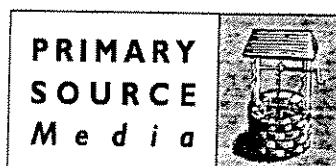

Twentieth Century Composers

Unit Two

The Elgar Diaries, Letters and Manuscripts from
Birmingham University Library



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Publisher's Note

Primary Source Media is proud to be able to present this collection from Birmingham University Library, on one of England's finest composers. Included are 59 diaries: 10 by the composer himself (1892-94, 1900, 1905, 1918-21, 1925 & 1928), 33 by his wife Alice (for 1889-1920) and 16 by their daughter Carice (for 1889-1939): 33 letters: 29 by Edward to Frederick Gaisberg of The Gramophone Company, his publisher John West at Novello and the BBC: the autograph manuscript of *The Music Makers* and a printed vocal score of *The Dream of Gerontius* annotated with pencil observations on the first performance.

Elgar's own diaries spread over a period of 35 years, and include journals of his travels. He writes relatively little compared to his wife, but her death in his arms is movingly recorded:

"My darling sinking. Father Valentine gave extreme unction. . .sinking all day & died in my arms at 6.10pm."

Alice's diaries provide a detailed picture of the Elgars' daily life, the immense labour of Elgar's composing and sometimes, of the emotions stirred by his works, of the first Three Choirs Festival performance of *The Dream of Gerontius* in 1902, she writes

"Most beautiful, most wonderful in Cathedral. . .A most wonderful day."

The letters to West are largely about details of corrections to works: West's pedantic correctness is more than once dismissed by Elgar insisting that "it sounds right". The letters to Gaisberg have a more friendly, witty tone, most dating from the end of Elgar's life. He writes "Our visit to Delius was a great event for me" and of Yehudi Menuhin's performance of Elgar's Violin Concerto at the Royal Albert Hall

"I shd. be a very ungrateful person if I did not at once send hearty thanks to you... for bringing about the wonderful performance. Yehudi was marvellous..."

Elgar's attempts to write a 3rd symphony are documented in 2 letters to Owen Mase of the BBC in April 1933. He writes:

"I am as forward with the work as I had hoped to be & if nothing untoward occurs shd. be able to begin to 'feed' the publishers with MS shortly".

Three days later, presumably in response to a letter from Mase, he writes "I like your idea to announce the symphony for the May Festival of 1934". Sadly the Symphony has not been heard until its completion in 1998.

The autograph manuscript of the choral ode *The Music Makers*, 1912, is a significant part of the collection, showing the process of composition from sketch to final draft.

The nature of the guide

This guide, based on the typescript inventory of the collection kept in the Special Collections Department of the University Library, offers a contents of reels giving brief descriptions of each item. The collection is organised in 4 sections: Diaries, Letters, Manuscripts and Transcripts.

Acknowledgements

Primary Source Media are indebted to the help and expertise of Christine Penney, University Archivist of the University of Birmingham, Clive Field, Birmingham University's Librarian, and also to the Barber Trust, for allowing us to publish such rare and valuable material. We are also indebted to Mr Raymond Monk, Director of the Elgar Foundation and copyright owner of Carice Elgar's diaries, Mr Peter Shakeshaft of the Sir Elgar Elgar Will Trust for arranging permission to publish the diaries and letters of Sir Edward Elgar and Lady Elgar's diaries.

Caroline Kimbell
Music Editor
January 1999

"For several years I owned and cared for the diaries of Edward and Alice Elgar and I can testify that combined with the Elgar letters, published and unpublished, they add up to perhaps the most complete documentary source for any composer. The diaries are an indispensable record of the day by day activities of the Elgars and of the times in which they lived. We meet their friends and are told much about them, especially the "Enigma" characters, and the pattern of their meetings. The diaries span the thirty year creative life of Edward Elgar and they enable us to trace the progress of the composition and orchestration of all the great works. These fascinating documents will always be the ultimate source for supplying/corroborating factual information for the period they cover and they are an essential tool for any biographer.

We have, in these pages, a wonderful opportunity for the study of Alice Elgar herself, in the way she saw her husband and her relationship with him. Theirs was in many ways the most remarkable marriage in musical history and I rejoice to know that through the medium of microfilm these unique diaries will be available worldwide to all who wish to study them."

Raymond Monk
Director, The Elgar Foundation
Editor, Elgar Studies and Edward Elgar: Music and Literature

Sir Edward Elgar: *The Dream of Gerontius*: Copyright © 1902 Novello and Company Limited. Reproduced by permission

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TWENTIETH CENTURY COMPOSERS

Unit Two:

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CONTENTS OF REELS

REEL ONE

EE 1/1/1	Diary of Sir Edward Elgar, relating to a European holiday, 1892-3
EE 1/1/2	Diary of Sir Edward Elgar, relating to a Bavarian holiday, 1894
EE 1/1/3	Diary of Sir Edward Elgar, relating to a Mediterranean cruise, 1905
EE 1/1/4	Diary of Sir Edward Elgar, 1912
EE 1/1/5	Diary of Sir Edward Elgar, 1918
EE 1/1/6	Diary of Sir Edward Elgar, 1919-20
EE 1/1/7	Diary of Sir Edward Elgar, 1921
EE 1/1/8	Diary of Sir Edward Elgar, 1925

REEL TWO

EE 1/1/9	Diary of Sir Edward Elgar, 1928
EE 1/1/10	Diary of Sir Edward Elgar, 1928
EE 1/2/1	Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1889
EE 1/2/2	Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1890

REEL THREE

EE 1/2/3	Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, with annotations by Sir Edward, 1891
EE 1/2/4	Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1892
EE 1/2/5	Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1893

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EE 1/2/6	Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1894
EE 1/2/7	Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1895
EE 1/2/8	Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1896

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REEL FIVE

- EE 1/2/9 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1897
- EE 1/2/10 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1898
- EE 1/2/11 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, with annotations by Sir Edward
1899

REEL SIX

- EE 1/2/12 Diary of Sir Edward and Lady Elgar, 1900
- EE 1/2/13 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1901
- EE 1/2/14 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1902
- EE 1/2/15 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1903

REEL SEVEN

- EE 1/2/16 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1904
- EE 1/2/17 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1905
- EE 1/2/18 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1906

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- EE 1/2/19 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1907
- EE 1/2/20 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1908
- EE 1/2/21 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1909
- EE 1/2/22 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1910

REEL NINE

- EE 1/2/23 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1911
- EE 1/2/24 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1912
- EE 1/2/25 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1913

REEL TEN

- EE 1/2/26 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, relating to an Italian journey, 1913
- EE 1/2/27 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1914
- EE 1/2/28 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1915
- EE 1/2/29 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1916

REEL ELEVEN

- EE 1/2/30 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, with annotations by Sir Edward,
1917
- EE 1/2/31 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1918
- EE 1/2/32 Diary of Lady Caroline Alice Elgar, 1919
- EE 1/2/33 Diary of Sir Edward and Lady Elgar, 1920-April 1921 [Lady Elgar
died 1920]

CONTENTS OF REELS

REEL TWELVE

- EE 1/3/1 Diary of Carice Elgar, daughter of Sir Edward and Lady Elgar, later Mrs Elgar Blake, 1922
- EE 1/3/2 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1923
- EE 1/3/3 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1924
- EE 1/3/4 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1925

REEL THIRTEEN

- EE 1/3/5 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1926
- EE 1/3/6 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1927
- EE 1/3/7 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1928
- EE 1/3/8 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1929

REEL FOURTEEN

- EE 1/3/9 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1930
- EE 1/3/10 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1931
- EE 1/3/11 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1932
- EE 1/3/12 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1933 (unused after October 5)

REEL FIFTEEN

- EE 1/3/13 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1935-36
- EE 1/3/14 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1937
- EE 1/3/15 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1938
- EE 1/3/16 Diary of Carice Elgar, 1939

REEL SIXTEEN

- EE 2/1 Letters of Sir Edward Elgar to John West of Novello's (Publishers)**
- EE 2/1/1 Thu[rsday] 31 [?]
- EE 2/1/2 Oct[ober] 25 [18]98
- EE 2/1/3 Oct[ober] 23 1904. Re *Variations*
- EE 2/1/4 Feb[ruary]? 16 1905
- EE 2/1/5 Dec[ember] 7 1911. Written from The Athenaeum
- EE 2/1/6 June 11 1914
- EE 2/1/7 Aug[us]t 9 1921. Written from Sussex
- EE 2/1/8 July 10 1923 Re: arrangement of a Handel overture
- EE 2/2 Letters of Sir Edward Elgar to Frederick Gaisberg (Barbarossa) of The Gramophone Co.**
- EE 2/2/1 Feb[ruary] 26 1919. Offering condolences on the death of Gaisberg's brother and sending a photograph

CONTENTS OF REELS

REEL SIXTEEN continued

- EE 2/2/2 1 July 1932. Re: copies of *The Voice* to be autographed by Elgar; asking for the “proofs” of *The Severn Suite* [recording?] to be sent to Bernard Shaw; and enclosing a postcard from Bernard Shaw. [Card send separately? see EE 2/2/3].
- EE 2/2/3 29 June 1932. Postcard from Bernard Shaw to Elgar suggesting the outlines of a “Financial Symphony”.
- EE 2/2/3a Received 7 July 1932. Certificate guaranteeing ownership of postcard to Frederick Barbarossa.
- EE 2/2/4 22nd November 1932. Concerning performance of the Violin Concerto by Yehudi Menuhin.
- EE 2/2/5 21st April 1933. To “Frederick the Great” commiserating over an attack of lumbago.
- EE 2/2/6 24 April 1933. Asking to travel to Paris with Gaisberg; commenting that he had not been to Paris for many years; first visit in 1880.
- EE 2/2/7 3 June 1933. Thanking Gaisberg for [Paris] trip and commenting on visiting Delius.
- EE 2/2/8 Dec[ember] 7th 1933. Dictated [to Carice] from nursing home, but signed by Elgar. Asking Gaisberg to arrange for a photographer to visit nursing home.
- EE 2/2/9 Dec[ember] 14th 1933. Dictated [to Carice] from nursing home, but signed by Elgar. Thanking Gaisberg for his visit with photographer. Enclosing a photograph of Elgar [see EE 2/2/9a].
- EE 2/2/9a Photograph “taken by [...] Dr. Grindrod [...] about 30 years ago. This [...] represents the very serious dreamer & thinker [...] and not the gay, irrepressible spirit” [Quote from EE 2/2/9].
- EE 2/2/9b 15th Dec[ember] 1933. Postcard dictated to E. Mary Clifford [Elgar’s secretary] and signed by her acknowledging receipt of the photographs taken at the nursing home.
- EE 2/3 Letters of Sir Edward Elgar to Owen Mase of the BBC.**
- EE 2/3/1 24 Apr[il] 1933. Asking Mase not to announce the first performance of the [3rd] symphony at this stage.
- EE 2/3/2 27 April 1933. Allowing Mase to announce the symphony for the May festival, 1934. The reverse of the letter contains the heading of the four movements [proposed] and a note that Elgar is uncertain of the order of the middle two movements.
- EE 2/4 Letters of Sir Edward Elgar to Herbert Lambert, photographer.**
- EE 2/4/1 12th Feb[ruar]y 1931. Acknowledging Lambert’s offer of a sitting.
- EE 2/4/2 18 Oct[ober] 1932. Postcard offering to arrange a meeting at Marl Bank on Elgar’s return from Ireland.

CONTENTS OF REELS

REEL SIXTEEN continued

- EE 2/5 Letters of Carice Elgar Blake to Frederick Gaisberg of The Gramophone Co.**
- EE 2/5/1 Dec[ember] 17th 1933. Thanking Gaisberg for a wireless set and records; commenting on Elgar's health.
- EE 2/5/2 Jan[uary] 9th 1934. Confirming the doctor's agreement to Gaisberg's suggestion [for the recording session of *Caractacus* held in London with a microphone connexion to Elgar's bedroom later that month?]
- EE 2/5/3 15-2-[19]34. Commenting on a recording of *Mina* and sending Elgar's criticisms and wish that the record not be released.
- EE 2/5/3a Supplementary, undated note, initialled CJB, saying that this [ie. EE 2/5/3] is the best Carice can make of the comments and hopes that Gaisberg understands.
- EE 2/5/4 Nov[ember] 27th 1940. Giving permission for Gaisberg to quote from Elgar's letters to him in a forthcoming memoir.
- EE 3 Books, scores and other printed material**
- EE 3/1 Vocal score of *The Dream of Gerontius*. Dedicated to "C. Alice Elgar / Feb 27: 1900 / Edward Elgar". With numerous pencilled observations from the first performance.
- Unnumbered Autograph manuscript score of *The Music Makers*.

REEL SEVENTEEN

- EE 4/1 Transcripts**
- EE 4/1 Typed transcript described as 'Elgar Chronology - from his own MS, CAE's [Caroline Alice Elgar's] & c'. pp.1-184 Headed Elgar chronology and covering the period 1872-1900. From there the pages are headed Elgar diary - [Year - running no. within the year], eg. Elgar diary 1901-9. The section from 1915-16 to 1917 - 14 has been inserted back to front. The volume ends at 1921 [but see EE 4/2].
- EE 4/2 Typed transcript of the diaries from 1920-33. The 1920 and 3 pages of 1921 are Edward & Alice Elgar's diary. 1921-1933 are Carice's diaries. Unbound.