ His beloved, instantly recognizable and elegiac “Nimrod” theme is in this key in the “*Enigma*” *Variations* and later *The Music Makers*.

Elgar’s ability to orchestrate was no doubt his greatest strength as a composer. His knowledge of instruments, their ranges, melodic potential and ability to convey certain emotions effectively through timbre, dynamics and range allowed him to compose music that expressively spoke to the listener. His early training as an organist likely also influenced his orchestrations, with the layering of thick textures and his embracing of extreme ranges and dynamics. William Reed, friend and violinist from the London Symphony Orchestra, stated that

⁵¹ Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 226.

⁵² Printed in 1876 by Elgar’s primary publisher Novello. Adams, *Edward Elgar and His World*, 79.

⁵³ Charles McGuire, *Elgar's Oratorios: the creation of an epic narrative* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 2002), 124.

Elgar "...wrote parts that were particularly well-suited to the instruments and very playable."⁵⁴

Though much of Elgar's output was of a choral nature, both a cappella and with orchestral accompaniment, his choral writing was often considered inferior to the strengths of his purely orchestral writing. This was due in part to his approach in setting texts to music. For instance, regarding his *Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf* score, Kent suggests that problems were encountered whenever he superimposed a vocal line above or to fit in with an instrumental part that already existed. Such problems made even more acute the problem of setting indifferent and doggerel poetry "with just note and accent."⁵⁵

Elgar tended to begin with pre-existing melodic fragments not written for the new score, which he would then string together to form a musical phrase. Through this process, his approach to composition often did not begin with a focus on the nature of the text's natural word stress. To begin with, his interpretation of the text's meaning or emotion would often affect his choice of melody. The setting of the words themselves, however, frequently did not fit the natural word stress or meter of the music. It is not uncommon for the textual phrasing to appear disjointed or even stilted. However, Neufeld suggests that Elgar deliberately set the rhythm of particular words in contrast to their accompaniments in order to produce the word's "speech-like rhythm", shortening and lengthening syllables for "dramatic effect."⁵⁶ Indeed, this hypothesis would

⁵⁴ Neufeld, *A conductor's analysis*, 196.

⁵⁵ Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 73.

⁵⁶ Neufeld, *A conductor's analysis*, 182.

seem to be supported by Elgar's own statement: "I hold that short syllables may be sustained occasionally for the sake of effect: just as an actor does..."⁵⁷

However, this misunderstands the context of Elgar's words, which were actually in reference to the nature of performance practice rather than his text setting.

Elgar would later abandon the earlier "four-square"⁵⁸ approach of composers like Mendelssohn and later English romantic composers and adopt an approach that would honor the life of the text and would naturally bring forward the intended inner emotion, as noted by his contemporary Daniel Mason.

What is meant is simply that sing-song balance of short phrases is often a symptom of superficial feeling, and that, per contra, elastic, vigorous, and imaginative rhythms are a constant result, and therefore a reliable evidence, of the emotional ardor that makes a piece of music live. For in every-thing Elgar writes there is the preoccupation with inner feeling which we find in such a composer as Schumann, but from which most of our contemporaries have turned away.⁵⁹

These strengths and weaknesses found in Elgar's writing are present in *The Music Makers* and give the work moments of both innocence and complexity. Their ultimate success, or lack thereof, will become clearer in later chapters.

⁵⁷ Ibid.

⁵⁸ Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 221.

⁵⁹ Daniel Gregory Mason, "A Study of Elgar." *The Musical Quarterly* III/2 (April 1917), 296.

CHAPTER II

THE HISTORY AND TEXT OF THE MUSIC MAKERS

The Commissioning and Composition

The earliest mention of *The Music Makers* appears in 1904, when Elgar told the press that he was "... [at] present engaged in writing music for chorus and orchestra to [Arthur] O'Shaughnessy's ode ... "We are *The Music Makers*"."

⁶⁰ Otherwise, all that was known for a time was that "there would be an important part for mezzo soloist."⁶¹ While there did not appear to be much energy behind the project for the next three years, the sketchbooks indicate that many of the original themes written specifically for *The Music Makers* were composed during this period.⁶² The Birmingham Festival commissioned Elgar to write the work for its 1912 festival. In July of 1907, after that year's Gloucester festival, Elgar wrote the publishers of O'Shaughnessy's poems Chatto & Windus for formal permission to set "Ode."⁶³

⁶⁰ From the Daily News March 25, 1904 in an interview with E. A. Baughan. Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 438.

⁶¹ Mentioned to critic Robin Legge by Elgar. Diana McVeagh, *Edward Elgar: His Life and His Music* (London: Dent, 1955), 106.

⁶² Pamela Willetts, "The Elgar Sketch Books," *The British Library Journal* XI/1 (Spring 1985), 40-44.

⁶³ Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 518.

The period between 1907 and 1911 saw the composition of several large works such as op. 63 Elgar's Symphony #2, his masque op. 66 *The Crown of India* and the op. 61 *Violin Concerto*. Though the quality of these works was generally strong, Elgar witnessed the size of the crowds attending his concert performances dwindling. General audience excitement over his new works was also waning. As he noted after the debut of his Symphony #2, "the audience just sat there like a bunch of stuffed pigs."⁶⁴ Some critics speculate that the personal themes of the work were ones that Elgar's public could not embrace during a time already filled with such worldly concern and fear. Moore writes

In the decade since the beginning of the new century, success itself had seemed to divide Edward from his self-doubt. Now the lack of response the Symphony #2 premiere raised all his old insecurity in an instant. And side by side with personal fear there began to grow a new fear of the future: that he and his music would find less and less understanding in the evolving world.⁶⁵

Kennedy aptly summed it up as well: "The "dreamer of dreams" was a deeply divided, unhappy man. He had lost his faith in God and now he had no faith in man's redemption."⁶⁶

⁶⁴ Symphony #2 had a lukewarm reception at its debut, partially due to the war and the English need for uplifting and more patriotic fare. The themes tended to be more "elegiac" in nature. Mundy, *Elgar: his life and times*, 82.

⁶⁵ Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 621.

⁶⁶ Though born into the Catholic faith and having strong religious beliefs even during the writing of his sacred oratorios between 1900 and 1906, Elgar's faith was diminished toward the end of the first decade. Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar*, 255.

Elgar's mindset was already evident the year before his "Ode" debut.

Concern over his future and legacy were escalating. Elgar wrote to publisher and agent Alfred Littleton on June 30, 1911

I have never deceived myself as to my true commercial value & see that everything of mine, as I have often said, dies a natural death; – if you look at the accounts you will see the new thing of mine "lasts" about a year & then dies & is buried in the mass of English music; under these inevitable circumstances it seems to me that the royalty system we adopted in 1904 cannot really be satisfactory to either of us. I am now well on in years & have to consider a "move" & make a new home – under the depressing state of my music I have to reconsider this entirely & shall probably go abroad or to a cottage in the country & leave the musical world entirely.⁶⁷

Elgar's health issues appeared to be escalating and the noises in his ears that were prevalent, particularly at times of extreme stress, were becoming more debilitating. It appears that this ailment prevented him from composing for a period thus turning his attention away from *The Music Makers*.⁶⁸ As Anderson notes

His sketchbook researches were more comprehensive than usual, and the Ode absorbed ideas originally intended for much earlier works. On 29 May Elgar was even wondering about the wind quintets of his novitiate and wrote about them to Hubert Leicester: "I wonder whether you would lend me the old Shed-books: I should very much like to see some of the old things & perhaps copy some of them."⁶⁹

⁶⁷ Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 623.

⁶⁸ Elgar wrote the entire score in six weeks, with another three to orchestrate it. This information is close, but dates in several other locations vary by a few weeks or so. From a Dr. Sanford Terry essay written on blank pages of a *The Music Makers* score given to him by Elgar on September 16, 1912 "before 'twas heard."

⁶⁹ It appears in the end that no themes from these Shed-books made their way into *The Music Makers*. Anderson, *Elgar*, 107.

In addition to his health issues, outside factors, including the deaths of close friends and colleagues affected him emotionally and contributed to the continuing feelings of anguish that he had already alluded to in his Symphony #2.⁷⁰ The sinking of the Titanic in April 1912, with its huge loss of life, and the looming concern over approaching world war further propelled Elgar into a period of depression. In this mindset, Elgar wrote a work that appears even more private. As Dennison notes

By this time the spiritual optimism which had prevailed in his music of the first decade of the century was beginning to yield to an autumnal introspection.⁷¹

Hoping to gain support and encouragement, Elgar showed parts of the vocal score to Alice Stuart Wortley (a.k.a. Windflower⁷²) with whom he had a very close relationship and who had been a true source of inspiration while composing his well-received Symphony #1 (1908)⁷³ and Violin Concerto (1910). Elgar completed the vocal score on July 18. The next day, in a mixture of self-doubt and joy, he wrote to her expressing the following

Yesterday was the usual awful day which inevitably occurs when I have completed a work: it has always been so: but this time I promised myself 'a day!' ...I wandered alone on to the heath - it was bitterly cold - I wrapped myself in a thick overcoat & sat for two minutes, tears streaming out of my cold eyes and loathed the world,

⁷⁰ Within a three-year period leading up to the *The Music Makers* debut close Elgar friend Julia Worthington was diagnosed with cancer and the following friends and acquaintances died; Canon Gorton, Pietro D'Alba, King Edward VII, and Professor Sanford.

⁷¹ Peter Dennison, "Elgar and Wagner," *Music & Letters* LXVII/2 (April 1985), 106.

⁷² Edward Elgar's name for the other Alice in his life and with whom he had a close relationship.

⁷³ In contrast to *The Music Makers*, there were an unprecedented over one hundred performances within the year following its debut.

- came back to the house - empty & cold - how I hated having written anything: so I wandered out again & shivered & longed to destroy the work of my hands - all wasted. - & this was to have been the one real day in my artistic life - sympathy at the end of work. "World losers & world-forsakers for ever & ever" How true it is.⁷⁴

Letters and diary accounts suggest that these feelings were not uncommon after other works were completed. Interestingly, in the same letter, he also suggests that his feelings towards these newer works were of pride and satisfaction

I have written out my soul in the Concerto, Symphony #2, the Ode & you know my vitality seems in them now - & I am happy it is so - in these *three* works I have shown myself.⁷⁵

Later, in Bayreuth, Alice Stuart Wortley took a set of the finished vocal proofs to show Hans Richter who had conducted the debuts of several well received Elgar works.⁷⁶ The orchestrations would be completed soon after, on August 20, 1912, the day on which his close colleague and supporter, Canon Gorton, died.⁷⁷ ⁷⁸ On the final page of the full score, Elgar placed the same Tasso quotation that he had already used at the end of the "*Enigma*" Variations: "*Bramo assai, poco spero, nulla chieggio*", translated as "I long for much, I hope for little, I ask for nothing." In thanks, Elgar dedicated the piece to his "friend Nicholas Kilburn", an

⁷⁴ The final line of this quote is taken from the O'Shaughnessy poem. Letter to Alice Stuart Wortley, 19 July 1912, Elgar Birthplace Museum letter 7676.

⁷⁵ "Three works" refers to the Symphony #1, *Violin Concerto* and *The Music Makers*. Anderson, *Elgar*, 108.

⁷⁶ Hans Richter had conducted the successful 1899 debut of the "*Enigma*" Variations and also was the dedicatee of the Symphony #1 and conducted its debut with the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester, England. Anderson, *Elgar*, 107.

⁷⁷ 20 August 1912.

⁷⁸ Canon Gorton was a good friend of Elgar's, and, as a priest, gave him helpful advice on the compilation of the Apostles and Kingdom libretti. Percy Marshall Young, *Elgar O. M.: a study of a musician* (London: Collins 1955), 162.

amateur conductor and pump maker by trade. Kilburn would be a lifelong friend and unwavering supporter of Elgar who greatly aided in the proliferation of his music, particularly within the choral societies and orchestras of northern England.

The Premiere and the Response

The Music Makers was debuted at the Birmingham Festival on October 1, 1912, with Muriel Foster as soloist.⁷⁹ At the same concert, the audience also heard the English debut of Jean Sibelius' *Symphony #4* conducted by the composer.

Many influential people were in attendance including composer Frederick Delius. Reviews of the concert were mixed. Following the debut Delius wrote to his wife Jelka

Elgar's work is not very interesting - and very noisy - The chorus treated in the old way and heavily orchestrated - It did not interest me - Sibelius interested me much more - He is trying to do something new & has a fine feeling for nature & he is also unconventional.⁸⁰

Years after the 1912 debut Delius reiterated "I didn't care for it - it was too rowdy and commonplace."⁸¹ Composer Philip Heseltine, better known as

⁷⁹ The Birmingham Festival never recovered after the war: 1912 was the last year of that institution as choirs were generally decimated by the war. The focus of the festival in the years immediately previous to 1910 had already begun to turn from Handel and the choral tradition more towards instrumental music. McGuire, *Elgar's Oratorios*, 299.

⁸⁰ Lionel Carley ed., *Delius: A Life in Letters 1909-1934* (Brookfield, VT: Scolar, 1988), 93.

⁸¹ Christopher Redwood, "Elgar and Delius," in *An Elgar Companion*, ed. Christopher Redwood, (Derbyshire, England: Sequoia Publishing, 1982), 194.

Peter Warlock, was in the audience too. In a letter to Colin Taylor, he wrote that he

... [did] not like it at all: it all seemed to me “sound and fury signifying nothing”. The enormous number of quotations from his own works, and the obscure references to persons and things which do not in the least matter struck me as being quite absurd. Elgar himself looked ill and careworn, and conducted in a very listless manner, though at times a sort of nervous energy seemed to come over him for a minute or two. I can’t imagine how people can follow his beat.⁸²

Letters, which normally poured in after the debut of other works by Elgar, are curiously absent from the files collected by his wife Alice. Bird suggests that it is almost as if a decision was made to “not” maintain correspondence for this period.⁸³ In general, Anderson suggests that

Critical reaction was generally guarded: it was felt there was little substance in O’Shaughnessy’s claim for *The Music Makers* as harbingers of worlds to come; that Elgar’s self-quotations from some of his finest works were hardly more than a private indulgence serving merely to show up the comparative poverty of the new music.⁸⁴

⁸² Letter from Philip Heseltine to Colin Taylor, in October 1912. Barry Smith, “Elgar and Warlock,” *Elgar Society Journal* XII/1 (March 2001), 7.

⁸³ In general, letters poured in after the debut of all the major works that preceded it, but there are none for *The Music Makers*. Microfilms made in the 1960s by the Worcester Record Office show how Carice had organized the Elgar correspondence. “... each of his friends merited his own foolscap folder and, in addition, major works each had their own folder which included any letters of congratulations received.” There is no folder for *The Music Makers*, and no letters dating from the months around the first performance in the friends’ folders even though many, including...the Stuart-Wortleys and Frank Schuster, were present. It is as if a concerted effort has been made not to preserve the correspondence, as was done with the letters from Windflower to Elgar, and the correspondence between Elgar and Alice.” Martin Bird, “Reactions to *The Music Makers*,” *The Elgar Society Journal* XVII/6 (December 2012), 13.

⁸⁴ Anderson, *Elgar*, 405.

From Birmingham *The Music Makers* quickly made its way to Worcester to Brighton to Sunderland and to London's Royal Albert Hall on November 28, 1912 with Muriel Foster again as soloist with the Royal Choral Society and Orchestra conducted by Frederick Bridge.⁸⁵ Composer Hubert Parry, a regularly commissioned composer of the festival circuit and professor of composition at the Royal College of Music, heard the work in November and thought the "Ode" had "...[s]ome good bits but [was] mostly commonplace."⁸⁶ On June 9, 1913, the work was performed again in London at Queens Hall, but otherwise information about other performances within the year after the debut are harder to find.⁸⁷

Not all reviews were as harshly critical; indeed, there were others who were charmed by the work. On Christmas Eve, Kilburn wrote to Alice with excitement concerning the overall success of *The Music Makers*

... I have desired to tell him and you that my choral folk love *The Music Makers*. All three choirs alike who have now tasted it. The strong vitality and charm of the music appeals to them, & the interest is manifestly sincere and alive. 'Tis delightful to find difficulties which do not dismay, but give zest; stimulating even the stodgiest! Whole tone scales, the obliquely intertwined tune, and the quotations, all a quaintness and a delight. With what genuine fitness of feeling dear "Gerontius" themes here take their place.⁸⁸

One assumes his support was as honest and heartfelt as his letter reads. From Novello, Littleton, in a conversation with R. H. Wilson, the choir preparer for the

⁸⁵ Stewart Craggs, *Edward Elgar: a source book* (Burlington, VT: Ashgate, 1995), 88.

⁸⁶ Parry diary, 28 November 1912. Hunt, *Thoughts on The Music Makers*, 7.

⁸⁷ Young, *Elgar O. M.*, 165.

⁸⁸ Letter from Nicholas Kilburn to Alice Elgar, 24 December 1912, EBM letter 9202.

Birmingham debut, noted that Wilson and the choir both were “enchanted by the work, & that during rehearsals the Choir seemed quite excited about it.”⁸⁹

Performance and Recording History

Following these initial debuts, *The Music Makers* was performed approximately fifteen times the following year, far fewer than his earlier extended choral works had enjoyed. The following March, Kilburn conducted it again, this time in Bishop Auckland with Lady Maud Warrender as soloist. Following that performance, he wrote

My dear Sir Edward. Why I wonder have you been constantly in my mind during the last week or two? 'Tis not easy to say. Of course 'The Music Makers' & I have been at close quarters, & the best in me has gone forth in an earnest & loving endeavour to present its message, with all honours. You are aware I think that Lady Maud generously came to help us. She sang excellently well & had evidently made a serious study of the part. If perchance you meet she will tell you all abt. it. One is never entirely satisfied, yet even I may say that much was done to make clear what the music means. Especially did I strive to impress on all concerned the importance of a subdued mystical treatment of certain parts of the work. Sing & play, I said, as though you were in dreamland; then all will be well. I mean at “Our dream shall become” -, “In our dreaming & singing” - & “Oh man it must ever be”, & at the choral commencement, & ending of the work.⁹⁰

More than a week later Elgar replied with a reserved response:

Your letter of the 16th - most kind & beautiful - deserved a better answer than I was capable of writing then or am capable of making now, - so ill have I been & so sick am I still - alas! I thank you for all

⁸⁹ Letter from Henry Clayton to William Hannan, 8 November 1912, published in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Elgar and his Publishers, Letters of the Creative a Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987), 768.

⁹⁰ Letter from Nicholas Kilburn to Elgar, 16 March 1913, EBM letter 6526/6495.

the loving care of your Ode and I was happy to know you had that rare creature with you at B. Auckland. Bless her!⁹¹

Elgar's response reflects his appreciation for Kilburn's continuing promotion of *The Music Makers*, but also, keeping in mind his perpetual health "issues", suggests a sadness over how he feels it was received. Elgar's response to other kudos after other debuts was generally much more vociferous.

Though there were a fair number of performances in England, it was clear that performances abroad, particularly in Germany, which had been a consistent venue for promoting his newer works, were not to be. A planned performance of *The Music Makers* was to be performed in Dusseldorf and conducted by Elgar enthusiast Fritz Steinbach, but now, likely due to escalating English versus German tensions, this looked "sadly ironic." Other hoped for performances conducted by German conductors of note such as Butts, Steinbach and Nikisch also "came to nothing."⁹² World War I and German anti-English sensitivities by the English caused Elgar's reputation to decline with the advent of new styles (those of Stravinsky, Debussy and Schoenberg, among others) that had come to maturity. Mundy stated that "Elgar seemed a survivor from a past age."⁹³

Elgar made several trips to the United States where he conducted at choral festivals and received a number of honorary doctorate degrees. One year after the debut of *The Music Makers*, the work was performed in two well-

⁹¹ Letter from Elgar to Nicholas Kilburn, 26 March 1913, Percy Young transcription, EBM letter 6470.

⁹² Michael Kennedy, *The life of Elgar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 134.

⁹³ Mundy, *Elgar: his life and times*, 95.

received concerts. The first was a concert at Columbia University where it was performed by the University Festival Chorus under Walter Henry Hall with Mildred Potter as soloist, in which fellow Englishman Sir Arthur Sullivan's *The Golden Legend* was also performed.⁹⁴ The second offering was by the Yonkers Choral Society.⁹⁵

After World War I, the work continued to be performed, albeit infrequently. Often Elgar conducted these performances himself as parts of "all-Elgar" programs. For example, at the revived Worcester Festival in September 1921, Elgar conducted *The Music Makers* amongst other pieces.⁹⁶ In September 1932, Elgar again conducted the work along with his *Dream of Gerontius*, Symphony #1, *For the Fallen* and the *Severn Suite*.⁹⁷ In 1932 Elgar attended what was likely his last festival in Worcester. This appears to have been the final time he heard *The Music Makers* sung.⁹⁸ It was performed at least four more times at the Three Choirs Festival between the wars, then surprisingly wouldn't be performed at that event again until 1975 at Worcester.⁹⁹

The BBC aired a rare broadcast in Glasgow around 1925.¹⁰⁰ This was likely the first performance of *The Music Makers* on radio and, according to the BBC, the contralto part was transferred for baritone voice which received the

⁹⁴ *The New Music Review and Church Music Review*, XII/139 (New York, NY) 256-7.

⁹⁵ *Ibid.*

⁹⁶ Kennedy, *The life of Elgar*, 164.

⁹⁷ Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 803.

⁹⁸ Young, *Elgar O. M.*, 239.

⁹⁹ Hunt was organist at Worcester Cathedral from 1976 to 1996 and a Vice-President of the Elgar Society. Hunt, *Thoughts on The Music Makers*, 7.

¹⁰⁰ The British Broadcasting Company.

composer's approval.¹⁰¹ Radio broadcasts of *The Music Makers* would never become commonplace, although it was broadcast again on May 20, 1925.¹⁰²

During the last two decades of his life, Elgar was under contract to record for the *His Majesty's Voice* (HMV) title of The Gramophone Record Company. Recordings of many of his works with him conducting were sold and continued to be quite popular. In 1927, a birthday celebration conducted by Elgar and sponsored by the BBC included the first and only recording of *The Music Makers* made during his lifetime.¹⁰³ Broadcast live from Hereford Cathedral during that year's Three Choirs Festival, the soloist was Olga Haley. As she was under contract to a rival record company all the sections in which she sang were unable to be included on the disc. Appendix D details which selections of this recording were ultimately issued.¹⁰⁴

The use of acoustic recording techniques during most of Elgar's association with HMV required that instruments or soloists be positioned quite close to the microphone horn. This made recordings of choirs, other than in a live concert setting, almost impossible to capture and balance successfully for

¹⁰¹ The baritone was Herbert Heyner and H. A. Carruthers conducted the augmented station orchestra and chorus. Raymond Monk, ed. *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature* (Brookfield, VT: Scolar Press, 1993), 340.

¹⁰² Monk, *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*, 331.

¹⁰³ A mobile recording van was stationed at the west end of the Cathedral. Recordings were taken from Elgar's performances of his cantata *Caractacus*, *The Music Makers* and more. The hope was that these recordings/broadcasts would become an annual opportunity for The Gramophone Company to record festival concerts live. Unfortunately, primarily due to cost and permission issues, this performance was the only one of its kind to succeed. Jerrold Northrup Moore, *Elgar on Record* (London: Oxford University Press, 1974), 75.

¹⁰⁴ *Ibid.*, 73.

recording purposes. This would not begin to change until about eleven years prior to Elgar's death with the advent of new electrical recording techniques. In addition, prior to 1931, HMV had no recording facilities that would allow for much more than a small orchestra with a few soloists in the studio. Choirs and larger ensembles were able to be accommodated after 1931 with the opening of London's St. John's Wood Studios in Abbey Road.¹⁰⁵ Elgar recorded in the new studios multiple times, but other than the selections recorded in 1927, *The Music Makers* was not to be recorded in its entirety during his own lifetime.

Elgar's Goal of Writing

It is unclear when Elgar came across O'Shaughnessy's poem and decided to set it to music. As these notions of "dreams" and the role of the artist had resonated throughout his life, it is not surprising that the poem would appeal to him particularly at this time. Dreams had been the inspiration for Elgar's op. 43, a short work for small orchestra entitled *Dream Children* as well as his groundbreaking oratorio, *The Dream of Gerontius*.¹⁰⁶ The theme of dreams was also tangentially connected to the theme of "ghosts."¹⁰⁷ Both ideas are found in O'Shaughnessy's "Ode" and thus in *The Music Makers*. There are two evocative

¹⁰⁵ Ibid., 143.

¹⁰⁶ Ian Parrott suggests that "If the word "Imperial" is in the mind when we contemplate one side of Elgar's nature, so the word "dream" represents the other." Mundy, *Elgar: his life and times*, 54.

¹⁰⁷ Matthew Riley, *Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2007), 39, 40, 70.

phrases that particularly draw on the concept of dreaming. At the very onset of the work we hear the often re-occurring “dreamers of dreams” text, set to one of Elgar’s new themes which he entitled the “artists” theme here set to one of the few strictly *a cappella* choral moments in the work. The second and most aching moment is set to the words “a dreamer who slumbers no more” located at the conclusion of the work. Considering his general emotional state at the time, his continuing concerns of “belonging” (both socially and professionally) in addition to the anxiety over his musical legacy, Elgar’s choice of poem and its inherent message seems appropriate.

The Daily Telegraph critic Robin Legge, upon reviewing the very first performance, suggested that the piece’s “note” was one not of “sadness”, but of “unsatisfied yearning.” He goes on to say that while the poet speaks in “general terms” Elgar “appears to look at the personal aspect of the matter.”

The music is often of exquisite beauty, but ... its very mood is against it - this mood of yearning, alternating with a confident mood of massive power, and finally bringing a return to the prevailing lack of confidence, as if the subject were greater than the composer could translate into terms of music.¹⁰⁸

It is obvious that Elgar’s inspiration needed to be integrally linked to the subject matter with which he was grappling. Indeed, many works were never completed as a result of Elgar’s not having a truly personal connection or interest in the project.

Kennedy, though often egregious in his exaggerated descriptions of Elgar’s motives, rightly suggests

¹⁰⁸ *Daily Telegraph*, 2 October 1912.

In *Gerontius*, the symphonies, *The Music Makers*, most of all in the Violin Concerto, are a human soul's hopes and regrets, disappointments and beliefs, universally shared experiences, strengths and weaknesses, faults and foibles.¹⁰⁹

Critics have drawn a connection between Elgar's work and Richard Strauss' tone poem *Ein Heldenleben*. Strauss' work, which was considered controversial by many, was derided for its self-quotation, which implied egotism and a certain "heroic self-portrayal" on the part of the composer.¹¹⁰ Similarly, by its inclusion of many well-known Elgar themes, *The Music Makers* may have appeared to some as being egotistical as well, but not in a heroic manner. In light of the aforementioned "foibles" and "disappointments" exhibited by Elgar throughout his life, this work instead surely reflects the multiple facets of the enigmatic and self-doubting Elgar, and supports more a depiction of Elgar as "suffering artist" or "bard" and not as "hero."

Brief O'Shaughnessy Biography and History of "Ode"

Born to an Irish family, poet Arthur O'Shaughnessy was born in London in 1844. Little is known of his earliest years, but at the young age of seventeen he began working at the British Museum where he ultimately became an entomologist and herpetologist in the Natural History department. In his free time, he was an active poet, publishing collections of poems in 1870, 1872 and 1874.

¹⁰⁹ Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar*, 334.

¹¹⁰ D. Kern Holoman, ed., *The Nineteenth-Century Symphony* (New York: Schirmer Books, 1997), 358.

His final volume of poetry was published posthumously in 1881 by the executor of his will.

O'Shaughnessy is usually included among the poets of the Aesthetics Movement, which also included Baudelaire and Wordsworth. These writers tended to turn away from materialism of the period, instead focusing on the nature of beauty, particularly in art.¹¹¹ Unlike some of his contemporaries who sought to separate from worldly concerns, O'Shaughnessy suggests that it is the duty of the artist to be a part of the world and to serve some purpose.¹¹² In reality though, the life he led appears to have been relatively solitary; one where he spent his days working at a job which he did not appreciate or excel at, while, at the same time, wondering why he and his work weren't more appreciated by others.¹¹³ Though he suggests in his "Ode" that "working together as one" is important, his political and social actions did not appear to support that belief.¹¹⁴ Though he considered himself to be an outsider, his poetry exhibits a strong desire to be useful to the world and to have a huge impact on it.¹¹⁵ The strong language of the "Ode" with phrases such as the opening "We are the music

¹¹¹ In this poem though, "O'Shaughnessy's conception of the relationship between the artist and society is very different from the one expressed by the Aesthetes. Baudelaire, and the Aesthetes after him, posited the fundamental alienation of the artist from society, an attitude O'Shaughnessy echoed in 'A Discord'. In contrast, the 'Ode' depicts the artist as integral to society." Jordan Kistler, "'I Carve the Marble of Pure Thought': Work and Production in The Poetry of Arthur O'Shaughnessy," *Victorian Network* IV/1 (Summer 2012), 81.

¹¹² *Ibid.*, 83.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 73.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 82.

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 88.

makers and we are the dreamers of dreams” and “World-movers and world-forsakers” peaked Elgar’s interest and provoked his creative spirit.

O’Shaughnessy was considered to be a second-rate poet by some of his contemporaries and especially critics. Even his friend, the poet Dante Gabriel Rossetti, wrote a cruel limerick mocking O’Shaughnessy’s literary aspirations: “There’s the Irishman Arthur O’Shaughnessy – / On the chessboard of poets a pawn is he: / Though a bishop or king / Would be rather the thing, / To the fancy of Arthur O’Shaughnessy.”¹¹⁶ It is likely, that Elgar, with his strong background in poetry, (having been exposed to poets like Shelley, Longfellow and Wordsworth beginning at an early age), may have been aware of the concerns with O’Shaughnessy’s verse, but because of its resonating topic, was drawn to it nonetheless.

The title of O’Shaughnessy’s collection *Music and Moonlight: Poems and Songs* was published by Chatto and Windus in 1874.¹¹⁷ The “Ode” begins with “We are the music makers and we are the dreamers of dreams,” a line made famous to modern audiences by being quoted in the 1971 film “Willy Wonka and the Chocolate Factory.” This poem is likely the most popular of all of O’Shaughnessy’s poems partly as it focuses on all “artists” and not solely on the poet or musician. It is surely a text to which any creative person could be drawn.

¹¹⁶ A limerick by O’Shaughnessy’s “friend”. Dinah Roe, “Arthur O’Shaughnessy: The Original Mover and Shaker,” <https://theibtaurisblog.com/2011/12/14/arthur-oshughnessy-the-original-mover-and-shaker/> (2011), accessed 15 January 2018.

¹¹⁷ The “Ode” was first published in the journal *The Athenaeum* of 30 August 1873.

Popular during Elgar's lifetime, the composer would, no doubt, have been moved by the poet's message and poem's message that paralleled his own life's work, dreams and ambitions. It is not surprising that he would embrace this text at this latter point in his life journey. The poem's obvious connections to both Elgar's past and his worries over his future are summed up appropriately.

O'Shaughnessy focuses on the image of the solitary artist that is so common in the language of the Aesthetes "in order to distance himself from 'ordinary' men, in his poetry represented by his scientific colleagues."¹¹⁸ This image of the solitary artist was certainly one with which Elgar self-identified.

Elgar's Interpretation of O'Shaughnessy's Poem

Elgar was a voracious reader and consumer of new poetry and literature. As a self-taught learner with limited formal schooling, his choices of literature may also have been encouraged by what was in fashion at the time or was popular amongst his family and close circle of friends and acquaintances. Where Elgar's texts for his solo songs are concerned, for instance, it has been suggested that his choice of texts actually contributed to his song's lack of popularity.¹¹⁹ In his effort to always be looking forward and not backward, he often chose contemporary poetry which had not yet withstood the test of time,

¹¹⁸ Kistler, *I Carve*, 79.

¹¹⁹ Lynnette Borman, *Sea Pictures, Op. 37 by Sir Edward Elgar: a comprehensive guide for study and performance* (D.M.A. Diss., Ohio State University, 1998), 71.

perhaps under the impression that such texts were considered “modern” and would help elevate the popularity of his “modern” music’s reception. On the other hand, Elgar seems to have been aware of the dubious reputations of the texts he selected, for he once commented that it was better to set a “...second rate poem to music, for the most immortal verse is music already.”¹²⁰ Likewise, as Elgar biographer Percy Young suggests

A great poem could only be expressed in music which, following the aspirations of the verse developed its own life. The words of minor poetry may more easily be assimilated directly to music, for while they may annotate mood and atmosphere they will by reason of poetic indifference make no impediment to the music.¹²¹

Elgar’s approach to setting texts to music could sometimes elevate the sounding quality of the text, but just as easily call it into question.

Elgar’s general interpretation of the poem and its message was a bit broader than that of O’Shaughnessy. Elgar believed it was the artist’s “mission” to “renew the world”. He insisted that it was an artist’s “responsibility” to “suffer” in the overwhelming act of creation, essentially alongside those who toil to bring the artists vision to fulfillment.¹²² In his own words contained in his unpublished preface to *The Music Makers*, Elgar reflected on the artist’s role. (His deletions to the original text are in square brackets).

Yes, suffers [after years devoted to art] this is the only word I dare to use: [for] even the [joy] brightest joy of creating is [tempered alloyed] soured mixed [with the ever] with the sombre dignity of the

¹²⁰ Ibid., 339.

¹²¹ Young, *Elgar O.M.*, 306.

¹²² Ernest Newman, ““*The Music Makers*” by Edward Elgar,” *The Musical Times*, LIII/835 (September 1912), 567.

eternity, [eternity of the responsibility of the effect] of the artists responsibility.¹²³

Both men believed the artist had an important responsibility to society. They also both suggested that the artist was privileged in being able to exist and act on two levels, that of the earthly and that of a "... divine realm: the world of art."¹²⁴

Considering Elgar's emotional state at the time and the regularity of his ailments it is no wonder that O'Shaughnessy's poem would have such an impact. He may have felt that his days were numbered and thus the concerns over his legacy weighed heavily on his thoughts as is alluded to in a letter he wrote to Littleton, where he stated "And our name shall be forgotten in time, and no man have our work in remembrance."¹²⁵ Amidst his continuing feelings of thwarted ambition, he clearly was also feeling a sense of isolation and rejection. As Michael Kennedy recognized

The Music Makers is a requiem for Elgar's creative psyche. ...But the adult Elgar found that music did not move and shake the world. He cursed the gifts that providence had given him.¹²⁶

The Musical Implications of the Text

While O'Shaughnessy's "Ode" is most commonly remembered as a three-stanza poem, it was actually abridged from nine stanzas in the anthology *The*

¹²³ British Library manuscript Add. Ms. 47908 f. 93. Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 24.

¹²⁴ Kistler, *I Carve*, 86.

¹²⁵ Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 146.

¹²⁶ Kennedy, *The life of Elgar*, 5.

Golden Treasury by poet and anthologist Francis Turner Palgrave (1824–1897) soon after the poet's death. Elgar chose to set the full-length poem in its entirety, despite the fact that he had often omitted certain words or passages of original poems to tighten up the message of the text being set to his music. For instance, he omitted substantial sections of Henry Hamilton's libretto for *The Crown of India* a year earlier. He famously also omitted almost half of the original nine hundred verses of Newman's poem for *The Dream of Gerontius*.¹²⁷ This surgical excision allowed him to strengthen the dramatic impact of the text and to evolve the meaning of the libretto to focus on his own interpretation and not necessarily that of the poet's. It is thus surprising that in *The Music Makers* he chose to leave all sections intact, including numerous trite passages of dubious rhythmic quality, such as "with wonderful deathless ditties, we build up the world's great cities." Indeed, the listener is made acutely aware of the text's sing-songy and forced rhymes in passages like: "A breath of our inspiration / Is the life of each generation." That said, there are times when Elgar was able to ameliorate these two issues purely by the musical setting of the text. First, he would choose the musical theme that he deemed appropriate to the text, and then later he would tweak the theme either rhythmically or "notationally" to allow the text to sound more natural and less forced onto the pre-existing theme.¹²⁸

Though Elgar left the poetry alone, he did occasionally choose to repeat words here or there, or even paraphrase some, thus subtly altering the original

¹²⁷ Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar*, 179.

¹²⁸ Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 164.

meaning of the text and making it more personal. In the full poem (Appendix F) all words in bold were added by the composer or at least borrowed from elsewhere in the poem. Even small alterations could change the emphasis of the verse. I have placed text that has been repeated in *italics*. Such repeats were often added to further emphasize times of great joy and excitement.

As Hunt suggests, one subtle interpretation which Elgar embraced was that the composer

...wanted to use the poem in a different sort of way: he preferred to look back, rather than forward, and so he brings back the opening lines (he called it the 'artist theme') several times, like bookends to each of the stanzas.¹²⁹

The recurrence of this "artists" theme (usually attached to the bolded text) is likely the work's most memorable musical theme and not just because it is repeated multiple times and thus becomes quickly familiar. Through its regular re-occurrence the theme not only acts as a reminiscence motive recalling the most important message of the text, but also, like bookends, keeps the poem's different thoughts and sometimes moods apart from one another. Later, to denote the "artists" theme echo, I have used an asterisk. Otherwise the re-occurrence of this text is not in the original poem as it was added by the composer.

**We are the music makers,
And we are the dreamers of dreams,
Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
And sitting by desolate streams;
World-losers and world-forsakers,
On whom the pale moon gleams:**

¹²⁹ Hunt, *Thoughts on The Music Makers*, 9.

Yet we are the movers and shakers¹³⁰
Of the world for ever, it seems.

In this poem, though not all, O'Shaughnessy departs from the Aesthetes' idea that "art's only responsibility is to itself" and instead proclaims that the role of the artist is to aid society. Kistler suggests that "O'Shaughnessy trumpets the power that lies in a poet's words..."¹³¹ In the following phrase, this sentiment is particularly present. As noted earlier, the following stanza is of questionable quality."

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story
We fashion an empire's glory:

Hunt suggests that "[in] recent years some of Elgar's most ardent admirers think they have found in this poem sinister overtones of colonialism and class-distinction."¹³² There has been a fair amount of writing focusing on the nature of Elgar's connection to and support of the English empire. He also no doubt did write many compositions with imperial leanings, such as *The Crown of India* masque, the *Pomp and Circumstance* series and even perhaps the coronation works may be added to this category. It would have made perfect sense in that environment that he would be compelled to write music that might become popular. Pieces referencing the theme of empire and nationalism would surely

¹³⁰ It is believed that O'Shaughnessy coined the term "movers and shakers" in the first publication of this poem. Kistler, *I Carve*, 82.

¹³¹ *Ibid.*, 81.

¹³² Hunt, *Thoughts on The Music Makers*, 8.

help accomplish that goal. There is no doubt that colonial sentiments are present in this late nineteenth century poem. They are though only briefly alluded to, as are they through musical motives. The remainder of the poem deals more with the artistic message to which Elgar seems to have been initially drawn.

One man with a dream, at pleasure,
Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

Alluding to O'Shaughnessy's call that people must join together after "hearing" the artist's message, this previous phrase illustrates how those joined together can act for the good of society. Though Kistler suggests: "Although he [O'Shaughnessy] declares that artists should shape society, he rarely tries to do so himself."¹³³

We, in the ages lying
In the buried past of the earth,¹³⁴
Built Nineveh with our sighing,
And Babel itself in our mirth;

In his "Ode", O'Shaughnessy alludes to the artist's role as that of a prophet in the world, recalling Percy Shelley's mandate that poets merge the responsibility of prophecy with their role as legislator.¹³⁵ There is no question that Elgar accepted this responsibility as a "shaker of the world" but grappled with the

¹³³ Kistler, *I Carve*, 82.

¹³⁴ Anderson suggests that "Elgar put most of his emphasis on the past, using quotations from his secular choral works own greatest works to make of his setting a personal document of almost painful intensity." Anderson, *Elgar*, 194-95.

¹³⁵ Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 146.

weight of this lofty calling. Longtime friend and Elgar collaborator Canon Gorton considered one of his life responsibilities to be one of guarding “the welfare of this genius...” and to therefore keep Elgar from accepting any other roles that “would interfere” with “the gift for prophecy – in music.”¹³⁶

And o'erthrew them with prophesying
To the old of the new world's worth;

In general, with a few notable exceptions when composing a fugal motive, Elgar chose to couple most verses throughout the poem with solely one phrase of music. There are occasional times when he chose, however, to emphasize a certain phrase or set of words by repeating the words several times in a row, much like a composer of an oratorio might have, the achieved effect being one of pointedly highlighting the message for the listener. Based on the manner in which Elgar chose to set the following stanza, the composer draws the listeners attention to “the dream that is dying” instead of to a dream “that is coming to birth.” Given Elgar’s multiple repetitions of this specific phrase, he clearly has chosen not to focus on future potential and instead has embraced the melancholy of dreams now past, perhaps reflecting his own personal doubts.

For each age is a dream that is dying,
Or one that is coming to birth.*
A breath of our inspiration
Is the life of each generation;
A wondrous thing of our dreaming
Unearthly, impossible seeming—

¹³⁶ Young, *Elgar O. M.*, 131.

The romantic imagery that was suddenly positive and compelling, now just as quickly became doubtful and questioning. Evocative words like “unearthly” and “impossible” perfectly capture the moods of the composer at this time and also lend themselves to wonderful opportunities for word painting.

The soldier, the king, and the peasant
 Are working together in one,
 Till our dream shall become their present,
 And their work in the world be done.¹³⁷

Again, the verses segue from those brimming with affirmation and potential of the people to ones of dependency on “one man”, the artist, who surely has the ability to “light” the way and will lead the community forward with his prophecy. Set to the contralto soloist’s first entrance, the next section ends the segue from the mostly energetic and up-tempo sections of the text to a much slower *lento, quasi recitativo* emotion. This new section ushers in a more personal and introspective text and almost suggests a sense of biblically based oratorio narration.

They had no vision amazing
 Of the goodly house they are raising;
 They had no divine foreshowing
 Of the land to which they are going:
 But on one man's soul it hath broken,
 A light that doth not depart;
 And his look, or a word he hath spoken,
 Wrought flame in another man's heart.

¹³⁷ Anderson again suggests that Elgar purposefully “misinterpret[s]” the Ode. “O’Shaughnessy is by no means pessimistic, but Elgar seized on the fact that at least three of the stanzas, having found hope in the future, make a regretful farewell to the past.” Anderson, *Elgar*, 195.

The anticipation of the possible bubbles forth with potential from this more introspective section. It is in this section that the “artists” theme returns, again attached to the opening words. The harmonization with its now much higher tessitura and triple forte dynamic unexpectedly catches the listener off guard and reminds the artist of his continuing role, one that is both connected to the people, yet also one that is solitary.

And therefore to-day is thrilling
 With a past day's late fulfilling;
 And the multitudes are enlisted
 In the faith that their fathers resisted,
 And, scorning the dream of to-morrow,
 Are bringing to pass, as they may,
 In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,
 The dream that was scorned yesterday.*
 But we, with our dreaming and singing,
 Ceaseless and sorrowless we!

At this point, Elgar again re-inserts the text from the previous verse beginning with “and therefore today is thrilling...” This time, amidst the energetic excitement of the text, Elgar again inserts the “artists” theme, this time set to “we are the movers and shakers.” This is followed briefly and grandly by a paraphrasing of the verses just sung, creating the new phrase “The multitudes are bringing to pass in the world the dream that was scorned yesterday.” Here Elgar has surely taken poetic license. This point will be made clearer during Chapter Four, during the discussion of musical themes.

The glory about us clinging
 Of the glorious futures we see,
 Our souls with high music ringing:
 O men! it must ever be

That we dwell, in our dreaming and singing,
A little apart from ye.

Again, the “artists” theme re-appears, this time following one of the few full cessations of musical activity. Now attached to the first phrase of the newest stanza, the message becomes one both of bold hope and rebirth for the future coupled with acceptance for what preceded.

For we are afar with the dawning*
And the suns that are not yet high,
And out of the infinite morning
Intrepid you hear us cry—
How, spite of your human scorning,
Once more God's future draws nigh,
And already goes forth the warning
That ye of the past must die.

The contralto soloist cries out to all “artists” to answer the prophesy and to lead the world in ways which we have not yet imagined possible.

Great hail! we cry to the comers
From the dazzling unknown shore;
Bring us hither your sun and your summers;
And renew our world as of yore;
You shall teach us your song's new numbers,
And things that we dreamed not before:

In the closing of his article, Ernest Newman writes for Elgar

...The mainspring of O'Shaughnessy's Ode is the sense of progress, of never-ceasing change; it is the duty of the artist to see that this inevitable change is progress. With a deep sense of this trust, I have endeavoured to interpret the Ode as shewing the continuity of art, "in spite of a dreamer who slumbers, and a singer who sings no more."¹³⁸

¹³⁸ Newman, *The Music Makers*, 567.

The final iteration of the “artists” theme closes the work as a mere echo of the first. Beginning at a triple piano and leading to a hushed quadruple piano dynamic, the homophonic theme, now slower than ever before, gently reminds the listener of the artist’s continuing potential into the future. A message that deigns to say “keep dreaming.”

Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers,
And a singer who sings no more.*

O’Shaughnessy’s poem asserts the notion that all artists, not just poets or composers are “...creators and inspirers of men and their deeds.” Their creations and dreams envision the best of what our world can become, thus foreshadowing what the world must then ultimately toil to bring into reality.¹³⁹

Though Elgar and O’Shaughnessy strongly believed in the role of the artist, there were many reactions to the efficacy of the text’s message. Written after the debut, this is summarized in this closing quote by an anonymous critic.

Where '*The Music Makers*' falls short is in the unreality of the theme. Arthur O’Shaughnessy’s ode celebrates the feats of the world’s poets in forging to ideals the destinies of their fellow-men ... But did a single member of the chorus who sang those words, or one person in to-night’s audience, really believe them? The fallacy of the poem lies, of course, in the fact that poets have nothing to do with 'teaching humanity' or in the building of empires or cities, but solely with the charming of one’s finer senses and the enrichment of one’s inner life. Music set to this ode could not therefore be expected to have great strength or sincerity.¹⁴⁰

¹³⁹ Ibid., 566.

¹⁴⁰ Cutting from an unidentified newspaper (Elgar Birthplace). Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 639.

CHAPTER III

THE MUSICAL THEMES OF THE
MUSIC MAKERS**Elgar's Dream Chest of Musical Themes**

The Music Makers provides ample proof of his strong belief that music and the arts in general can be of more benefit to the human race than the building of empires.¹⁴¹

As mentioned, one of the critiques leveled against *The Music Makers* was that of Elgar's abundant use of self-quotation, having used musical themes from a sizeable number of his own earlier compositions, largely taken from orchestral works with the occasional quote from a choral work.¹⁴² That said, Koldau suggests that this act of self-quotation is not just problematic, but also affects the ability to aesthetically appreciate a work.

When a composer makes clear that his work can finally only be understood by understanding himself; he focuses our attention on himself and not on the music. Where the artist's personality becomes more important than his work, the crucial point of music as a medium that can speak for itself is lost. The work is burdened

¹⁴¹ Hunt, *Thoughts on The Music Makers*, 8.

¹⁴² “[Elgar] commonly expected to transfer material between one project and another. This aspect of Elgar's working methods can be followed through from his juvenilia to the unfinished works of his old age. It shows that the extensive “self-quotations” in *The Music Makers* were in fact rather less remarkable than has been thought.” Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 222.

with extra-musical facts that by no means contribute to its aesthetic quality.¹⁴³

Elgar's self-quotation approach was hardly unusual and often occurs in works by other composers prior to the twentieth century. In their introduction to *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar*, Grimley and Rushton also criticize the use of self-quotation in *The Music Makers*. However, they also suggest that this approach, whereby Elgar endeavors to create an autobiographical connection through the work, "is partly a romantic device that can be traced back to Schumann, a composer who had a formative influence on Elgar's early career."¹⁴⁴ Other composers, such as Mozart, Handel and Richard Strauss, also were known to have used this same device. In the same collection, Diana McVeagh suggests that the use of the quotations "turn this music from being a setting of O'Shaughnessy's Ode into what amounts to Elgar's musical and spiritual autobiography."¹⁴⁵ Critics noted that the use of quotes from other works created a new work that was pale in comparison to the original from which they were borrowed. One anonymous reviewer writing after the Brighton second performance of the work quipped

Sir Edward Elgar's Birmingham Festival novelty, "We are the music makers" is not a new case of wine tasting like the old; in fact, it is

¹⁴³ Linda Maria Koldau, "Elgar's *The Music Makers*: The Problem of Aesthetic Assessment," *The Elgar Society Journal* VIII/1 (1993–4), 14.

¹⁴⁴ Daniel Grimley and Julian Rushton, eds. "Introduction", in *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 11.

¹⁴⁵ Diana McVeagh, "Elgar's musical language: the shorter instrumental works," in *The Cambridge Companion to Elgar*, eds. Daniel Grimley and Julian Rushton (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004), 62.

the nips he permits us of the latter that make the latest vintage seem lacking in flavor and bouquet.”¹⁴⁶

However, this was not an isolated practice; many of his self-quotes would appear in later works such as his highly regarded *Cello Concerto*.

A Brief Formal Analysis

As Aidan Thomson ¹⁴⁷ offers the most thorough formal theoretical analysis of Elgar’s use of self-quotation in *The Music Makers*, this chapter will only briefly outline the themes, their meanings as connected to the libretto and the connections between many quotes to the works from which they originated.¹⁴⁸ In conjunction with the thematic unfolding, a limited formal analysis will also be given here. These analyses will form the basis of a proposed method of teaching the work to prospective ensembles.

As was his custom before many of his debuts, Elgar engaged in discussion with friend and critic Ernest Newman who later published an article

¹⁴⁶ Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 639.

¹⁴⁷ This article can be found in Byron Adams, *Edward Elgar and His World*. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007.

¹⁴⁸ It is important to note that many of the pre-existing quotes used in *The Music Makers* had already become familiar to audiences. Many of these themes had been derived from the sketch books that Edward Elgar kept throughout his life and was constantly reviewing as he wrote new works. In her article, Willetts produces a thorough list of many sketches contained in the sketchbooks found in the British Library. Many of these ended up in *The Music Makers*. Sketches for this work were being written from 1903 onward, at the same time as those for the *Violin Concerto*, *The Apostles*, and Elgar’s two completed symphonies.

outlining the nature of *The Music Makers* prior to its debut.¹⁴⁹ This article was intended to help excite the public and included not only Newman's own thoughts and personal interpretation of the new piece, but also offered multiple insights conveyed by Elgar himself. It is from this correspondence between Elgar and Newman that most of the composer's interpretations and intentions are indeed known today. This letter reveals that self-quotation was an important element of the composition; as Elgar wrote

I am glad you like the idea of the quotations: after all art must be the man, and all true art is, to some extent egotism & I have written several things which are still alive.¹⁵⁰

The Music Makers not only contains numerous self-quotes, but accompanying those quotes come allusions and references to those original works which then add meaning (subtle and not so subtle) to the new work. To those who did not know Elgar personally, one might not comprehend their inner meaning. Raymond Monk complains

So often there seems to be a 'story' behind Elgar's music, all the more teasing because it is incomplete. In modern terms, it is like giving an interview to the tabloid press, then complaining that the article as printed is inaccurate or scurrilous. ... It seems as though his inspiration was so closely bound up with his personal life, and needed such strong emotional stimulus, that his attitude to life was indeed a vital part of his creativity.¹⁵¹

It is of course much more complicated an issue than that.

¹⁴⁹ Newman, *The Music Makers*, 566-570.

¹⁵⁰ Diana McVeagh, "A Man's Attitude to Life," in *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*, ed. Raymond Monk (Scolar Press, 1993), 1.

¹⁵¹ McVeagh, *A Man's Attitude to Life*, 2.

Several options exist for how one may get the most out of a listening to *The Music Makers*. When listening to the work, one option might be to focus narrowly on the “hope chest” of earlier Elgar themes which then transports the seasoned concert-goer back to memories of an earlier performance of the work. This re-living of the *Nimrod* theme from the “*Enigma*” *Variations*, for instance, now conjures up a visceral memory of the first time one was moved by the elegiac theme and its associated personal emotional response.

Additionally, critics denounced the veiled and not so veiled use of themes as “extensive word painting” as it acted “to the detriment of the general jubilancy which is the tenor and purport of the poem.”¹⁵² The listener using a second option which requires not only a clear memory recall (recalling the work from which a original theme was derived) also asks the listener to remember the meaning of the themes’ original emotion. The emotion of the new passage, now coupled with a specific word or textual phrase in *The Music Makers*, imbues the current musical expression with a layered emotional meaning such as a mixing of joy (from the new text) colored with sense of irony (layered on by the theme’s original meaning). This layering draws on Wagner’s use of the leitmotif and its multiple levels of emotional depth and context conveyed by the super-imposing of themes of different derivation and intent.

A final option, one requiring by far the most advanced knowledge of Elgar’s compositional output, its history and recall of its themes, would result in the most stirring and inspiring hearing of the work. As Michael Kennedy

¹⁵² Adams, *Edward Elgar and His World*, 210.

suggests, thinking of this last of Elgar's large choral works as his own personal "requiem" allows the listener to make special sense of his "most personal music and self-quotation" and "serves to strengthen the sense of yearning that he felt so deeply and that remained unresolved for the rest of his life."¹⁵³ Understanding how Elgar so personally and effectively married aspects of musical retrospect (with specific attached emotion) coupled with word painting and the introduction of new, evocative themes wedding the multiple parts together, allowed him to create a work that artistically captured his own personal emotions at the time as well as the enigmatic role of the "suffering artist." Elgar, likely to his surprise, maintained this role for another twenty-two years after *The Music Makers* debuted.

In closing his article, Newman placed a footnote (seemingly as if from the composer himself) in which he seemed to predict the critical response soon to ensue and then distanced himself from that choice by instead drawing attention to the new music aspects of the work.¹⁵⁴

Before discussing the themes of the work, a brief word regarding the available score options is appropriate. As Elgar was allied with Novello and Company for most of his composing career and their music is still under copyright and being printed today, few other alternative scores for *The Music Makers* exist. A piano vocal score is only available from three publishers,

¹⁵³ Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 639.

¹⁵⁴ "These quotations from earlier works occupy a prominent space in analysis, but the reader must be warned against thinking at they form anything more than episodes in the work as a whole. The great bulk of the music is quite new." Newman, *The Music Makers*, 569.

Novello, Serenissima and Ludwig Masters Publications, the last two of which are relatively recent off-prints of the original Novello score. Small differences exist and are listed in Appendix C. For instrumental parts and full scores there are only three choices available, Kalmus, the original 1912 Novello score, and the Elgar Complete Edition score also from Novello. The clear choice for the conductor would be the Elgar Complete Edition full score. Not only is it much easier to read, at a larger size, has much better printing quality (and, in addition to the Novello full score) is the only score, other than the Serenissima piano vocal score, that not only has rehearsal (or “figure” or “cue”) numbers but also very helpful measure numbers. At a larger size, clearer printing and, at writing, the cheaper score by almost sixteen dollars, the Serenissima piano vocal score would be the preferable choice. The biggest issue with this score is that measure numbers are occasionally off by four measures in places when compared to the Elgar Complete Edition full score. Choir members should personally correct measure numbers by hand or the conductor could use solely the rehearsal numbers which do concur between all three full scores. One should note that the Elgar Complete Edition full score will be referenced for the remainder of this document.¹⁵⁵

¹⁵⁵ If an Elgar Complete Edition full score is not available, one might also reference the scanned version of the 1912 Novello full score that can be found online at <http://imslp.org/wiki/File:PMLP35136-Elgar-op69-The-Music-Makers-FS-ECE.pdf>.

The Overall Structure of *The Music Makers*

The Music Makers is considered a cantata due to its lack of delineated movements and its sense of being through-composed. Elgar's compositional style, which by this time was firmly allied to the Wagnerian sense of unity through its use of interwoven themes, allowed for the music to ebb and flow with ease in tandem with the evolution of the poem and its often-extreme Victorian emotionality. However, though written as one connected almost forty-minute work, the poem and the literal focus of its verses largely suggests clear junctures between stanzas. These junctures offer clear opportunities where Elgar could easily have placed the beginning of a new chorus or aria, akin to that of the oratorio tradition in which he was so firmly bred. Though appropriate for the creation of a work that was cohesive (one which kept the listener firmly connected to the text's message) this choice also, unlike in his large choral works, meant that work would not likely be as accessible to a wider audience. Often in anticipation of an upcoming debut, Novello and other publishers would commonly promote new extended works through the advance sale of score selections, often choruses, that could be extracted from the larger whole.¹⁵⁶ These hopefully popular excerpts would frequently make the larger work itself also more popular and well-received, thus ensuring more sales and

¹⁵⁶ To be profitable and often to get publishers on board, expectations were that there be sections that could be sold under a separate cover from the much larger extended work from which the selection was derived. It was these sections that often sold so well and thus helped the larger work to also become more popular.

performances of the work in England and abroad. Given Elgar's through-composed approach in this work, the opportunity for any such primer was absent.

To connect one stanza to another, Elgar frequently uses short orchestral interludes to bridge the gaps between old and new sections. These interludes most often make use of the newly written music themes (such as “The Complete Understanding” theme of the prelude) which might often reflect the emotion of the recently sung text or, in other cases, foreshadow the new emotion of the section to follow. These interludes are frequently the moments when the tempi and/or dynamics vary most dramatically from that which preceded. The end of these interludes is often then marked by a *ritardando* or brief pause on a final note with fermata before then continuing forward. In addition, Elgar’s choice of keys during these interludes often come across as tonally unstable, frequently due to his “predilection for the sequence” as he wends his way to the new key of the next section.¹⁵⁷

As noted earlier, *The Music Makers* contains multiple new themes specifically composed for the work as well as a healthy number of briefly stated themes from earlier published and sketched works. Rory Boyle notes that Elgar “drew on this store of past musings to clothe O’Shaughnessy’s poem in the garb of personal testimony.”¹⁵⁸ The F minor prelude begins with one of these sketched themes dating to around 1904. This typical Elgar *nobilmente*, almost wave-like theme (rivers held great meaning for Elgar) in the woodwinds and violas ebbs

¹⁵⁷ Koldau, *The Music Makers*, 12.

¹⁵⁸ Rory Boyle, “Interpreting Elgar - A Conductor's Thoughts,” *The Elgar Society Journal* XI/4 (March 2000), 224.

and flows through the heavily sequenced weighted rhythm (Ex. 1) that leans into the half-note. Newman described it as a theme that was both “passionate” and “troubled.”¹⁵⁹ Matthew Riley points to the symbolism of rivers as that of “seasonal renewal” connoting forward growth (or evolution) but also pointing backwards to a reliving, or nostalgia, of the past.¹⁶⁰ This idea further supports the theme of the poet, and, more importantly, the composer himself.



Ex. 1. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 2–7, prelude beginning with “The Complete Understanding” theme 1.

Anderson, however, critiques the heavy use of sequencing employed in the prelude by noting that this was not the first time that this typical Elgarian device was overused. The “...9/8 theme in the ‘Meditation’ from [Elgar’s] *The Light of Life* already has some of the sequential and chromatic traits that were to mar the start of *The Music Makers*...” and “...Mendelssohn or Gounod would have done much the same.”¹⁶¹ This statement suggests this theme over-uses the technique of sequential expansion. In that this technique was one of Elgar’s most successful compositional devices and that it only lasts the first twenty-two measures, this seems an overly harsh criticism. For now, this theme, named

¹⁵⁹ Newman suggests that the first theme, is “...of a passionate and troubled character.” Newman, *The Music Makers*, 567.

¹⁶⁰ Riley, *Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination*, 178.

¹⁶¹ Anderson, *Elgar*, 405.

“The Complete Understanding” by Elgar, segues effortlessly into the second and more tranquil theme present from mm. 23–28 (Ex. 2).¹⁶² Themes in Example 1 and 2 are both used throughout the work, #1 only for orchestral “commentary”¹⁶³ and Example 2 for orchestral as well as melodic material for the soloist.



Ex. 2. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 23–28, prelude theme 2.

In the 1912 debut program notes, Newman writes

Hence the atmosphere of the music is mainly sad, though there are enthusiastic, joyous, and even frenzied moments. ...my sense of the loneliness of the artist as described in the first six lines of the Ode, and, to me, it still embodies that sense.¹⁶⁴

This sense of “loneliness” is particularly embodied in the second theme which not only emotionally, but also rhythmically, has a kinship with the beloved “Nimrod” variation of the “Enigma” theme from Elgar’s *“Enigma” Variations*. This second theme, along with its “pendant”¹⁶⁵ (Ex. 3) (later to be coupled with the soloist’s powerful words “you shall teach us”) appears first in the orchestra at m. 31.

¹⁶² For the purposes of this, and future, discussions, “mm.” will be used when referring to measure numbers. When the occasional reference to a rehearsal number occurs, it will use the format “R#”. Conducting patterns will be referred to, for instance, as “in 1”, meaning conduct one pulse per measure.

¹⁶³ Newman, *The Music Makers*, 567.

¹⁶⁴ *Ibid.*, 567.

¹⁶⁵ *Ibid.*



Ex. 3. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 31–32, the Newman described “pendant theme.”

This theme is woven in and out of the work, sometimes as an instrumental utterance and other times as melodic material for the contralto soloist. Though only a short melodic fragment, Elgar makes heartfelt use of it.

As Boyle and Elgar have suggested, the “Enigma” theme represents the “loneliness of the creative artist.”¹⁶⁶ Thus by extension, the “Nimrod” theme does so as well. This takes on even stronger significance when made clear that the “Nimrod” theme was written in honor of August Jaeger, Elgar’s primary and devoted editor at Novello. As a close friend and confidant of Elgar’s, he lived vicariously through him and supported his composer friend in meaningful artistic and personal ways. The “Enigma” theme (Ex. 4) enters for the first time at m. 55 in the cello, viola, French horn, clarinet and English horn parts. This original theme is stated in the first six measures of the *“Enigma” Variations* score and forms the basis of that work. As Richard Powell states

Fragments of the enigma theme appear more than once and a knowledge of the composer's psychology and personal history are necessary for an understanding of the use which he has here made of them.¹⁶⁷

¹⁶⁶ Boyle, *Interpreting Elgar*, 224.

¹⁶⁷ Richard Powell, “The Enigma – 1”, in *An Elgar Companion*, ed. Christopher Redwood (Derbyshire, England: Sequoia Publishing, 1982), 52.

It appears twice again in mm. 71–74 and mm. 86–87 in the cello and flute then the cello and clarinet parts respectively. Later use of the theme pairs it with text, thus making its setting even more meaningful than its orchestral settings.



Ex. 4. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 55–61, “Enigma” theme first entrance.

The “artists” theme (Ex. 5), which Elgar composed newly for this work, enters for the first time in the choir from mm. 109–113. The melody is always in the sopranos and, though immediately recognizable, the harmonization and time signature will often vary from one repetition to the next.

Larghetto **poco rit.** **a tempo**

p *pp* *ppp*

S. We are the mu-sic mak-ers, And we are the dream-ers of dreams.

A. We are the mu-sic mak-ers, And we are the dream-ers of dreams.

T. We are the mu-sic mak-ers, And we are the dream-ers of dreams.

B. We are the mu-sic mak-ers, And we are the dream-ers of dreams.——

Four vocal staves (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) in 4/4 time signature and key signature of three flats. The lyrics are: "We are the mu-sic mak-ers, And we are the dream-ers of dreams." Dynamics are marked as *p*, *pp*, and *ppp* with hairpins. The tempo markings are **Larghetto**, **poco rit.**, and **a tempo**.

Ex. 5. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 109–113, “artists” theme first entrance.

Often sung a cappella, or with sparse orchestral scoring, the theme most times is set to the opening lines of the poem, which, as mentioned in Chapter 3, was inserted in later stanzas of the poem not by the poet, but rather by the composer himself. The first eight measures of the theme are sensitively interrupted by the two-measure orchestral response (mm. 112–113) which echos the Elgar-designated “judgment” theme from *The Dream of Gerontius*. Its use here comments supportively on the roles of the poet and the composer as prophets. The first repeat of the “artists” theme in m. 114 is set to new words “Wandering by lone sea-breakers” under which the violins, in a not so subtle word painting, recall the introduction and interlude theme from *Sea Slumber Song*, the first song of Elgar’s contralto solo song set *Sea Pictures*. Quickly interrupted by another brief quote in mm. 117–119 of the “Enigma” theme in the violins and flutes, the theme further supports the idea of the loneliness of the artists referenced earlier. The second iteration of the “artists” theme segues directly into a new theme (mm. 121–122) set in the soprano voice to the words “World-losers and world-forsakers / On whom the pale moon gleams.” Though not assigned a theme name by Elgar, the theme is re-iterated orchestrally later to represent the concept of “loss.” It is sometimes paired with the two measure theme (mm. 127–128) in the orchestra which Newman suggests acts as a “symbol of power” in its later incarnations in the work.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁸ Newman, *The Music Makers*, 568.

The image shows a musical score for four voices: Soprano (S.), Alto (A.), Tenor (T.), and Bass (B.). The music is in 4/4 time and has a key signature of three flats. The dynamics are marked as *fff* (triple fortissimo), *allargando* (ritardando), and *sfz* (sforzando). The lyrics for all parts are: "Shak - ers Of the world for - e - ver." The Soprano part has a fermata over the word "world".

Ex. 6. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 127–128, first entrance of “movers and shakers” theme.

With the choir’s entrance at a subtle *piano* dynamic, this theme (Ex. 6) might be entitled the “movers and shakers” theme and marks the first grand crescendo to a triple fortissimo in this suddenly militant sounding section. Just as quickly as the dynamic grows it likewise subsides to an insecure attitude of questioning on the last two words of the phrase. Elgar underscores this emotion with a two-measure “Enigma” theme leading into the brief interlude utilizing “The Complete Understanding” theme.

Yet we are the movers and shakers
Of the world for ever, it seems.

Quickly, the interlude through a four-measure *stringendo* phrase segues into the new *allegro* dotted quarter = 80 tempo for the words

With wonderful deathless ditties
We build up the world's great cities,
And out of a fabulous story

Amidst this imperial flourish, the composer cleverly hides two well-known, though non-Elgar, melodies into the orchestral fabric. In mm. 165–170, the tenors subtly quote the opening phrase of *Rule Britannia* on the phrase “We fashion an empire's glory.” Immediately following, in mm. 172–179, the French national anthem *La Marseillaise* is quoted, not surprisingly, in the trumpets and trombones. As Elgar noted, both nationalistic themes were used to represent “typical national fables under a radical government.”¹⁶⁹ These two quotes are likely not to be noticed by most listeners unless pointed out in advance, as they are integrated into a *vivace* and neurotic contrapuntal orchestration. Elgar wrote to Newman, “You will be interested to see how they go together & the deadly sarcasm of that rush in horns & trombones in the English tune-deliberately commercialising it...”¹⁷⁰ Though some scholars have suggested that Elgar often reeks of imperial leanings, this quote instead suggests that he looked on the empire with ambivalence, except when it suited his needs and quest for elevated social status. Just as quickly as the music turned frenetic, Elgar enters a rather sedentary dream state and a return to the *Gerontius* “judgement” theme¹⁷¹ on the words “One man with a dream, at pleasure (mm. 185–207).” In short order, the conquering attitude quickly returns

Shall go forth and conquer a crown;
And three with a new song's measure
Can trample a kingdom down.

¹⁶⁹ A quote by Edward Elgar. Edward Elgar, Introduction to Volume 10, *Elgar Complete Edition*, eds. Robert Anderson, Peter Dennison, Christopher Kent, Jerrold Northrop Moore, Brian Trowell (London: Novello, 1986), vii.

¹⁷⁰ 14 August 1912 letter to Ernest Newman.

¹⁷¹ Moore, *Edward Elgar: A Creative Life*, 634.

A descending whole tone scale theme (Ex. 7) set to this last poetic phrase (mm. 241–252) effectively plunges the listener downward as the orchestra concurrently moves upwards into “conquering” glory.

The image displays a musical score for four vocal parts (Soprano, Alto, Tenor, Bass) and piano accompaniment. The score is in 3/8 time and features a descending whole tone scale theme. The lyrics are: "down tramp - le a king - dom down". The score includes dynamic markings such as *fff* and *sfz*. The piano part features a descending whole tone scale theme.

Ex. 7. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 241–252, descending whole tone scale theme.

Originally found in Sketchbook III and then destined for *The Dream of Gerontius*, this theme made its way initially into *The Apostles*, then the “Coliseum Masque” from *The Crown of India*, then finally to its ultimate resting place in *The Music Makers*.¹⁷² Following one final reminder of *La Marseillaise* at mm. 252–258 in the trumpets and trombones, the bold figure finally rests on the musical heartbeat

¹⁷² Anderson, *Elgar*, 139.

motive of the C timpani. This repetitive motive highlights the earthly bound text to follow; “We, in the ages lying / In the buried past of the earth.”

“We in the ages lying” (m. 271) proved to effectively lend itself to word painting using a moving theme originally intended for a dramatic scene in *The Saga of St. Olaf*. Word painting in the voices on the words “lying” and “buried” moves downward every second measure by half-step (C, B, B-flat, A) along with the orchestral celli sequence downward by half-steps every two measures (B-flat, A, A-flat, G). Both themes at the downbeat of every other measure together land on notes that create a palpable major second dissonance and further elicit the sense of death. Christopher Kent further suggests that “[for] Elgar this phrase may well have conjured up the memory of King Olaf, whose fate was burial beneath the waves in the distant past.”¹⁷³ Anderson differently points out that this theme has its roots in Elgar’s Sketchbook VIII and was to be a song performed by a young harp player named Callicles in a planned setting of Matthew Arnold’s poem *Empedocles on Etna*.¹⁷⁴ Interestingly, the scene was to be concerned with shepherds lying in the moonlight, thus proving to be a natural connection to this part of the “Ode” text. After a period of inactivity, the harp makes a prominent return, further drawing focus on the theme’s original intention.

The downward moving theme transitions the section from C major quickly into D minor as the new melody (Ex. 8) enters on the words “Built Nineveh¹⁷⁵ with our sighing.” Koldau notes that:

¹⁷³ Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 88.

¹⁷⁴ Anderson, *Elgar*, 140-141.

¹⁷⁵ One of the oldest and greatest cities in antiquity, now called Mosul in Iraq.

The theme on "Nineveh" could have been written for a historical film: wide undulating choral gestures in ancient modality over a regular rhythmic pattern in the orchestra give life to the image of the building of Nineveh.¹⁷⁶



Ex. 8. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 280–284, “built Nineveh” theme.

This theme leads effortlessly into another example of word painting at mm. 284–285 (and again mm. 297–298) on the word “sighing” as choral duets echo off one another singing a “sigh” motive of five scalar pitches arching downward. This leads into one of the first instances when the work includes contrapuntal singing. Soon after, at m. 299, the climbing musical gesture on the words “Babel itself in our mirth” conjures up a joyous and vociferous sequence hearkening to the biblical tower of Babel with its many languages all being uttered concurrently. Interspersed throughout the phrase “And o’erthrew them with prophesying” are creatively hidden snippets of the opening phrases of *Rule, Britannia* and *La Marseillaise* which Newman stated were “...given out with great effect by the orchestra, pointing [to] certain morals in the words.”¹⁷⁷

¹⁷⁶ Koldau, *Elgar's "The Music Makers"*, 13.

¹⁷⁷ Newman, *The Music Makers*, 567.

Moderato

S. old, For each

A. *ff* To the old of the new world's worth; *ff*

T. old, *ff* To the old of the

B. old, O'er threw them with pro - phe - sy - ing

age is a dream that is dy ing, Or one that is com- ing, com - ing

new world's worth;

ff To the old of the new world's worth;

Ex. 9. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 313–319, “to the old of the new world’s worth” theme from the first-generation sketch-books (9 VI).

In mm. 313–319, Elgar enters a new 6/8 fugal section set to the words “To the old of the new world's worth” (Ex. 9). Drawn from Elgar’s first-generation sketch-books (9 VI)¹⁷⁸ and originally placed in *The Dream of Gerontius*, this short germ of an idea is much more substantially elaborated on by the middle strings

¹⁷⁸ (L.f.208v.) Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 135.

along with clarinets and voices. The organ also enters after a period of inactivity and helps segue into another “narrative haze” moment settling on a seemingly ungrounded first inversion diminished f chord. This is accompanied by tremolo strings and sequencing dual harps as the choir sings “a dream that is dying.” As Riley suggests “[often] these passages are harmonically static, and the functional status of pitches is thereby...undermined.”¹⁷⁹ Beginning in mm. 325–330, evocative words painting on “a dream that is dying” again employs a sequencing sigh motive, this time, set in a linear descent of a quarter-to-eighth note rhythmic pattern. Material originally planned for *Callicles* that saw the approach of Apollo and the nine muses¹⁸⁰ is followed by a brief utterance of the “The Complete Understanding” theme in the orchestra, ending with the “artists” theme (mm. 350–357). For the first time, Elgar merges a version of “The Complete Understanding” theme (in the orchestra) and the choir’s “artists” theme together.

Following a brief interlude set to the second prelude theme in 3/8, a momentary cessation of energy occurs as the *a cappella* choir rests with a *fermata* on the word “breath” before “of our inspiration.” Elgar chose to set the words “our inspiration” (mm. 363–364) to a Giuseppe Verdi melody for the text “et lux perpetua” (and light eternal) in the *Introit* of his *Requiem*. Elgar doesn’t have solely one voice or instrument play the full melody, but rather (following Ex. 10 arrows) parses out two notes beginning with the sopranos to each of the upper two vocal parts (one after another) and then three notes to the tenor part.

¹⁷⁹ Riley, *Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination*, 23.

¹⁸⁰ Julian Rushton, “Elgar and Religion,” *Musik-Konzepte* (January 2013), 22-38.

Kent cites three other instances in other works where Elgar quotes similar thematic material, though not necessarily always split in this fashion.¹⁸¹ Diana McVeagh, also notes that “as the ‘yearning’ theme reaches its highest note, the orchestra falls silent and the chorus breathes the word ‘inspiration’; the phrase is almost exactly the one under the words ‘and he worshipped Him’ [in *The Light of Life*].”¹⁸²

***ppp* a tempo, ma sostenuto**

S. Our _____ in - spi - ra - - - tion,

A. Our _____ in - spi - ra - - - tion,

T. Our _____ in - spi - ra - - - tion,

B. Our _____ in - spi - ra - - - tion,

Ex. 10. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 363–364, Verdi *Requiem* “introit” theme, mm. 17–22.

Beginning at R42,¹⁸³ with the words “[a] wondrous thing of our dreaming” the violin arabesques are derived from material which Elgar composed for his

¹⁸¹ *The Light of Life* (no. 15, letter C), *Caractacus* (Scene VI, Ex. 5), *The Music Makers* (figs. 39 and 507), and the *Cello Concerto* (fig. 366). “It is interesting to note that in each of the Elgar versions of this figure, the music acquires its characteristic Elgarian flow from the use of successive first inversion triads and appoggiaturas.” Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 13.

¹⁸² McVeagh, *Elgar’s musical language*, 62.

¹⁸³ A comical Elgar written footnote dated January 15, 1931 is found in the sketches of *Music Makers* ... it reads “Mem: for trout (descent) three (small) put back. Mr. D. Hooked a salmon and lost it. MordiFord.” Young, *Elgar O. M.*, 234.

unfinished string quartet of 1907.¹⁸⁴ Continued word painting occurs in the vocal parts beginning at m. 389 through a sequenced lowering of pitches on “Unearthly, impossible seeming” (Ex. 11) conjuring up an otherworldly feeling.

Poco piu animato.

S. im - pos - si - ble seem - ing

A. Un - earth - ly, Un -

T. im - pos - si - ble seem - ing,

B. Un - earth - ly, Un -

4 *cresc.* **poco a poco animato**

im - pos - si - ble seem - ing,

earth - ly,

cresc.

im - pos - si - ble seem - ing,

earth - ly,

Ex. 11. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 389–393, word painting on “unearthly, impossible seeming.”

One notices this section contains, like others before it, compositional techniques by which Elgar utilizes harmonic material which modulates quickly from one

¹⁸⁴ Hunt, *Thoughts on The Music Makers*, 9.

theme's key to another and then another in quick succession. The melodic material and its sequencing accomplish this effect in short course. In this case, the "otherworldly" sounding key of A-minor slowly wends its way to a triumphant C-sharp major at m. 397 with "The soldier, the king, and the peasant / Are working together in one." Soon after this arrival at m. 418, Elgar placed a short duet between the tenor and bass, then echoed by the women on "till our dream shall become their present." Hunt suggests this phrase was taken from "a little fanciful duo called 'He and she'."¹⁸⁵ "And their work in the world be done" ends with a gradual diminishing of orchestral activity leading gently into the first contralto solo of the work on "They¹⁸⁶ had no vision amazing." This text is now set to the theme originally heard on "World-movers and world-forsakers" located just following the original "artists" theme found at m. 121. The first violins (Ex. 12) briefly make use of the earlier theme as it quickly connects to another quoting of "The Complete Understanding" theme, this time located in the soloist's melodic line (m. 452) and not orchestrally, as is more common.

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Solo and Violin 1. The Solo part is in 3/4 time, starting with a piano (p) dynamic and an acceleration (accel.) marking. The lyrics are "Of the good - ly house they are rais - ing;". The Violin 1 part is in 3/4 time, starting with a pianissimo (pp) dynamic and featuring several triplet markings. The dynamics for the Violin 1 part are pp, mf, and pp.

Ex. 12. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 445–449, the upward coiling theme supporting the soloist's "of the goodly house they are raising."

¹⁸⁵ Ibid.

¹⁸⁶ **They** had no vision = * i.e., Soldiers, kings, peasants, and other of the world's workers. Newman, *The Music Makers* 567.

A touching, though minor, moment points to Elgar's knack for word painting. After the expected use of the A-flat in the melody, Elgar, with the change of one A-flat to an A-natural on the word "divine", alters the symbolism from that of earthly (minor triad) to that of heavenly (major triad). At this *lento* tempo, the soloist takes the lead and can elicit the most of this subtle moment.

At the same time, a new quote is set into the work. Elgar's *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* supplies the melody for both the soloist and the first violins from mm. 457–462. Derived from the cello melody in movement three of the concerto, the melody segues into the first vocal entrance of the "Nimrod" theme from the ninth variation of the "*Enigma*" *Variations*. Set first for viola and soloist, the haunting theme (Ex. 13) on "But on one man's soul it hath broken a light that doth not depart" served for Elgar as a reminder of his dear departed friend who had served as artistic inspiration and still did after death.¹⁸⁷ Newman understood the importance of a repeated melody.¹⁸⁸

¹⁸⁷ August Jaeger died in 1909.

¹⁸⁸ "Prominent in the tissue is a typical Elgarian theme that is afterwards employed several times to symbolize the fulfilling of the dream." Newman, *The Music Makers*, 569.

Solo

Violin I

5

But on one man's soul it hath

bro - ken a light that doth not de - part

pp *f* *dim.* *p*

dim. *pp*

cresc. *cresc.*

Ex. 13. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 463–470, “Nimrod” theme with solo.

This “aching recall”¹⁸⁹ melds seamlessly into a similarly emotional theme from the Finale of the Symphony #2 (5 measures after R170) and set to the text “And his look / Or a word he hath spoken” (Ex. 14).

Solo

S.

allargando

sostenuto

And his look, or a word he hath spo-ken,

And his look, or a word he hath spo-ken,

f *p*

Ex. 14. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 483–487, theme from the finale to Elgar’s Symphony #2 (5 mm. after R170).

¹⁸⁹ Diana McVeagh, “A Man’s Attitude to Life,” in *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*, ed. Raymond Monk (Scolar Press, 1993), 7.

Set in the soprano and tenor parts and mirrored by the first violins and violas (m. 483), the theme emotionally intensifies the singing. The broadening *allargando* emphatically surges into an unexpected and energetic segue into a new section full of hope-filled potential of the new generation.

And therefore to-day is thrilling
 With a past day's late fulfilling;
 And the multitudes are enlisted
 In the faith that their fathers resisted,
 And, scorning the dream of to-morrow,
 Are bringing to pass, as they may,
 In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,
 The dream that was scorned yesterday.

At mm. 534–540, a triple *forte* variant of the “artists” theme, still employing the original text, interrupts the fabric of “The dream that was scorned.” Elgar chose to repeat the previous stanza (above) a second time with much of the same thematic material, though with less textual repetition this time. Similarly, (m. 567) Elgar again interjects the “artists” theme, now also actively accompanied, and at an even higher tessitura than the first time. With the sopranos singing their highest note of the work, a B-flat, the earlier phrase “We are the movers and shakers of the world” segues the action into what is likely the most gloriously triumphant section of the work. In a clever paraphrasing of the previous stanza texts¹⁹⁰ Elgar’s expressive contrapuntal vocal lines beginning with “Parry-cum-

¹⁹⁰ “The multitudes... are bringing to pass...the dream that was scorned yesterday.” Referred to on page 60.

Elgar leaping sevenths”,¹⁹¹ segue into the first prelude theme, now treated as an interlude into the next and slightly less energetic stanza.

Set as a lilting 6/8 fugue, “But we, with our dreaming and singing” begins energetically, but becomes quieter and sets the tone for the message of affirmation to follow. The interlude material at m. 611, though brief, appears to have been derived from a planned string quartet written in 1907.¹⁹²

The “Enigma” theme re-appears in a slightly modified form in the flute and clarinet parts at mm. 647–656 and by the voices briefly at the words “in our dreaming and singing.” Newman suggests that the “Nimrod” theme is warranted here as “we have another reminder of the sadness of the “artists” mission.”¹⁹³ A bit more subtly, at mm. 657–661 (Ex. 15), Elgar references his *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* in the first violins under the words “a little apart from ye.” For Elgar, this violin melody, coupled with the monotone singing voices might have represented a personal sadness in how he felt that his own dreams or visions were poorly received.



Ex. 15. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 657–661, theme from Elgar’s *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra*.

¹⁹¹ Herbert Howells, *Preface to the score of “Concerto for String Orchestra”* (London: Novello, 1938).

¹⁹² Hunt, *Thoughts on The Music Makers*, 9.

¹⁹³ Newman, *The Music Makers*, 569.

At the same time, almost as an echo, a two-measure utterance of the “Enigma” theme is heard at a *pianissimo* in the flute and English horn followed by a two-measure quote (mm. 662–663) in the violins from the slow movement of the violin concerto. Immediately following, a new quote in the flutes, clarinets and first violins enters, (mm. 663–665) this time from his oratorio *The Apostles* (at cue 205). In this new setting, the tempo of the original quote has been noticeably accelerated. In its original score context, this quote from the chorus “There shall ye see Him” acted as an affirmation of Christ’s rising, as conveyed to the disciple Peter by the angel at Christ’s tomb. In this new context, Elgar seems to draw a connection between Christ’s separation from his followers and the “artist and dreamer [who] must by his nature be 'a little apart' from the mass of men.”¹⁹⁴

Following a *lunga fermata* at m. 666, the “artists” theme is heard twice in succession and at differing pitch levels. Like the first time, the choir begins in hushed unaccompanied fashion, this time on the new words “For we are afar with the dawning” to be followed by the second utterance at an interval of a fourth higher on the words “And the suns that are not yet high.” A not so subtle placement of a *fermata* on the second syllable of the choir’s “a-far” figuratively lengthens the distance between the artist and others. Over a short six-measure phrase, the hushed entrance, followed by an impressive upward surging string flourish, crescendos to another unexpected change in dynamics. Accompanied

¹⁹⁴ Newman, *The Music Makers*, 569.

by a surprising omission of orchestral support (mm. 672–674), a triumphant “morning” (Ex. 16) is signaled.



Ex. 16. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 672–678, motto theme from the first movt. of Elgar’s Symphony #1, op. 55.

Along with the introduction of the motto theme from the first movement of Elgar’s Symphony #1 (mm. 3–8), this theme, located first in the soprano part, acts as a segue into the new key of C-minor and is filled with a plethora of inspired *con fuoco* brass writing. In its original context, this *nobilmente e semplice* theme¹⁹⁵ is now set to the cautionary words “And already goes forth the warning / That ye of the past must die.” This leads to closure of the section which is highlighted by a solo viola passage (mm. 709–711), originally heard with the earlier words “He had no vision amazing.”

The final stanza of the “ode” (m. 712) begins with an impassioned soloist entrance on “Great hail! we cry to the comers from the dazzling unknown shore.” Set to newly composed music and accompanied by virtuosic string writing, the beginning *allegro* tempo soon gives way to a much slower tempo entrance of “The Complete Understanding” theme now sung by the soloist to the new words

¹⁹⁵ Edward Elgar, *Symphonies Nos. 1 and 2 in Full Score* (Mineola, NY: Dover Publications, 1999), 3.

Bring us hither your sun and your summers;
 And renew our world as of yore;
 You shall teach us your song's new numbers,
 And things that we dreamed not before:

This soloist's theme (m. 727) is often mirrored by *colla parte* first violins, methodically grounding the listener over this longest iteration of this now well-known melody. A mood of hushed reverence for the artist and dreamer is created.

Beginning at m. 866, the soloist's new melody set to "Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers" has been suggested¹⁹⁶ to parallel the Rondo theme from Symphony #2 (movement 3) located in the opening measures of the bassoon part where the melody rises by half steps.¹⁹⁷ In this case, the melody does so as well, but in reverse downward motion. As the soloist sings her final phrase "And a singer who sings no more", Elgar's "Novissima hora est" theme from *The Dream of Gerontius* (part I, R66) is referenced immediately after the solo (Ex. 17).

Solo *dim.*
 And a sing-er who sings no more, ___ *espressivo*
 Violin 1 *pp*

Ex. 17. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 870–875, the violin 1 quotes the "Novissima hora est" theme from *The Dream of Gerontius* (part 1, R66).

¹⁹⁶ Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar*, 211.

¹⁹⁷ Kent, *Edward Elgar: a composer at work*, 190.

This theme, found both at mm. 874–877 in the first violin and then again at mm. 880–883 in the first violin and solo lines, was originally a precursor to the words “into Thy hands, O Lord.” In *The Music Makers*, this same penitential theme is offered while the last reminder of “The Complete Understanding” theme leads into the final utterance of the original “artists” theme (m. 881). Now buoyed by an ethereal string support, this final phrase enters at a triple *piano* and drifts away as if to remind us that the artist’s work continues.

Multiple writers have noticed that during the 1910s, Elgar “developed a tendency to conclude his major compositions with bitter irony or with palpable, unresolved duality.”¹⁹⁸ Riley argues that *The Music Makers* and several other works “endure painful ruptures in their final bars, which push dream and reality, memory and present consciousness into stark oppositions.”¹⁹⁹ In addition, some musicologists have critiqued Elgar’s supposed “weak” ending to the work. As Boyle interprets the ending, he suggests it “seems to show Elgar leaving the dream unfinished.”²⁰⁰ This quiet ending surely does re-enforce the concept of the artist’s vision continuing long into the future, into the unseen distance. As McGuire has also advocated for Elgar’s *The Apostles* (also hailing from this same period), *The Music Makers* ending is also one that may be considered soft, lacking a feeling of conclusion as it “was not concrete, nor was it reason for a physical celebration.”²⁰¹ And, as Elgar himself spoke, “I have endeavoured to

¹⁹⁸ Matthew Riley, “Elgar the Escapist”, in *Edward Elgar and His World*, ed. Byron Adams (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007), 50.

¹⁹⁹ *Ibid.*, 47.

²⁰⁰ Boyle, *Interpreting Elgar*, 224.

²⁰¹ McGuire, *Elgar's Oratorios*, 292.

interpret the Ode as shewing the continuity of art..." a continuity that may be not always be in the forefront of our thoughts and actions, but which is nonetheless necessary for progress and societal advancement.

CHAPTER IV

PEDAGOGICAL AND CONDUCTING CHALLENGES

The Makeup of The Musical Forces

Having addressed the text of O'Shaughnessy's "Ode" and Elgar's self-quotations in the previous two chapters, this fourth chapter will examine the makeup of the musical forces and the pedagogical challenges contained within the score, incorporating suggested solutions for a conductor endeavoring to prepare and perform *The Music Makers*.

Initially there will be a brief discussion of the choral, orchestral, and solo forces utilized. Discussion of the numbers of singers and musicians required, their ranges and other performance aspects will clarify the vocal, orchestral and conducting challenges that are most prominent in the work. Reference to Elgar's own conducting of this work and his performance practice, set into the context of the early twentieth century and using contemporary documentation, will help us gain a better understanding of the composer's style and expectations.

Finally, a section by section narrative of the music, including occasional accompanying musical figures, will offer suggested remedies for some of the specific challenges presented in the music. Proposed solutions with approaches with which to address vocal, orchestral and conducting challenges will be offered

throughout and will also incorporate pertinent thoughts from the writer and other documentation. In closing, suggestions for optional rehearsal order will be offered.

The choral forces in *The Music Makers* are comprised of the four common vocal parts, soprano, alto, tenor and bass with occasional part divisi. Most often divisi tend to occur during the homophonic moments of the work. The ranges of each part are quite extreme, with sopranos singing as high as a B-flat 5 and tenors up to B-flat 4. The bass and alto parts tend to dwell in the middle tessitura more frequently, with occasional moments above the clef, but not so much that the tessitura affects the singer's stamina to endure for the duration of the almost forty-minute work. There are occasional moments when the altos sing as low as an F3. Frequently the tenors are also singing the same pitches at a perfect unison. During these moments it is advised that choices are made whereby the first tenor part sings these lower alto notes and all altos sing the lower pitches of the second soprano part. There do not appear to be any specific reasons why Elgar chose to set the altos in this low range, whether it be for textual or color reasons. It is helpful to note that examples of this "re-writing" were indeed condoned during Elgar's own performances of his choral works.²⁰² Due to the loud dynamics and fullness of scoring, a minimum of about twenty-five singers per part is recommended. With even more vocalists being preferable, the

²⁰² Malcolm Sargent and other choral directors are known to have done this in order to balance the vocal parts when one of them was singing in a part of their range in which it was difficult to sing with enough volume and to balance vocal parts. Hunt, *Thoughts on The Music Makers*, 11.

balance issues with orchestra will be less problematic than might otherwise be the case. It is important to note, that there is more choral singing in *The Music Makers* than in *The Dream of Gerontius*, even though, based on the latter's popularity, one might expect otherwise.

Though choral conductors often conceive of their choir layout in very personal ways, there is an orchestral precedent from the earlier twentieth century that, by extension, suggests that choirs might be laid out with the sopranos and basses on the left of the conductor, with basses behind sopranos and the altos and tenors on the conductor's right, with the women again in the front rows. This layout would effectively match the common pairings of the first violins with sopranos and the second violins with the altos. It also would allow for the outside voices (sopranos and basses) to actively be aware of the Elgarian compositional tendency to set up the rhythmic polarity between melody and bass lines.

Over the course of the twentieth century the English orchestral placement of the violin sections evolved. During the nineteenth century and the first few decades of the twentieth century, violins still tended to be located on both sides of the conductor, with firsts on the left and seconds on the right and the violas and bass instruments in the center, as was feasible. This approach, common in the Hallé and London Symphony orchestras with which Elgar often worked, provided a layout that rather effectively brought out the antiphonal nature of the violin parts and "Elgar's music simply leaps off the page" as envisioned.²⁰³ Even

²⁰³ Ben Palmer, "The sound of Elgar's orchestra - a study of early twentieth-century orchestral performance practice," in *The Elgar Society Journal* XIX/1 (April 2015), 14.

today, under the leadership of conductor Mark Elder, the Hallé Orchestra can use this older arrangement.

As was traditional for Elgar's choral works with orchestra, the scoring is rather full-bodied. The instrumentation not only requires the usual complement of orchestral strings, woodwinds, brass and timpani but also includes several late-Romantic orchestra additions like the piccolo, English horn, contrabassoon, bass clarinet, four French horns, tuba, two harps and a pipe organ. Though written with their own unique scoring and adding much color to the orchestration, the harps and organ parts may be adaptable. In a letter to Kilburn during the summer of 1912, Elgar noted that he envisioned the orchestration to be a flexible one. This flexibility would accommodate performances in locations around England where certain instruments might be more difficult to acquire.²⁰⁴ It is evident that Elgar condoned the limiting of two harps down to one ("One will do!") and the omission of the organ part ("where practical") entirely. For today's performances more commonly occurring in a concert hall instead of a church venue this permission comes as a welcome option. Otherwise, the composer specifies that the three trombone parts "May be boiled down to two by an expert", and that the percussion parts "will take 3 men."

Depending on the size of the choral forces, the number of strings might also be supplemented. Hans Richter, who conducted several Elgar premieres of a purely orchestral nature, also debuted the oratorio *The Dream of Gerontius*. By

²⁰⁴ Based on Elgar's letter to Kilburn prior to the debut – 5 July 1912, letter in Jerrold Northrop Moore, *Edward Elgar Letters of a Lifetime* (London: Clarendon Press, 1990), 246-247.

extension, it is likely that he, had he conducted the work, may have also maintained the same orchestral forces in *The Music Makers*. Elgar also may have followed his lead. For the 1908 debut of Elgar's Symphony #1, Richter called for a string allotment of 16.16.11.12.10. Similar requirements were expressed for other performances as well.²⁰⁵ It is important to note, however, that the strings of the time, and up until the early 1960's, were predominantly strung with gut strings,²⁰⁶ thus strings today which are capable of producing more sound might merit a limiting of the number of strings players so as not to overwhelm the choral forces. In addition, some of the extensions to instruments, such as those on the double bass, were just beginning to become more commonplace. For situations such as these, Elgar provided alternate small notes to be played in locales where a newer instrument might not have been available. These smaller ossia versions were for the limited, not the expanded, instruments. Today, with contemporary instruments being the norm, the larger notes would be used.

One of the most moving aspects of *The Music Makers* is no doubt the inclusion of the mezzo-soprano soloist. Sometimes also listed as a "contralto", a consistent brilliance from lowest to highest note must be present. Her solo sections are generally more contemplative and often the most intimate in nature and are responsible for conveying the emotional depth of the significant and beloved "Nimrod" theme. This was true in all his vocal music. When discussing Elgar's vocal music, Brian Trowell reminds us that for

²⁰⁵ Palmer, *The Sound*, 5.

²⁰⁶ Palmer, *The Sound*, 8.

... such songs he demanded 'singers with brains', of the kind whose absence had made for difficulties in the early performances of the oratorios. As well as musicality and a lovely sound, he required from them a high level of general intelligence and a subtle response to words...²⁰⁷

A soloist with strong, nuanced communication talent is imperative.²⁰⁸ With a rather wide range, ranging from a low B-flat 3 to a high G5, the soloist should possess not only a well-supported lower range but also a consistent comfort and power in the higher tessitura. Occasional smaller alternate notes, as seen for instance in 1 before R86, are included in the score where a specific high note may be out of range for a given singer. With dramatic reasons in mind, it is surely preferable that all larger notes are observed. When the soloist sings alone, the orchestral scoring is carefully minimized and fewer instruments are generally engaged. However, the soloist is also often singing her own unique vocal line at the same time the full choir is singing at a loud dynamic and with a full orchestration. Choosing a soloist possessing a timbre that is capable of being clearly heard above the other forces is crucial.

²⁰⁷ Brian Trowell, "Elgar's Use of Literature", in *Edward Elgar: Music and Literature*, ed. Raymond Monk (1993), 276.

²⁰⁸ In the words of Dame Janet Baker, one of the foremost twentieth century interpreters of the Elgar solo roles: "For a moment the power of music allied to the power of words is placed in the hands of the singer is the medium between composer, poet and audience, bringing with it the most awesome responsibility and the most sublime joy." Janet Baker, "The Role of the Angel in the *Dream of Gerontius*", in *Elgar, an anniversary portrait*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (London: Continuum, 2007), 147.

Performance Practices

To perform Elgar's music in an informed manner, one must be aware of a number of consistent editorial and performance practice issues that are prevalent in his scores. While preparing the work, close attention must obviously be paid to editorial details such as articulations, tempi and dynamic markings that will ultimately effect expression opportunities. In addition, other performance practice expectations, such as Elgar's expectation for "elasticity" and flexibility in performances (which are felt or learned) can greatly impact the expression of the conductor and thus the musical forces. Varying of tempi, many of which are unexpected and sudden, are often not noted in scores. These factors must be understood and embraced as they can provide obstacles for the successful performance of much of his music. To embrace these expectations, it is helpful to know a bit about Elgar as a conductor.

Just as Elgar was a self-taught composer, he was also a self-taught conductor. Though he conducted many performances of his own music throughout the years, including the debut of *The Music Makers*, his technical skills were not nuanced nor sufficient to always communicate the intricacies of his own music, although they did improve over time. In his October 1913 Daily Telegraph review of the *Falstaff* debut, critic Robin Legge wrote:

I do not think that even Elgar has ever written more complicated music, and it is for this very reason that I wish a greater conductor than he had explained his complications last night.²⁰⁹

²⁰⁹ Anderson, *Elgar*, 112.

That said, there are many reflections by other musicians on performances where Elgar's unique style, though often "stiff and jerky", rather effectively seemed to communicate the true meaning of the work.²¹⁰ As conductor Stephen Lloyd remarked, Elgar's conducting

...if sometimes lacking precision in the technical sense, [has] rarely been surpassed for releasing the very spirit of the work. No-one knew better than he the elusive secrets to their interpretation, those subtle inflections and the right placing (or eschewal of) emphasis.²¹¹

Likewise, in a *Musical Times* review of a performance by Elgar of his own music, an anonymous critic stated that "Points, shadows and lights are specially and often delicately contrasted, and the whole work seems to be more organic than when other conductors conduct it."²¹² This sense of elasticity and freedom was extremely important to Elgar.

Though contemporary conductors differed in their opinions on the effectiveness of his conducting style and the detail of his performances, they did tend to agree that the works sounded fresh and new and truly came alive when he conducted them. Famed English conductor Sir Adrian Boult who worked with Elgar went so far as to say that though

...musicians who heard Elgar conduct are getting fewer in number...I think they will all agree that if they could make a list of the finest performances they had ever heard of Elgar's works,

²¹⁰ Alan Webb, "Some Personal Memories of Elgar", in *An Elgar Companion*, ed. Christopher Redwood (Derbyshire, England: Sequoia Publishing, 1982), 169.

²¹¹ Stephen Lloyd, "Elgar as Conductor", in *An Elgar Companion*. Ed. Christopher Redwood (Derbyshire, England. Sequoia Publishing, 1982), 291.

²¹² *Ibid.*, 305.

nearly, if not all of them would turn out to have been conducted by Elgar himself.²¹³

Elgar himself in later life is quoted as saying that when it came to the

interpretations of his own music he considered his recordings

... to be of great educational value, and am quite satisfied that the records of my compositions, conducted by me are remarkably faithful reproductions of the originals.²¹⁴

It is therefore advisable to refer to the many recordings he made during the last twenty years of his life to help identify ways in which he expressed his own music and personally interpreted the detailed markings he placed in his scores. While listening to these recordings one will be surprised by the seeming lack of attention to performance detail, as if almost appearing to leave them to chance.²¹⁵ This lack of detail likely has more to do with Elgar's personality and inability to effectively communicate through the spoken word what he expected from his performers. It is well documented through letters with his publishers and personal journal entries that he was generally very detailed in his musical expectations that were printed in his scores.

²¹³ Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar*, 304.

²¹⁴ Regarding his own approach to conducting his own works, Elgar himself wrote in *The Voice* (His Majesty's Voice newsletter). Moore, *Elgar on Record*, 20.

²¹⁵ In a review of his London Symphony Orchestra conducting the Musical Times reported "Sir Edward has a drastic way of hacking at his music. All sorts of things which other conductors carefully foster, he seems to leave to take their chance. He cuts a way through in a fashion both nervous and decisive...At the end we realize that detail and rhetorical niceties have been put in their right place, and that the essential tale has been vividly told." *The Musical Times*, lxxvii (1926), 550.

In part due to his very conscientious wife Alice and his editors at Novello, the amount of detail in Elgar's scores is staggering. Elgar himself wished for nothing to be left to chance and carefully insisted on all details that would bring his style to life. As soloist Dame Janet Baker suggested

Elgar, great composer that he is, has thought of everything: the performer has only to obey the markings and directions he has written on the score – these are many and one ignores them at one's peril.²¹⁶

Particularly detailed are the markings related to dynamics and expression (crescendos, etc.). A master at orchestrating and clearly possessing a deep knowledge of the instruments with their strengths and weaknesses, Elgar was very careful to judiciously choose dynamics, for instance, for an instrumental part so as to allow for balance with a vocalist singing in tandem. Markings are “personalized” and attention to these details, or lack thereof, can make a huge difference in the outcome of the performance. On paper, very little was left to chance, a crucial tactic given that Elgar was well aware that the performing resources at his disposal were often lacking.²¹⁷

As implied, one of the largest issues in Elgar's extended choral/orchestral works is that of balance. Though not unique to *The Music Makers*, Elgar's very dramatic music often contains pronounced and sudden changes in dynamics. Sir Mark Elder, current conductor of the Hallé Orchestra, which specializes in period

²¹⁶ Baker, *The Role*, 144.

²¹⁷ “...in all his compositions he was the most practical of workmen and knew well the shortcomings of the choirs and orchestral players in England at the time. He left nothing to chance...” Boyle, *Interpreting Elgar*, 220.

performance practices, is particularly well versed in the issues related to Elgar's music. He warns that

...the big tuttis which can be too brassy and veer towards pomposity and emptiness, the side of his music-making that evokes an open-top sports car whizzing along the lanes-all that is easier to hear and feel. The other stuff in between-the shimmering, uncertain harmonies, the moments of rhythmic suspension and of waiting-they are so difficult to do beautifully.²¹⁸

There is a need to keep a constant ear towards balance, but also to work towards bringing out the inner parts with their special harmonic traits.

Editorially, Elgar also generally paid careful attention to breathing and the interpretive needs of the choir. Most of the original textual breaths are made evident in O'Shaughnessy's poem; however, as will be elaborated upon later, there are occasional moments when breaths not coordinated with the poem's original punctuation were added to effectively convey the meaning of the text or the way in which he set the text to the orchestral scoring at the time. Additionally, Elgar very clearly denoted an accent on commonly accepted un-stressed syllables, for example at m. 508. Often these stressed syllables make musical and dramatic sense, but sometimes can appear forced or even awkward, especially by today's standards. Such choices sometimes make more sense aurally than on the page visually.

Another way in which Elgar's music would have been performed, and again this is not clearly marked in the music itself, is with the incorporation of

²¹⁸ Mark Elder, "Conducting Elgar", in *Elgar, an anniversary portrait*, ed. Nicholas Kenyon (London: Continuum, 2007), 134.

portamenti.²¹⁹ Now rarely utilized, contemporary performers incorporated these “lush expressive slides” between notes sometimes as often as every few intervals.²²⁰ Most commonly utilized in the string playing of the time, but sometimes vocally as well, portamenti are now instead used for special effect and not because they are stylistically requested. However, as Elder notes, portamenti added greatly to the palette of feeling in Elgar, heightening the expressiveness of the moment.²²¹ To embrace the use of portamenti in a performance today, analysis would be required regarding the type of portamenti that was intended by the composer in each given situation. Questions to consider include: Are they a slow or fast slide? covering a change of string fingering positions? loud or soft? and so on.²²² To effectively add these to a performance would require much time, detailed planning and careful execution.

Over the course of the twentieth century, string technique evolved to essentially replace the widespread use of portamenti with a more consistent use of vibrato. Though vibrato existed in Elgar’s time, it was used much more sparingly and often in a shallow manner, mostly to add color to long-held notes. In the context of contemporary performances, scholars tend to agree that “any attempt to reconstruct the style of the 1920s would not only be doomed to failure” and “would also be essentially phoney.”²²³ This doesn’t mean that it can’t be

²¹⁹ Elgar's scores rarely indicate or imply a slide.

²²⁰ Palmer, *The sound of Elgar's orchestra*, 11.

²²¹ Elder, *Conducting Elgar*, 138.

²²² Robert Philip, “The Recordings of Edward Elgar (1857-1934): Authenticity and Performance Practice,” *Early Music*, XII/4 (November 1984), 487.

²²³ *Ibid.*, 489.

done, but time constraints might preclude being able to change current player's habits. Robert Phillips further concludes that the study of performances by Elgar

...can guide us, not towards the sterile reconstruction of a dead style, but towards the creation of performances of his music which speak as forcefully to us as Elgar's own performances spoke to his contemporaries.²²⁴

This would require getting into the head and heart of the composer.

Elgar's style is not always predictable based on the printed directions in the score, as detailed as his score markings are. It can't be stressed enough that Elgar's style is one encompassing a free sense of "elasticity." This overarching sense of flexibility allows performances to sound particularly dramatic and emotional, while at the same time maintaining a quality of spontaneity or freshness. Elgar elicited this elasticity in a variety of ways. For example, he wrote many passages whereby he approached the climax of a section by a steady rise and fall of pitch and dynamic. This moment was then accentuated by a simultaneous growth and diminishing of speed or rubato. A 1926 review of Elgar stated

...the orchestra played with great purity of tone, and were responsive to Sir Edward's very personal rubato. Elgar's rubato is characterized by the subtle use of tenutos and agogic accents, accelerandos and rallentandos, in such a way that the overall flow of the music is not impeded.²²⁵

Thus, this effect is also accompanied by a growing of the dynamics when the tempo speeds up and a diminishing of the dynamic as the music slows down.

²²⁴ Ibid.

²²⁵ *The Times* (27 April 1926), 14.

The markings in the score may sometimes allude to this effect, but the amount to which this is done is ultimately communicated by the conductor and may vary quite a bit from one run to another. Given the almost improvisatory manner of this ebb and flow, Mark Elder points out that “People always describe this process as being very spontaneous, so much so that at times it's very difficult for players!”²²⁶ This suggests that as much practice as possible with one's orchestra is needed so these elastic moments can flow naturally and effortlessly. It is important to note that while Elgar wrote definite tempo markings in his scores, he did not always follow them strictly himself as a conductor. In a letter to his editor and friend August Jaeger the composer grumbled

When they [his works] go as I like - elastically and mystically - people grumble - when they are conducted squarely and sound like a wooden box these people are pleased to say it's better. It's a curious thing that the performances that I have hated & loathed as being caricatures of my thoughts are the very ones held up as patterns.²²⁷

That said, Elgar's approach to that elasticity would vary from time to time even when conducting the same work with the same ensemble. Learning this can also be done by listening to recordings of the time, noticing that these effects were not only Elgar's choices, but were informed by performance styles and habits of the period.²²⁸

Not only did Elgar's own personal leanings towards elasticity affect his performances, but the nature of tempi evolved over time as well. Conductors of

²²⁶ Elder, *Conducting Elgar*, 135.

²²⁷ Letter to Jaeger from Elgar on July 1, 1903. Kennedy, *Portrait of Elgar*, 179.

²²⁸ Philip, *The Recordings*, 481.

Elgar's period, including Elgar himself, tended to take fast tempi particularly quickly by today's standards, as revealed by early 78 rpm recordings. It has been suggested that one reason for this is that today we are more concerned about the clarity and precision of the faster sections and thus take them more slowly than before.²²⁹ Additionally, there is evidence to suggest faster tempi tended to occur on pre-1925 recordings specifically due to the very short time length that each side of an acoustic recording could accommodate. However, even slower and more melodic sections are now taken even more slowly so as to dwell on the lovely melodies. Markings abound in Elgar's music. E. O. Turner suggests that "As he grew older he grew more accurate, and the marks are often more numerous."²³⁰ On one hand Elgar once announced that

all his music required was to be left alone to say what it had to say in its own way: the expression was in the music, and it was not merely unnecessary but harmful for the conductor to add to it an expression of his own.²³¹

That said, his recordings show that he conducted the melodic themes more slowly than the rhythmic ones, even when they were listed in the scores as being the same tempo.²³² Elgar could also be a very practical man and was known to vary his tempi in reaction to issues such as hall size, acoustics and number of performances forces.

²²⁹ Ibid., 484.

²³⁰ E. O. Turner, "Tempo Variation: With Examples from Elgar," *Music & Letters* XIX/3 (July 1938), 319.

²³¹ *Sunday Times*, 25 October, quoted in Ibid., 320.

²³² Ibid., 314.

Real-Life Thoughts on Preparing “The Music Makers”

The remainder of this chapter will grapple with issues presented in *The Music Makers* score, and helpful suggestions will be offered that successfully address a variety of pedagogical issues contained therein. Again, the Elgar Complete Edition full score will continue to be referenced for this process. Occasionally, thoughts based on comparisons between three key recordings will further illuminate examples. The two conductors who most benefited from their experiences performing under Elgar himself, and thus became immersed in his style, were Sir Adrian Boult and Sir John Barbirolli. Both men were considered, along with Malcolm Sargent, to be the foremost interpreters of Elgar’s music in England in the second half of the twentieth century. Of these first two, Boult recorded *The Music Makers*, but Barbirolli, though he likely performed it, did not. Of today’s conductors, Mark Elder of the Hallé Orchestra has picked up the mantle of Elgar specialist. For the purposes of this document, the 2005 recording conducted by Elder with the Hallé Orchestra and chorus with Jane Irwin soloist, and the EMI 1966 Boult recording of the London Philharmonic Orchestra and Chorus with Dame Janet Baker as soloist have been chosen, alongside Elgar’s 1927 live recording.

As mentioned earlier, *The Music Makers* contains much more choral singing than his most well-known choral/orchestral work *The Dream of Gerontius*. Though the soloist sings some lengthy sections, the chorus is active much more frequently and sings music that is much more complex than that found in most of

Elgar's choral oeuvre. Moreover, there are numerous pedagogical issues that will face the singers (such as vowel choices), as well as technical problems that the conductor will face (such as beat patterns). An analysis of these challenges, combined with solutions for surmounting them, will offer insight into ways all participants can bring out the drama and stirring musicianship of the work.

The prelude is by far the longest purely orchestral section of the piece, containing the outlines of the two new themes that will reoccur multiple times later in the work and at largely varied tempi. Elgar calls for m. 1 to begin at a spirited pace of eighth note = 138 in the 3/8 time. Even at this faster tempo the conductor should conduct in 3 while working to de-emphasize the second and third beats of each measure. This will instead allow focus on the longer melodic phrase that surges forward with an almost wave-like ebb and flow. Occasionally, it may even be helpful to conduct in 1, accentuating the hypermeter thus further emphasizing the overall melodic contour. Though many of the instruments will face issues of tuning, the half-step movement found in this opening accompanimental theme (found primarily in the oboe, *Cor Inglese*, French horns and viola parts) deserves special attention. In addition, one should stress the constantly changing and often *subito* dynamic changes immediately. This hallmark of Elgar's style should be stressed throughout and will ultimately help the work to maintain its spontaneity.

In m. 23, one will notice an example where Elgar conveys a change of tempo, this time to a *tranquillo e cantabile*, through purely textual tempo directions. This is but one example where his tempo directions leave a fair

amount of room for a conductor's interpretation. For instance, in the Boult recording, the theme 2 tempi vary quite substantially from the opening theme and even within it an emotive elasticity exists.

Beginning at m. 55, balance issues often exist when the violoncello, viola and three wind parts assume the melodic interest while the other strings and remaining winds play the *affrettando* (rushed or nervous accelerando) mostly octave based, accompanimental figure. The tendency, particularly when larger numbers of strings are used, is for balance to be inconsistent when secondary parts are too loud. Elgar's varied notated dynamics are well designed to avoid this problem, but it still can occur. Conduct this moment in 1 until the *tempo primo* returns. From this point through the ending prelude *ritardando*, conducting in 3 will allow for the *piu tranquillo* to slowly wind down the energy of the section and arrive sensitively at R10 where we hear the first utterance of the *a cappella* "artists" theme.

The m. 109 moment calls for the quietest of singing. The large numbers of singers that the work generally requires (in order to best balance the louder dynamics found in the majority of the work) can often be too much for this moment. Careful attention should be made to teach the choir to sing as softly as possible. Though marked *piano*, a conductor should be prepared at the beginning of the rehearsal process to instead suggest a *pianissimo* dynamic. Also, though usually addressed through his notation, there are moments when a phrase requires a breath (conveyed both by the artistic phrasing and punctuation) but the notation does not show where the breath should occur.

Measure 110 is one example where the half-note should be shortened by an eighth rest. This likewise occurs in m. 115 and in m. 124 as well.

Occasionally for the sake of emphasis, Elgar will choose to add a lift breath between two words, such as in the case of the words “yet we” in m. 124 to m. 125. This apostrophe mark suggests a shortening of the word “yet” to an eighth note followed by an accented stress on the downbeat of the next measure, which in this case happened to also be a new *forte* dynamic. Interestingly in the next measure, instead of an apostrophe, he uses a staccatissimo mark over the word “yet” in the tenor and bass parts to basically achieve the same emphasis as the first time. Finishing the section, the “shaker of the world forever” is written without a breath after “world.” This makes sense textually. However, the way Elgar set it suggests a breath after the word “world” in order to better emphasize the sixteenth, quarter, half-note rhythm. A breath is recommended and is indeed supported by the rhythm of all the orchestral notes that correspond with the word “world.”

Leading into verse two, the first prelude theme again begins like its first utterance. Six measures into the theme, however, the *allegro* (quarter = 80) shifts into a feeling of one per measure. To segue the orchestra in a controlled manner into this new tempo effectively, the conductor should conduct the first two measures in 3 and then to change to beating in 1 even before the *accelerando* begins. This will allow the forces to arrive at R16 in the new *con fuoco* tempo as the unison choir enters singing “with wonderful deathless ditties” (Ex. 18). Once the “in 1” feeling has been established, the phrasing will be more musically

managed until R27 by conducting a four-beat pattern, one beat for each measure. This approach will unify the choir's phrasing in particular and poses no issues for the orchestra.

The musical score for the entrance of the choir in Elgar's *The Music Makers*, measures 135-144, is presented. The score is in 3/8 time and features a tempo of *Allegro* (♩ = 80). The key signature is two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The score includes parts for Soprano, Alto, Tenor, and Bass, all of which are marked "With" and "f". The instrumental parts include Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Violoncello, and Double Bass. The score features dynamic markings such as *f*, *cresc.*, and *ff*, and performance instructions like *Come prima*, *stringendo*, and *espressivo*. The score is written in a system with a common time signature of 3/8.

Ex. 18. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 135–144, entrance by the choir leading into “with wonderful deathless ditties.”

Elgar regularly, and joyfully, mixes rhythms of two beats against three or three against four. Beginning at m. 161 with “We fashion an empire’s glory,” and having already effectively cemented the sense “of three” in each measure, he begins playfully, and with a great sense of “empire” pride, to fashion a phrase filled with two against three (Ex. 19). Likely the hardest rhythmical phrase of the work, the correct execution of it is made even more challenging by the lack of mirroring melodic material which is coupled by the driving scalar motion of the

orchestra. Additionally, an accelerated dotted quarter note = 100 starts immediately as the vocal phrase begins. Pay close attention to the accents as they will help cement the rhythm in the choir's mind. The staccato accent (found only in the Novello and Serenissima piano-vocal scores) on the second syllable of "glory" is purposeful and will assist in the choir's clean cut off. A clear and deliberate approach to teaching this phrase is strongly suggested at the beginning of the rehearsal process.

The image shows a musical score for two parts: Basses and Cello. The Basses part is written in bass clef with a 3/8 time signature. It features a vocal line with lyrics: "We fash - ion an em - pire's glo - ry,". The word "risoluto" is written above the first measure. The Cello part is also in bass clef with a 3/8 time signature. It begins with a forte (f) dynamic and provides a rhythmic accompaniment. The score is set in a key with two flats (B-flat major or D-flat minor).

Ex. 19. Elgar, *The Music Makers*, mm. 161–165, example of 2 against 3 in orchestra and choir.

Elgar's frequent harmonic meandering, combined with distinctive orchestral techniques, together can create moments that Riley refers to as "narrative haze" moments.²³³ These are often characterized by the presence of tremolo techniques, pedal tones, first inversion chords and accidentals, which together blur the lines between one key area and another as a way to summon a specific effect. One of several "narrative haze" moments in this work occurs in m. 193 surrounding the word "dream." Though the orchestra does support the choir singing an E fully diminished seventh chord, the orchestra further complicates the choir's tuning while the harp plays arpeggiated chords, the violoncello and viola

²³³ Riley, *Edward Elgar and the Nostalgic Imagination*, 23.

play in a *pizzicato* style and the timpani rolls persistently on a B-flat. Further complicating this moment is the soprano tessitura. Singing on an extended G5, the word “dream” with its [i] vowel often tends towards a bright and pinched sound. Careful attention to evolving the vowel to an [I] vowel will afford the sopranos more vertical aural space, thus creating a taller, rounded and pleasant sound that resonates with the intended effect of the “dream” phrase sung at a challenging *pianissimo* dynamic.

Following this brief dream sequence, the piece’s attitude changes abruptly beginning with an unexpected m. 208 tenor entrance on the words “at pleasure.” This entrance is a challenging one and men often do not enter confidently. A shortening of the prior tenor note is recommended and will provide a brief moment to prepare for the entrance. One should also note that the notes of the viola and French horn parts three and four do coordinate with the tenor part and thus should assist the singers in singing their opening pitch confidently at the end of an otherwise challenging tonal “narrative haze” moment. At R23, heed the four-measure *ritard* that then quickly returns to the *tempo primo* and the repeat of the imperial text. In a unique approach to word painting, Elgar places special emphasis on the first syllable of the verb “trample” whereby he sets the syllable on a stopped eighth note followed by a sixteenth rest which serves to emphasize the meaning of the active verb. It is recommended that singers go straight to the “m” of the first syllable before stopping the sound. This, of course, goes against the traditional approach of placing an internal consonant whereby a conductor implores choristers to elongate the first vowel so as not to arrive at the “m”

prematurely. The conductor may have to push this concept, but the dramatic effect will be worth it.

A *ritard*, followed by a subdivided *piu lento* leads into m. 270 and m. 271 where some conductors choose to add a brief lift between the two measures. This acts as if one has added an additional pulse to the penultimate measure before moving onward and allows for a clean attack on the second measure with its new theme on “We in the ages lying.” Though normally the addition of this extra beat is not advisable, in this case a clean attack on the first measure of the new section (m. 271) does not negatively affect the music or its flow. As this new section begins, it is crucial that while conducting in 3 one makes sure to take a tempo that is neither too fast nor too slow so as not to influence the cleanliness of the intricate instrumental lines. Beginning at R28, the violin one part begins a challenging sequence which lasts until R32. It will take some time to clean up its quickly moving sixteenth note and triplet rhythms. During this section you will also need to choose the pronunciation of the word “Babel” first found in m. 287. Depending on the choir’s derivation, a choice needs to be made as to whether to use [bei] as in “baby” or [bæ] as in “bat.” English ensembles tend to use the first choice with American ensembles only occasionally choosing the second. All three consulted recordings use the [bei] pronunciation. Using the forward focused [ei] vowel will ultimately create a more rounded sound.

At m. 310, a typically Elgarian opportunity presents itself for the conductor to stretch the *maestoso* on “(o’er)through them with prophesying” leading into the new 6/8 time (eighth note = 112) tempo where now the eighth note equals the

dotted quarter note of the previous section. This transition, when well executed, can be effective, but will take some practice, especially when accompanied by the third beat scalar flourish in the strings, flute and piccolo. Chorally this segue from the active "o'er through them" motive (heard three measures before R32) into a much more melodious section focusing on the words "to the old of the new world's worth" will require some practice. Following quickly on its heels, the sopranos hold an exposed G5 on the word "each", again requiring vowel modification as earlier. At the same time, each voice part enters individually with their distinct contrapuntal entrance. The pedagogical difficulty here will be to help the choir understand where the section is going harmonically. As it wends its way towards the illusive key of F minor at m. 342, it ushers in the quietest and moodiest return of the "artists" theme at m. 346 (now in 6/8 and not the regular 4/4). Hiding within this contrapuntal movement, a unique Elgar moment occurs notationally and presents possible challenges for the choir. At m. 331, a brief moment occurs with the chorus and orchestra still in 2/4, except for the violins, which are still in the previous 6/8 time signature. Having two different time signatures occurring at the same moment causes momentary challenges of two against three and should be carefully addressed with the choir. In particular, the clarity of the quarter note eighth note rhythm will need to be reinforced. This phrase, culminating in a rare, triumphant *fermata* held by the entire ensemble, will require a subdivided conducting pattern at the *allargando* in the preceding measure (m. 336). This approach will make the *fermata* on downbeat of m. 337 much easier to control before returning to the 6/8, now beat in 6, which begins at

the *piu lento* of R36 and continues until the *a tempo* at m. 354 when "The Complete Understanding" theme re-enters in the orchestra. At this *molto tranquillo* moment, the 3/8 should be conducted in 3 with the hushed a cappella choir until m. 365, when the *poco animato* of the clarinet quickly aids the transition immediately to conducting in 1 and the "Is the life of each generation" section begins. When the *allegretto* begins at m. 373 it is advisable, though still in 3/8, that one conducts in a 4 pattern to help define the overall phrasing or hypermeter of the section. This will aid in the smooth transition into 12/8, also conducted in 4. Accompanying this *pianissimo* section, the first violins play a fluttering, bird-like theme which is a challenging line to keep clean. It is advisable to have this five-measure phrase played solely by the concert master or a very small number of nimble first violinists.

The organ, a rather under-used instrument in the work, is often used to bolster moments where the text suggests strength, the monarchy or empire. Such an example occurs at the *piu allegro ma maestoso* of m. 397 when the organ enters as it doubles the choir's pitches. This adds regal emphasis and timbre to the text "the soldier, the king, and the peasant." This brief martial section requires careful attention to the many detailed articulations, including the lack of a breath after the word "peasant" each time it occurs. Adding a short *crescendo* on this word will also add to the effect and the following "working together" emphasis. After this brief energetic section, Elgar quite effectively segues (m. 422) into a *morendo* effect by slowly diminishing the number of instruments and the swiftness of their notes, thus minimizing the energy.

Ethereal, arpeggiated harp chords end the section and set the tone for the first entrance of the soloist.

The soloist sections tend to have multiple rubato moments that are left up to the discretion of the singer. These moments are sometimes complicated by the placement of a *fermata* that requires the conductor to follow the soloist's lead rather carefully. In addition, in m. 462, a lift between measures prior to the beginning of the "Nimrod" theme, often added, is recommended. This will also allow the new *a tempo, solenne* to truly speak. The clarinet should rather freely hold its penultimate note before resolving on the downbeat of m. 463. Another *fermata* example occurs on the downbeat of m. 487. Note that the *fermata* is placed on the choir and orchestra parts but not on the soloist's. It will be important to follow the soloist's lead but also to coordinate her two notes along with the first violins who also play the same pitches, but with a *fermata* included. On comparison, Boult barely recognizes the fermata whereas Elder rather dwells on it. In m. 488, Del Mar notes that in the proofs from Novello editor Harold Brooke²³⁴ (who worked most closely on *The Music Makers* score) showed Elgar that rhythmic discrepancies between the solo, soprano and violin one parts existed even though all had the same pitches. Elgar ultimately suggested this discrepancy was okay, and thus it would be appropriate today to leave these as

²³⁴ Anderson suggests that the relationship between Brooke and Elgar was rather strong and amounted in a very detailed score with few errors. The Complete Edition full score, of whom Robert Anderson was the Co-ordinating Editor, only required 50 "adjustments", mostly of a dynamic and interpretive nature. A list of these can be found on p. xxiii. Anderson, Robert. *Elgar in manuscript*. Portland, Oregon: Amadeus Press, 1990, 146.

they appear in the score.²³⁵ At m. 495, there is a sudden change after the slow solo section into the *allegro molto* (quarter note = 152) tempo accompanied by a change to 4/4. This quickly changes at m. 499 into 2/2 where the same tempo will be maintained through the change, which will then be conducted in 2 on the words “today is thrilling”. The men must especially focus on singing clear and concise rhythms and diction. Elgar expected acting when he conducted his own works and this verbose martial section surely deserves this treatment.²³⁶

Occasionally in this section, Elgar interrupts the frenetic action with an *allargando* expansion of the pulse, requiring a change to conducting in 4, before returning to *a tempo*. This happens twice, roughly from mm. 526–528 and then again from mm. 559–561. Conductors will need to determine whether to return to conducting in 2 in between these two *allargando* sections or to remain in 4. Both can work, however conducting in 4 after the second occurrence is wise and will tighten the transition into the new (quarter = half note of the preceding bar) section beginning at R65 with its grand tenor entrance on an interval of a seventh on “the multitudes.” This new contrapuntal section will require that the triplet rhythms of the words “bringing to pass” are sung as written and not sung as a sixteenth-eighth-sixteenth note rhythm, which often is the tendency. Otherwise, a focus on strong and confident vocal part entrances on “the multitudes” is required, with

²³⁵ Anderson, *Elgar in manuscript*, 145.

²³⁶ Edgar Day, who worked with Elgar, writes “Later on, in the ‘Ha has’, he didn’t worry about accuracy of notes in the chorus. He told them that the orchestra would play the notes and asked them to make the most demoniacal sounds of which they were capable.” Edgar Day, “Interpreting ‘Gerontius’: Personal Memories of Elgar in Rehearsal,” *The Musical Times* CX/1516 (June 1969), 608.

special care attached to the first pitch of each new entrance. These opening notes are often set against another voice's notes at the interval of a minor or major second, thus making it easy to start on the other part's pitch and throwing the vocal line off after that.

This section ends at m. 597 with a move into 3/8 time accompanied by an unexpected *poco accelerando* that would best be conducted in 3 for only two measures and then a move into conducting in 1. This will ensure a unified transition into this new and faster section between m. 597 and m. 617. The preparatory gesture for the new time signature in m. 618 needs to occur on the second beat of m. 617. If conducted like a second pulse of a 6/8 measure conducted in 2, this gesture will aid in the preparation of the new and faster tempo. In the new key of A-flat major, careful execution of the downward seventh interval beginning on the word "and" to the first syllable of "singing" is often sung flat or simply incorrectly. As the interval of a seventh is commonly found in Elgar's music, the creation of a warm-up used during choir training would be warranted and might alleviate seventh tuning issues in the learning process. In addition to intervallic challenges in this section, it is also fraught with many accidentals and transpositions from one key to another in quick succession, though they are not actually registered as a new printed key signature. At m. 655, the dotted quarter of the current section equals the quarter in the new 4/4 tempo and slowly acts as a built-in *ritard* before the *fermata* at m. 665. At this moment another "narrative haze" moment occurs as the strings play *con sordino* as the

prayerful “in our dreaming and singing” section slows to an end. As Elgar himself encouraged a choir to sing

He entreated them not to sing as if they were in a church. He wanted "more tears in the voices" in the Kyrie, "as if they were assisting at the death of a friend." They must sing as if they felt each strain, not conventionally...²³⁷

Elgar clearly wanted his music to come alive and emotive singing was to be a part of this.

One measure before R78 (and later R103) after a great deal of mostly vigorous music, Elgar ceases all activity and inserts a grand pause for everyone. A *fermata* set on this rest further emphasizes his expectation of a grand pause. This is followed by one of the lovelier moments in the work as the choir enters on a sensitive, unaccompanied chord. Poor planning on Novello’s part placed an unfortunate page-turn right between the two quarter rests and the choir’s entrance. It is recommended that the choir be expected to either memorize the first two measures of the new section, which should cause no issues, or to turn the page approximately two measures earlier.²³⁸ At this same moment, Elgar scored clarinets and bassoons to support the choral pitches. In m. 667, Hunt suggests that Elgar sometimes omitted these instruments, thus allowing the a *cappella* singing to be even more effective and un-encumbered by orchestration.²³⁹

²³⁷ From the *Birmingham Mail*, 13 September 1900.

²³⁸ Hunt, *Thoughts on The Music Makers*, 12.

²³⁹ *Ibid.*, 10.

Immediately after the hushed “For we are afar...” opening of the new section, Elgar executes a glorious crescendo leading to the “infinite morning.” In m. 673, plan carefully to coordinate the unexpected choir breath between the words “infinite” and “morning.” With the choir at a triple *forte* dynamic, it only takes one singer to not breathe or for them to attack the word “morning” prematurely, as the entire orchestra, having rested up to this point, enters loudly and unexpectedly. Soon after, though not notated, a quick breath after the word “morning” is recommended. This will enable the choir to navigate the entire following phrase and then confidently segue into the next phrase where the tenors take the lead.

As there is a fair amount of choral divisi, planned vocal substitutions should be practiced. These are most helpful when the tenor one part is written in too high of a tessitura or the second alto part is likewise in a tessitura considered too low for many singers. At these moments, the notes in question are usually the same between vocal parts. For instance, in m. 686 one might have the first tenor part sing the second alto part’s notes.²⁴⁰ This would be consistent with Elgar’s own practice, which he developed out of orchestral technique, whereby he might add one voice to another in order “to reinforce the tone and enrich the colour as he might add the violas to the cellos...”²⁴¹

Elgar occasionally composed using the whole tone scale. This choice was usually exercised when he wished to create a specific, often otherworldly effect.

²⁴⁰ Ibid., 11-12.

²⁴¹ Ralph Vaughan Williams, “What Have We Learnt from Elgar?”, *Music & Letters* XVI/1 (January 1935), 13.

In m. 700 watch the tuning of the whole tone scale in the first harp and violin one and two parts, as the tuning can be problematic. Beginning at m. 712 with a challenging three measures of *allegro* and demanding string playing, the contralto enters confidently at a *forte* dynamic singing “Great hail.” Follow the soloist carefully for the first few measures after entering. These eleven measures are challenging to keep together as the 4/4 evolves into a 12/8 for some instruments, but not for others. Issues related to two against three are very likely to occur at this point. At the end of this section, a well-placed *ritard* segues the instruments and soloist into a slower 3/8 section filled with *colla parte* playing, with the soloist taking the lead as “The Complete Understanding” theme returns again.

Beginning at R92, out of the now established 3/8 section conducted in 3, the conductor should plan to segue into conducting in 1 in order to execute the *poco piu mosso*. Not long after, at m. 781, the *allargando* should be conducted in 3. This will help guide the violin melody and later the soloist’s tempo coupled with violin one part until m. 829 when the *poco piu mosso* begins and when conducting in 1 will be more effective. At m. 863, the *ritard* guides the conductor into conducting in 3 and the *molto lento* tempo helps emphasize the soloist’s final utterance “and a singer who sings no more.” The last six measures of the work are *come prima*, but much slower. The final “artists” theme, now sung with the most intensity of the work, acts as a final reminder of the poet’s message, with the low strings and timpani quietly echoing “so be it” into the distance. The choir, holding its final F-minor chord with *fermata* even longer than the last chord of the

orchestra, focuses on Elgar's belief in the continuity of the artist's role in society. This message will be made most meaningful if the conductor holds the choir's final pitch almost until the last dream utterance continues into the distance.

Though every conductor preparing the work will discern their own approach to teaching the work to their own choir, Appendix E delineates specific sections along with assigned difficulty levels and challenge details that will aid in planning an appropriate, well-informed rehearsal order for the work.

CHAPTER V

CONCLUSION

The Music Makers may not be a perfect piece. Its two often-cited criticisms, that of Elgar's reliance on too much supposed self-aggrandizing quotation and his choice to set a less than stellar text are perhaps well-founded.

After a healthy amount of immersion in Elgar's biography and knowledge of his other compositions, each reviewer will need to live with this work, and determine what they feel. Should one judge the work solely based purely on its compositional strengths, and ignore its quotational content? Does it stand on its own when the performer is unaware of the text's personal meaning to Elgar or the meaning of the quotes as they relate to the earlier pieces from which they were plucked? When reading Chapter 3, the number of quotes appears substantial. The achieved effect is, however, one of subtlety where the quotes are often not as overt as may be expected. Sir Jack Westrup suggested that "[few] of us could produce a work...by this [mosaic] method; but with Elgar it worked wonders, over and over again. It is only when it failed that we notice the seams."²⁴² Does the work have "seams" that null the strength of its message or minimize its joy when heard, performed or conducted?

²⁴² Jack Westrup, "The Enigma 3," in *An Elgar Companion*, ed. Christopher Redwood (Derbyshire, England: Sequoia Publishing, 1982), 69.

Looking back many years later, London Symphony Orchestra concert master Willy Reed suggested that *The Music Makers*

...would have made Elgar's name if he had never written anything else; but it has not quite the same spiritual exaltation which we find in *Gerontius* or the other oratorios.²⁴³

O'Shaughnessy's text was clearly meaningful to Elgar on a personal and artistic level, not a religious one. At the time of composition, the choice of texts for his oratorios not only functioned on a dramatic level, but also paralleled the composer's own deep faith and spirituality at the time. It is these texts with which his public was most familiar, with those of his earlier secular cantatas dealing with historic themes coming a close second. It is not surprising that *The Music Makers* theme of the artist and their role in society would be one lacking the comprehension or appreciation by the average concert goer. This would have been particularly true during the anxious time-frame when the work debuted.

Setting the two main criticisms aside, Elgar successfully set the text in exciting, beautiful and often dramatic ways, making the work one that is still eminently approachable and quite enjoyable to perform. With the presence of a choir of a large enough size (to balance the orchestral forces), and a sizeable and sensitive orchestra being available, *The Music Makers* is well worth the effort to learn and will provide an exciting counterpart in a college, community or other choral/orchestral concert

²⁴³ Reed, *Elgar*, 151.

program. The inclusion of the quotes and word-painting examples only further add to the uniqueness of this unfamiliar, yet breathtaking work.

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APPENDIX A

A CHRONOLOGICAL LIST OF ELGAR'S
CHORAL WORKS

First column dates refer to the date of composition; if the publication year was different, it has been listed in parentheses. Part-songs should be assumed to be SATB unless otherwise indicated. Any “chorus” should be assumed to be SATB and sung *a cappella*, unless otherwise indicated. For very detailed information on the major choral works and their histories, sources of themes, etc., the many volumes of the Elgar Complete Edition (ECE) may be consulted. In some cases, Elgar began but never completed a work. These works are included and listed as “incomplete.” Further details can be found in *Edward Elgar: A Guide to Research* by Christopher Kent (Hamden, CT, 1993), *Elgar* by Robert Anderson (NY: Schirmer, 1993) and *Edward Elgar: A Source Book* by Stewart R. Craggs (Scolar Press, 1995).

DATE	OP. / NO.	TITLE & DETAIL
1872?		<i>O salutaris hostia</i> , chorus; (incomplete), reconstructed Timothy Hooke
1872		<i>Litanies</i> for various occasions, chorus
1873		<i>Credo</i> on themes from Beethoven Symphonies nos. 5, 7, 9, chorus, org
1876	[1]	<i>Salve regina</i> , chorus, org
1876	[2]	<i>Tantum ergo</i> , chorus, org
1877		<i>Credo</i> in E minor, chorus, org
1878		Hymn tunes in C, G and F major, the last pubd as 'Drake Broughton' / 151 in <i>Westminster Hymnal</i> (1898) and quoted in 'Aubade' of <i>Nursery Suite</i> (1931)
1878		<i>Kyrie in C</i> , chorus, org (incomplete)
1878		<i>Magnificat in F</i> , chorus, org (incomplete)
1878		<i>Magnificat in G</i> , chorus, org (incomplete)
1879		<i>Brother, for thee He Died</i> , (Easter anthem) chorus, org, strings, flute, oboe
1879		<i>Tantum ergo</i> , chorus, org

1879		<i>Domine, salvam fac reginam</i> , chorus, org
1880		<i>Gloria</i> , chorus, org; adapted from the Allegro movt of Mozart's Violin Sonata in F, K547
1880?		<i>O salutaris hostia</i> in F, chorus, org (1898)
1880?		<i>O salutaris hostia</i> in E-flat, chorus, org (1898)
1881		<i>Why so Pale and Wan</i> ; lost <i>O Happy Eyes</i> (C. A. Elgar) (1896)
1882		<i>Benedictus sit Deus pater</i> , chorus, org, str; (incomplete)
1882		<i>O salutaris hostia</i> in A, B solo; ed. P Young (incomplete)
1886		<i>Four Litanies for the Blessed Virgin Mary</i> , uni chorus
1886		<i>Stabat Mater</i> (J. da Todi -1228-1306), chorus
1886		<i>Twenty-seven Litany Chants</i> , chorus
1887	2 / 1	<i>Ave verum corpus</i> , chorus, org (originally to the words 'Pie Jesu')
1887?	2 / 2	<i>Ave Maria</i> (also <i>Lord of Life and Glory</i>) chorus, org (1907)
1887?	2 / 3	<i>Ave maris stella</i> , chorus, org (1907)
1888		<i>Ecce sacerdos magnus</i> , chorus, org or orch
1888		<i>Laudate Dominum</i> (Chant in D flat) uni, opt. org
1889	18 / 1	<i>My Love Dwelt in a Northern Land</i> (A. Lang), chorus
1892	23	<i>Spanish Serenade</i> , 'Stars of the Summer Night' (H. Longfellow), SATB, 2 vln, pf, or orch (1892)
1892	25	<i>The Black Knight</i> (L. Uhland, trans. H. Longfellow), "symphony" for chorus, orch
1892		<i>The High Tide</i> (cantata) soli, chorus, orch (incomplete)
1894	26 / 1	<i>The Snow</i> (C. A. Elgar), SATB or SSA, 2 vln, pf or orch (1903)
1894	26 / 2	<i>Fly, Singing Bird</i> (C. A. Elgar), SATB or SSA, 2 vln, pf or orch (1903)
1895	27	<i>Scenes from the Bavarian Highlands</i> (C. A. Elgar, after Bavarian folksongs), 6 choral songs with pf (1895) or orch (1896) acc.
1896	30	<i>Scenes from the Saga of King Olaf</i> (H. Longfellow and H. A. Acworth), cantata, S, T, B, chorus, orchestra
1896	29	<i>The Light of Life</i> (E. Capel Cure), on biblical basis short, oratorio, S, C, T, B, SATB chorus, orch (ECE vol. 3)

1897	33	<i>The Banner of St George</i> (S. Wensley), ballad, chorus, orch
1897	34	<i>Te Deum and Benedictus</i> , chorus, org or orch
1898		<i>The Holly and the Ivy</i> , semi-chorus, chorus, orch
1898	35	<i>Caractacus</i> (H. A. Acworth), cantata, S, T, Bar, B, chorus, orch (ECE vol. 5)
1899		<i>To her Beneath whose Steadfast Star</i> (F. W. H. Myers), chorus
1900	38	<i>The Dream of Gerontius</i> (J. H. Newman), Mez, T, B, semi-chorus, SATB chorus, orch (ECE vol. 6)
1902	44	<i>Coronation Ode</i> (A. C. Benson), S, C, T, B, chorus, orch / 7, "Land of Hope and Glory", trio tune of <i>Pomp and Circumstance</i> 1 (1901)
1902	45	Five Partsongs from the Greek Anthology, TTBB; 1 <i>Yea, Cast Me from the Heights</i> (anon., trans. A. Strettell), 2 <i>Whether I Find Thee</i> (anon., trans. A. Lang), 3 <i>After Many a Dusty Mile</i> (anon., trans. E. Gosse), 4 <i>It's oh! to be a Wild Wind</i> (anon., trans. W. M. Hardinge), 5 <i>Feasting I Watch</i> (M. Argentarius, trans. R. Garnett) (1903)
1902		<i>God Save the King</i> , S, chorus, orch
1902		'Land of Hope and Glory' (Benson), from <i>Coronation Ode</i> , C, chorus and orch, with carillon <i>ad lib</i> (1927)
1902		<i>O Mightiest of the Mighty</i> , hymn, chorus, org
1902		<i>Weary Wind of the West</i> (T. E. Brown), chorus
1903	39	<i>The Apostles</i> (Elgar, compiled from biblical texts) oratorio, S, C, T, 3 B, SATB chorus; orch (ECE vol. 8)
1905		<i>April</i> , partsong for 2 sopranos (or SA chorus), 2 vln, pf
1905		<i>Evening Scene</i> (C. Patmore)
1906	51	<i>The Kingdom</i> (Elgar, compiled from biblical texts and the <i>Didache</i>), oratorio, S, C, T, B, SATB chorus, orch (ECE vol. 9)
1906		<i>The Last Judgement</i> (Elgar, to be compiled from biblical texts and perhaps <i>The City of God</i> by St Augustine), projected conclusion to the oratorio trilogy; libretto ideas and some musical sketches survive (incomplete)
1907	52	<i>A Christmas Greeting</i> (C. A. Elgar), 2 S, TB chorus <i>ad lib</i> , 2 vln, pf
1907	18 / 2	<i>Love</i> (A. Maquarie)
1907		<i>Marching Song</i> (W. de Courcy Stretton), reissued as <i>Follow the Colours</i> (1914), male voices, TB chorus or SATB
1907		<i>How Calmly the Evening</i> (T. Lynch), chorus

1907	53	Four Choral (Part)Songs; 1 <i>There is Sweet Music</i> (Tennyson), SSAATTBB, 2 <i>Deep in my Soul</i> (Byron), 3 <i>O Wild West Wind</i> (Shelley), 4 <i>Owls</i> (Elgar)
1907	54	<i>The Reveille</i> (B. Harte), TTBB
1909		Elegy; <i>They are at Rest</i> (Newman)
1909		<i>Lo! Christ the Lord is Born</i> (S. Wensley), carol, uni chorus; adapted from <i>Grete Malverne on a Rock</i> , sent as private Christmas card (1897)
1909		Two single chants for the <i>Venite</i>
1909		Two double chants for Psalms 68 and 75
1909	56 / 1	<i>Angelus</i> (Tuscan dialect words translated), chorus
1909	57	<i>Go, Song of Mine</i> (<i>Cavalcanti</i> , trans. D. G. Rossetti), SAATTB
1909		<i>In a Vineyard</i> , Choral Suite (W. S. Landon), (incomplete)
1909		<i>They are at rest</i> (Cardinal J. H. Newman), chorus
1911	64	<i>O Hearken Thou</i> (from Psalm 5), [also <i>Coronation Offertorium</i>], chorus, org or orch
1912	66	<i>The Crown of India</i> (imperial masque by H. Hamilton); Mez, T, chorus, orch
1912	67	<i>Great is the Lord</i> (Psalm 48), anthem, SSAATTBB chorus (with B solo), org or orch (1913)
1912	69	<i>The Music Makers</i> (A. O'Shaughnessy), ode, C, chorus and orch (ECE vol. 10)
1914	71	Two Choral Songs; 1 <i>The Shower</i> (Vaughan), 2 <i>The Fountain</i> (Vaughan)
1914	72	Choral Song; <i>Death on the Hills</i> (Maykov, trans. R. Newmarch)
1914	73	Two Choral Songs; 1 <i>Love's Tempest</i> (Maykov, trans. Newmarch), 2 <i>Serenade</i> (Minsky, trans. Newmarch)
1914	74	<i>Give unto the Lord</i> (Psalm 29), anthem, B, chorus, org or orch
1914		<i>Fear not, O Land</i> (from <i>Joel</i> ii), harvest anthem, chorus, org
1914		<i>The Brook</i> , (E. Soule), 2-pt child voices, pf
1914		<i>The Birthright</i> (G. A. Stocks), boys' chorus, bugles, drums; also SATB
1914?		<i>The Merry-go-round</i> (F. C. Fox), uni chorus
1914?		<i>The Windlass</i> (W. Allingham), child voices or SATB
1916		<i>Fight for Right</i> (W. Morris), chorus, pf
1916	80	<i>The Spirit of England</i> (L. Binyon), T or S, chorus, orch #2 of (ECE vol. 10)

1916		<i>With Proud Thanksgiving</i> (L. Binyon), chorus and military or brass band, or orch (1921); reworking of 'For the Fallen', #3 of (ECE vol. 10)
1917		<i>The Fringes of the Fleet</i> (R. Kipling), songs, 4 Bar, orch; 'The Lowestoft Boat', 'Fate's Discourtesy', 'Submarines', 'The Sweepers'; additional song 'Inside the Bar' (G. Parker) for 4 Bar
1918		<i>Big Steamers</i> (R. Kipling), uni chorus, pf
1922		<i>Jerusalem</i> (comp Hubert Parry), arr, chorus, orch
1922		<i>The Worcestershire Squire</i> (E. Anderson), song with uni chorus; inc.
1922		<i>The Ballad of Brave Hector</i> (E. Anderson), song with uni chorus; (incomplete)
1923		<i>Abide with me</i> (comp Ivor Atkins) arr, chorus, orch
1923		<i>Let us lift up our heart</i> (comp S.S. Wesley) arr, mixed soli, chorus, orch
1923		<i>O Lord, Look Down from Heaven</i> (composition J. Battishill), arr, Chorus, orch
1923		<i>The Wanderer</i> (anon., adapted by Elgar from <i>Wit and Drollery</i> , 1661), TTBB
1923		<i>Zut! Zut! Zut!</i> (Richard Mardon, pseud. for Elgar), TTBB
1924		<i>The Bull (in May Week)</i> (F. Hamilton), male voice, optional chorus, pf
1924		<i>A Song of Union</i> (A. Noyes), from the <i>Pageant of Empire</i>
1925		<i>The Herald</i> (A. Smith), TTBB
1925		<i>The Prince of Sleep</i> (de la Mare), chorus
1928		<i>I Sing the Birth</i> (B. Jonson), carol, chorus (with A, B, soli)
1929		<i>Goodmorrow</i> (G. Gascoigne), carol, chorus
1929		<i>Jehova, quam multi sunt hostes mei</i> (comp Henry Purcell), arr, chorus, orch
1932		<i>So Many True Princesses</i> (Masefield), ode, chorus, military band
1932		<i>The Rapid Stream</i> (C. Mackay), uni child or 2-pt chorus, pf
1932		<i>The Woodland Stream</i> (Mackay), uni child or 2-pt chorus, pf
1932		<i>When Swallows Fly</i> (Mackay), uni child or 2-pt chorus, pf

APPENDIX B

ANNOTATED DISCOGRAPHY OF
THE MUSIC MAKERS

The following table, listed by issue date, includes the most well-known recordings of *The Music Makers* and offers interpretations primarily by English conductors.

ENSEMBLES	SOLO	CONDUCTOR	NOTES	LABEL & #	DATE
London Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus	Baker	Boult	<i>The Dream of Gerontius</i>	EMI 66540	1966
London Symphony Orchestra & Chorus	Palmer	Hickox	<i>Sea Pictures</i>	Warner 5651262	1987
London Symphony Orchestra & Three Choirs Festival Choir	N/A	Elgar	Recorded live. Choral excerpts. Three Choirs Festival, 8 Sept. 1927	EMI Classics 95694	1992 re- issue
London Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus	Finnie	Thomson	<i>Sea Pictures</i>	Chandos 9022	1992
BBC Symphony Orchestra & Chorus	Rigby	Davis	Multiple short orchestral pieces	Teldec/ Warner 2564621992	1994
London Philharmonic Chorus & Orchestra, New Philharmonia Orchestra	Baker	Boult	<i>The Dream of Gerontius, The Apostles, The Kingdom & Coronation Ode</i>	EMI 3679312	1994 re- issue
Oxford Orchestra da Camera & Choir	Wilson	Williams	Kodaly's <i>An Ode-The Music Makers & A Summer Evening</i>	Somm CD230	2002
Hallé Orchestra & Choir	Irwin	Elder	<i>Froissart, Dream Children & J.S. Bach's Fantasia & Fugue in C minor</i>	Hallé 7509	2005
Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra & Chorus	Connolly	Wright	<i>Sea Pictures</i>	Naxos 8557710	2006
London Philharmonic Orchestra & Chorus	Baker	Boult	<i>Dream of Gerontius</i>	Warner 3919782	2007 re- issue
Netherlands Radio Philharmonic Orchestra & Choir	Irwin	van Zweden	<i>Memoria</i> by Wolfgang Rihm	Quattro 2009-01	2009

APPENDIX C

THE MUSIC MAKERS SCORES

The following table lists all of the published piano vocal and full orchestral scores available of *The Music Makers* and includes a few quirks of certain scores as well.

- Elgar, Edward. *The Music Makers*. USA: Serenissima Music, 2003. Piano-Vocal Score. Offprint of Novello, 1912. Contains measure numbers in addition to cue numbers and orchestration list in front.
- Elgar, Edward. *The Music Makers*. Boca Raton, FL: The Well-Tempered Press, n/d. Piano-Vocal Score. Offprint of Novello, 1912. No measure numbers.
- Elgar, Edward. *The Music Makers*. London: Novello, 1912. Piano-Vocal Score. Full poem in front. No measure numbers.
- Elgar, Edward. *The Music Makers*. London: Novello, 1912. Full Score. Includes measure numbers.
- Elgar, Edward. *The Music Makers*. Elgar Complete Edition, Vol. 10. London: Novello, 1986. Full Score. Contains measure numbers in addition to cue numbers. Corresponding orchestral parts also available from Novello.
- Elgar, Edward. *The Music Makers*. Boca Raton, FL: Kalmus, n/d. Full Score. No measure numbers. Corresponding orchestral parts also available from Kalmus.

APPENDIX D

TEMPOS OF THREE REPRESENTATIVE
RECORDINGS AND SUGGESTED
CONDUCTING PATTERNS

Approximate tempos of three representative recordings of *The Music Makers*, accompanied by suggested conducting patterns.*

R # (Bar #)	Elgar Complete Edition Score Tempi 1986*	Elgar 1927	Boult 1966	Elder 2010	Suggested Pattern
1 (1)	eighth = 138		100	110	In 3
2 (23)	<i>Tranquillo e cantabile</i>		75	85	In 3
	dotted quarter		100	115	In 3
10 (109)	<i>Larghetto</i> , quarter = 58	45	50	45	In 4
15 (135)	dotted quarter = 80	80	80	80	In 3 → In 1
27 (271)	dotted quarter = 88		75	65	In 3 -
32 (313)	eighth = 112		112	110	In 2
34 (325)					In 6 → In 4 (orch. 2/4)
36 (339)	<i>Piu lento</i>		105	105	In 6 → (353)
38 (354)	dotted quarter = 76	75	60	60	In 3
42 (385)	dotted quarter = 60	50	55	55	In 4
43 (390)	quarter = 72	110	70	85	In 4
44 (397)	quarter = 108	105	108	110	In 4
46 (411)	quarter = 100	95	85	90	In 4
49 (443)	<i>Lento quasi recit</i>		45	45	In 4
51 (463)	quarter = c. 46		40	38	In 3
(487)			Minimal <i>fermata</i>	Long <i>fermata</i>	
55 (495)	<i>Allegro molto</i> , quarter = 152		140	140	In 4
(499)					In 4 – yet In 2 may help
65 (573)	quarter = half of preceding bar		65	70	In 4
67 (589)	<i>Tranquillo</i>		68	60	In 4
68 (597)	<i>Poco accel.</i> , eighth = quarter of preceding m. → eighth = 120		100	100	In 3
71 (618)	<i>Andantino</i>		110	102	In 6
76 (655)	(<i>rallentando</i> occurs - not written)		40	35	In 4
78 (666)	<i>Come prima</i>	65	65	65	In 4
79 (672)	<i>Molto allargando</i> → <i>a tempo</i>	85	75	74	In 4
82 (694)	eighth = 138	105	80	72	In 4
85 (712)	<i>Allegro</i>		quarter = 85	quarter = 80	In 4
88 (727)	<i>Adantino</i> , eighth = c.112		50	75	In 3
92 (768)	<i>Poco piu mosso</i>		eighth = 80+	eighth = 110	In 3
93 (789)	<i>A tempo</i>		eighth = 70	eighth = 80	In 3
95 (805)	(<i>rallentando</i> occurs - not noted)		eighth = 70	eighth = 70	In 3
97 (829)	<i>Poco piu mosso</i>		eighth = 95	eighth = 115	In 3
99 (859)	<i>A tempo</i>		eighth = 65	eighth = 65	In 3
100 (866)	<i>Molto lento</i>		eighth = 40	eighth = 45	In 3

101 (873)	eighth = 76		65	65	In 3
103 (890)	<i>Come prima, ma piu lento</i>		quarter = 35	quarter = 40	In 4

*Due to the sheer amount of rubato Elgar's music requires, tempi are approximate and can vary widely within an overall phrase. In the Elgar Complete Edition tempi column, where only textual directions exist, the score does not contain any specific "note length = speed" suggestions.

APPENDIX E

SECTIONAL BREAKDOWN OF THE WORK
INCLUDING DIFFICULTY LEVEL
AND CHALLENGES

Suggested sectional breakdown of *The Music Makers*, including difficulty levels and challenges contained therein.*

R #	Measures	Difficulty level (1-5)	Themes or section titles	Challenges
1	109-134	1	"Artists" & movers and shakers themes	dramatic dynamic changes
2	144-258	4	We Fashion an Empire's Glory	2 against 3, tuning, whole tone scales
3	271-312	2	We in the Ages Lying	tuning, intervals
4	313-348	5	To the Old of the New World's Worth	key changes, contrapuntal entrances, intervals, vocal divisi
5	350-357	1	"Artists" theme	none
6	364-400	3	A Breath of Our Inspiration	time signatures, tuning
7	401-440	2	The Soldier, The King	some tuning
8	473-499	3	But on One Man's Soul	dense harmonies, intervals
9	503-577	5	Today Is Thrilling & "Artists" theme	rhythmic, harmonies, range, tempi
10	577-605	4	The Multitudes are Bringing to Pass	intervals, harmonies, range
11	622-652	4	With Our Dreaming and Singing	contrapuntal entrances, harmonies, intervals, entrances, 2 against 3
12	653-670	1	O Men, It Must Ever Be	none
13	671-705	2	For We Are Afar & "Artists" theme	tempi, range
14	793-864	2	O Men, It Must Ever Be	harmonies
15	881-900	1	"Artists" theme	dynamics

Since a choir's rehearsal pacing will ultimately depend on the strength of its singers and the length and number of rehearsals available, conductors may simply wish to use the above difficulty levels to help guide their own rehearsal order. There are, for instance, numerous easily learned sections that might begin a rehearsal and then segue into some of the more challenging sections with a higher difficulty level which may ultimately take more time.

APPENDIX F

THE MUSIC MAKERS TEXT

All words in **bold** were added by the composer and borrowed from elsewhere in the poem. Text in *italics* is repeated in various combinations of phrases and often sung multiple times in succession, usually during times of great joy and excitement.

We are the music makers
 And we are the dreamers of dreams,
 Wandering by lone sea-breakers,
 And sitting by desolate streams;
 World-losers and world-forsakers,
 On whom the pale moon gleams:
 Yet we are the movers and shakers
 Of the world for ever, it seems.

With wonderful deathless ditties
 We build up the world's great cities,
 And out of a fabulous story
 We fashion an empire's glory:
 One man with a dream, at pleasure,
One man Shall go forth and conquer a
 crown;
 And three with a new song's measure
 Can trample a kingdom down.

We, in the ages lying
 In the buried past of the earth,
 Built Nineveh with our sighing,
 And Babel itself in our mirth;
 And o'erthrew them with prophesying
 To the old of the new world's worth;
 For each age is a dream that is dying,
 Or one that is coming to birth.
We are the music makers
And we are the dreamers of dreams.
We are the movers and shakers
Of the world forever, it seems.

A breath of our inspiration
 Is the life of each generation;
 A wondrous thing of our dreaming
 Unearthly, impossible seeming—
A wondrous thing,
 The soldier, the king, and the peasant
 Are working together in one,
 Till our dream shall become their present,
 And their work in the world be done.

They had no vision amazing
 Of the goodly house they are raising;
 They had no divine foreshowing
 Of the land to which they are going:
 But on one man's soul it hath broken,
 A light that doth not depart;
 And his look, or a word he hath spoken,
 Wrought flame in another man's heart.

And therefore to-day is thrilling
With a past day's late fulfilling;
And the multitudes are enlisted
In the faith that their fathers resisted,
And, scorning the dream of to-morrow,
Are bringing to pass, as they may,
In the world, for its joy or its sorrow,
The dream that was scorned yesterday.
We are the music makers.
And we are the dreamers of dreams.

But we, with our dreaming and singing,
 Ceaseless and sorrowless we!
 The glory about us clinging
 Of the glorious futures we see,
 Our souls with high music ringing:
 O men! it must ever be
 That we dwell, in our dreaming and singing,
 A little apart from ye.

For we are afar with the dawning
 And the suns that are not yet high,
 And out of the infinite morning
 Intrepid you hear us cry—
 How, spite of your human scorning,
 Once more God's future draws nigh,

And already goes forth the warning
 That ye of the past must die.
 Great hail! we cry to the comers
 From the dazzling unknown shore;
 Bring us hither your sun and your summers;
 And renew our world as of yore;
 You shall teach us your song's new
 numbers,

And things that we dreamed not before:
 Yea, in spite of a dreamer who slumbers,
 And a singer who sings no more.

We are the music makers

And we are the dreamers of dreams.