

earlier books. On the other hand, there is something external: the life of a composer, or the words of assorted critics. What is never attempted is the consideration of these discrete worlds as dialogic, the investigation into how self and culture, music and criticism, were shaped by, and helped shape, each other.

At times, though, Wilson gives hints of what a very different study might resemble. In her chapter on *Tosca*, to take just one example, she notes that critics were haunted by anxieties that contemporary Italy was lacking in authentic heroes. For them, *Tosca* seemed “an opera that lacked both a heroic style of music and a heroic plot (or, rather, whose characters merely feigned heroics)” (p. 82). But why stop here? I would be interested in knowing how these claims might inform an interpretation of the end of *Tosca* and Cavaradossi’s act 3 duet: sung in octaves, unaccompanied, fanfare-like, and a seemingly “heroic” passage if there ever was one. What did critics think of this moment? Could the music be said to inscribe its failure? Similarly, it would be interesting to consider how a nostalgia for revolutionary heroism might have informed Puccini’s choice of subject, or led other composers to write operas featuring similar characters, such as Umberto Giordano’s *Andrea Chénier* (1896).

A fluid approach—one that takes account of composition, reception, and cultural history—may ultimately be necessary to adequately represent the place of opera in Italy at the fin-de-siècle. In the first appendix to *The Puccini Problem*, Wilson describes the contents of *L’illustrazione italiana* as “contemporary events and personalities, science, the fine arts, travel, theatre, music, fashion and serialized stories” (p. 233). She also notes “illustrations of carnivals, exotic foreign locations, royal weddings,” and “advertisements for eau de cologne, ice skates, the Printemps store in Paris, slimming pills, toothpaste, hotels on the Venice lido” (p. 233). This strange world is certainly “modernity,” and it appears to have made little distinction between art and commerce, between the national and the foreign, the lofty and the everyday. The world of *L’illustrazione italiana* is, palpably, the one in which both Puccini and his critics lived. Its porousness

is disconcerting, but by seizing on it Wilson might have produced a far richer book.

ARMAN SCHWARTZ
University of California, Berkeley

Edward Elgar and His World. Edited by Byron Adams. (Bard Music Festival.) Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2007. [xxi, 426 p. ISBN-10: 0691134456; ISBN-13 978-0-691-13446-8. \$22.95.] Illustrations, music examples, index.

2007 was the sesquicentennial of Elgar’s birth, and—as may be expected in anniversary years—there has been a surge of publications and events related to the honoree. That Elgar would be the subject of the celebrated Bard Music Festival is noteworthy, especially given his rather marginal status in American concert life. In recent years the festival title has included the first and last names of its subject—perhaps shying away from the “canonic” look of the household name. This postmodern move notwithstanding, by its nature the festival is “canonizing,” and Elgar’s admission to this selective list may be his most important achievement since being awarded the Order of Merit in 1911.

It is greatly to the credit of Byron Adams that, amid the plethora of Elgar material published in the last few years, *Edward Elgar and His World* is a vital contribution. The organization of *Elgar and His World* as outlined in the introduction is attractive; conceding to the “two Elgars” trope that pervades much of the literature, Adams settles on a version of the trope articulated by Percy Young—private Worcestershire versus public London. As Adams emphasizes, “nearly all of Elgar’s public and populist compositions, including all five of the *Pomp and Circumstance* marches, were composed in the West Midlands, and his anguished and, in spite of the large orchestral and choral forces employed, intimate reaction to the war, *The Spirit of England* . . . [and] the most nakedly autobiographical and most private of his scores, *The Music Makers*, . . . was finished in the city” (p. xvi). Thus there may indeed be a correspondence between what Elgar was writing and where he was writing it, but the correspondence is

not what we might expect; indeed, this may reveal something about the wistfulness and nostalgia that have often been cited in discussions of his music.

There are four essays under the heading "Worcester" and five under "London," although naturally the writers have not restricted their discussions only to works composed in their assigned locale. The geographical metropolis/periphery organization facilitates distinctions among works often jumbled together—namely the miscellaneous "low art" repertoire that Elgar produced in a variety of genres. Daniel Grimley's offering on Elgar's populism is a Worcester essay, and gives a fairly broad overview; the London essays on salon life (Sophie Fuller), *The Crown of India* (Nalini Ghuman) and its Music Hall origins (Deborah Heckert), are rich contextual treatments. It is refreshing to see so much space given to the serious treatment of the popular aspect of Elgar's oeuvre—as distinct from "public" and "private" and what Grimley rightly labels "an authentic mode of Elgar's compositional voice" (p. 100).

At the middle of the book Adams has carved out space for annotated primary sources: Aidan Thompson's extensive survey of early British reviews of *The Apostles* and Alison Shiel's edition of Charles Sanford Terry's previously unpublished "Notes on Elgar's Violin Concerto," together with related correspondence. Additionally, Thompson's brilliant essay on Elgar's critics illuminates much about the obfuscation (as defense mechanism) that the composer employed in later years.

Perhaps the most important contribution of this book is the nuanced discussion of Elgar's Catholicism and its significance for his music (and for subsequent biographical and critical treatments). It is a complex subject, and it is a focus in many of the essays—particularly that of Adams himself, as well as those of Charles Edward McGuire, Rachel Cowgill, and Leon Botstein, and the early reviews of *The Apostles*. With so many contributors exploring the subject, there are inevitably several interpretations, and one particular strength of this volume is that it allows contradictions to stand without the usual oversimplifications, recognizing that even if we were to believe that the enigmatic Elgar always

spoke as he felt, his feelings changed a good bit from context to context and time to time.

Coming first in the book, McGuire confronts the contradictory and elusive Elgar head-on, posing four "avatars" that have come to represent the composer: the "faithful child" (1857–1889); the "publicly faithful" (1889–1905); the "weak faith" he projected in his later years; and, as received after his death, the virtually secular "pan-Christian" national emblem or the "old English Catholic," either of which make him a traitor to his particular Ultramontane upbringing. Problematic as such periodizations may be, McGuire's essay sets the stage for much that is to come later in the volume. Even so, Cowgill's virtuosic reading of *The Spirit of England* (1917) as "Elgar's War Requiem"—not merely a memorial, but a work covertly Catholic—necessarily complicates a conception of the purportedly "weak faith" period. As she writes, "in the sphere of religious music Elgar had to become adept at negotiating Protestant sensibilities" (p. 325). In the framework of an established Church, national music did not need to hide its Christianity. *The Spirit of England* is not a sacred (let alone Anglican) work in any conventional respect—mystical perhaps, but with no overt Christian expression. Cowgill, however, locates a Catholic impetus behind it. Her reading of the middle movement "To Women" (with its line "For you, you too, to battle go") as thinly veiled *Stabat Mater* is illuminating, as are the specific musical connections to *The Dream of Gerontius* (1900) that she locates. Intriguingly, she posits that the *Gerontius* demon chorus quotation at the text "Vampire of Europe's wasted will" in *The Spirit of England* was so strongly felt by the composer that "critics observed a heightened sense of violence in Elgar's own performances . . . [of] *Gerontius* around this time" (p. 340).

Cowgill, Botstein, Adams, Riley, and Heckert make stimulating forays into literature, aesthetics, and the visual arts. Longfellow and Ruskin appear repeatedly, and Heckert's essay is a startling reminder that the painter Walter Sickert (1860–1942) is an almost exact contemporary of Elgar, even if he had seemed (to this reader at least) to fit better among a later generation.

Particularly provocative is Botstein's comparison of the Pre-Raphaelite painters John Everett Millais (rich in detail and psychology) and Edward Burne-Jones (objective formalist), with Elgar the heir to both:

In Elgar's music, the melodic material and rhetorical sweep have lent themselves to such disparate readings precisely because of their place in an overwhelming large-scale musical structure. The sections of *The Apostles* and *The Kingdom* that have attracted attention . . . are more like Millais, while the prelude to *The Apostles* and the setting of the Lord's Prayer in *The Kingdom* are suggestive of Burne-Jones. (pp. 395ff.)

Interesting though it is, does this reading tell us more about the music than it does about Botstein's approaches to this repertoire as interpreter? ("The painterly equivalent of Elgar's *Apostles* is Millais's *Christ in the House of His Parents*." [p. 393]) Perhaps so: he makes the case for Elgar's connections to both artists, but considerably more exploration is warranted.

Nor, of course, will this be the only contentious interpretation. Adams's speculation that Elgar's "tenacious memory may have colored certain musical decisions as a result of his early reading" of Novello primers by Ernst Pauer (p. 80) seems to give credit of influence to the theorist instead of the music. Pauer does not declare the majesty and pomp of D major ex cathedra, but rather observes it; Elgar is surely as likely to have come to a similar conclusion by his own exposure to the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century repertory. Grimley's assertion that "the emphasis in the main sections of the [first *Pomp and Circumstance*] march is on a forward vector, constantly pushing onward in a spirit of modernist progress" is reasonable, but he is grasping when he claims "the emphasis in the trio (even in its transformed *molto maestoso* apotheosis) is on circularity and repetition, and the tune ultimately avoids closure" (p. 111). How an augmentation of the final phrase, culminating in a perfect authentic cadence "avoids closure" is not clear to me; admittedly the cadence is elided with the coda, but even then there is a prolonged tonic pedal. For circularity and open-endedness, Grimley will have to wait for a great

nephew in the same "ceremonial" idiom, the "Jupiter" big tune in Holst's *The Planets*.

Nalini Ghuman's discussion of *The Crown of India* tackles more than can be accommodated in such a short space, and we may hope for a fuller monographic treatment. In particular her discussion of marches needs fleshing out. "By the 1897 Diamond Jubilee, the march had come to signify both imperial expansion and national celebration; in the process, it had become specifically linked with British India, as exemplified by Thomas Boatwright's 1898 *Indian March: The Diamond Jubilee*" (p. 267). Even the most casual glance at popular music from 1897 will reveal a super-abundance of works related to imperial expansion and national celebration. A strong association of the march with India would be very difficult to establish beyond the single example she names; in any case, the hundreds of marches published in the late 1890s are almost all 6/8 quick-marches, and not of the particular ceremonial style associated with Elgar and his followers. Given enough space, her perceptive discussion of the triple-time and assuredly ceremonial "March of the Mogul Emperors" would benefit from reference to Elgar's 1911 *Coronation March* (partially also in triple time, and almost as noisy); a comparison between these two near-contemporary marches might also give her scope to deal more thoroughly with David Cannadine's controversial *Ornamentalism: How the British Saw their Empire* (London: Allan Lane, 2001), which she dismisses for "eras[ing] race from the imperial equation" (p. 284n.).

Quibbles aside, *Edward Elgar and His World* presents one fine essay after another. It is a stimulating complement to its closest counterpart, the recent *Cambridge Companion to Elgar* (ed. Julian Rushton and Daniel Grimley [Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004]). While the Cambridge volume essentially surveys the music with an almost tangential treatment of the culture in which it was produced, here Adams challenges us with a rich contextual study not of Elgar's world, but of many conflicting and contradictory worlds in which the composer lived, battled, triumphed, failed, and died.

JAMES BROOKS KUYKENDALL
Erskine College