

Dutton Epoch
CDLX 7243

Elgar – *Sea Pictures & Pageant of Empire*
&
Orchestral Song Cycles by Michael Hurd and Ivor Gurney

BBC Concert Orchestra
conducted by Martin Yates
Roderick Williams baritone

Sir Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

Pageant of Empire (1924) *words: Alfred Noyes*

i. Shakespeare's Kingdom

When Shakespeare came to London
He met no shouting throngs;
He carried in his knapsack
A scroll of quiet songs.

No proud heraldic trumpet
Acclaimed him on his way.
Their court and camp have perished
The songs live on for aye.

Nobody saw or heard them;
But all around him there
Spirits of light and music
Went treading the April air.

He passed like any pedlar;
Yet he had wealth untold.
The galleons of th'Armada
Could not contain his gold.

The Kings rode on to darkness
In England's conqu'ring hour,
Unseen arrived her splendour;
Unknown her conqu'ring power.

ii. Sailing Westward

Hoist your sails, adventurous captains!
Out and chase the setting sun!
Boundless as the deep before you
Shines the dream that calls you on.

Sky to sky, adventurous captains,
Calls you, as the wonder grows;
Every sun-down as it deepens,
Every sun-down as it deepens,
Reddening to an English rose.

Are there worlds beyond the darkness?
Westward, through the thundering gales,
Westward go the shining sailors!
Westward plunge the tattered sails!
Ocean opens out to ocean,
England fades behind them far,
Are there world beyond the darkness,
Worlds of light beyond the darkness?
England sails beyond the darkness
Westward, steering by a star.

Sky to sky, immortal captains,
Calls you, as the wonder grows.
Every sun-down as it deepens,
Every sun-down as it deepens,
Reddening to an English rose.

iii. **The Heart of Canada**

Queen of the West, too queenly proud
(Canada! Canada! Fair young Canada!)
Ever to breathe her love aloud;
The sceptre lies in her hand,
Yet is her heart not wholly free!
Thine is all the heart of Canada,
Britain – look in her eyes and see,
Honour and understand.

She whose flag in thy fore-front shines
(Canada! Canada! Queenly Canada!)
Bows with all her breathing pines,
All her fragrant firs.
Thou art old and she is young;
Yet those eaglet-wings of Canada
In thy rocks have grown so strong,
Thy heart grows young in hers.

iv. **The Blue Mountains**

Over the Blue Mountains

The sun at evening went;
And there was nought beyond them,
And we were well content.

Yet, over the Blue Mountains,
As birds at evening may,
Though there was nought beyond them,
Our dreams began to stray.

The Southern Cross came riding,
Like Gabriel overhead,
Up to the shining summits;
We followed where it led.

We left the world behind us –;
The mists of time unfurled:
And over the Blue Mountains
We found a greater world.

v. **The Islands**

Southward now, the radiant islands
O'er the golden ocean rise;
Peaks of snow, and happy valleys
Where eternal summer lies;
Flocks that drift like clouds in heaven;
Lakes that gleam like fallen skies;
And the four great rivers rolling
Through the ferns of Paradise.

Yet, O yet, a shadowy island
Throned on misty Northern seas
Calls across the world for ever,
Calls us – to our mother's knees.
Ocean severs; Ocean binds us;
Every whisper of the foam
Breaking on our shores reminds us
That an island was our home.

vi. **Merchant Adventurers**

Merchant Adventurers, chanting at the windlass
Early in the morning, we shipped from Plymouth Sound,
All for adventure in the great New Regions,
All for Eldorado, and to sail the world around.
Sing, the red of sunrise ripples round the bows again,
Sing! Adventurers, at last we're outward bound.
All to cram the sunset in our old black galleon,

All to seek the merchandise that no man ever found.
Merchant adventurers! Merchant adventurers,
What shall be your profit in the mighty days to be?
England! England! Glory, glory everlasting,
In the lordship, in the lordship of the sea.

Merchant adventurers, O what'll ye bring home again?
Wonders and works and the thunder of the sea!
Whom will ye traffic with? the King of the Sunset!
What shall be your pilot then? A breeze from Araby!
Nay, ye be merchants, will ye come back empty handed then?
Ay, we be merchants, though our gains we ne'er shall see;
Rubies of glory and a crown of light for England.
Let her take and wear them in the mighty days to be.
Merchant adventurers! Merchant adventurers,
What shall be your profit in the mighty days to be?
England! England! Glory, glory everlasting,
In the lordship, in the lordship of the sea.

vii. **The Immortal Legions**

Now, in silence, muster round her
All the legions of her dead.
Grieving for the grief that crowned her,
England bows her glorious head.
Round the ever-living Mother,
Out of the forgetful grave,
Rise the legions that have saved her
Though themselves they could not save.
Now the living Power remembers,
Now the deeper trumpets roll.

Are there worlds beyond the darkness?
Worlds of light beyond the darkness?

And a voice beyond the darkness
Whispers to her stricken soul:
Mother of immortal legions,
Lift again thy glorious head.
Glory honour and thanksgiving,
Now, to our victorious dead.

Two songs

The Pipes of Pan (1899 orch. 1902) *words: Adrian Ross, pseudonym for Arthur Reed Ropes*

When the woods are gay in the time of June
With the chestnut flow'r and fan,

And the birds are still in the hush of noon,
Hark to the pipes of Pan!

He plays on the reed that once was a maid
Who broke from his arms and ran,
And her soul goes out to the list'ning glade –
Hark to the pipes of Pan!

Though you hear, come not near,
Fearing the wood-god's ban;
Soft and sweet, in the dim retreat,
Hark to the pipes of Pan!

When the sun goes down and the stars are out,
He gathers his goat-foot clan,
And the Dryads dance with the Satyr rout;
Hark to the pipes of Pan!

For the pipes the dance of the happy Earth
Ere ever the gods began,
When the woods were merry and mad with mirth
Hark to the pipes of Pan!

Come not nigh, pass them by,
Woe to the eyes that scan!
Wild and loud to the leaping crowd
Hark to the pipes of Pan!

When the armies meet on the battlefield,
And fight is man to man,
With the gride of sword and the clash of shield –
Hark to the pipes of Pan!

Thro' the madden'd shriek of the flying rear,
Thro' the roar of the charging van,
There skirls the tune of the God of Fear –
Hark to the pipes of Pan!

Ours the fray -on and slay,
Let him escape that can!
Ringing out in the battle shout,
Hark to the pipes of Pan!

The River, Op.60 No.1 (1910 orch. 1912) *words: Pietro d'Alba, pseudonym for Edward Elgar*
River, mother of fighting men, (Rustula!)
Sternest barrier of our land, (Rustula!)

From thy bosom we drew life:
Ancient, honoured, mighty, grand!
Rustula!

Oh! what worship had been thine, (Rustula!)
Hadst thou held the foe-men, drowned; (Rustula!)
Flood, more precious far than wine,
Victress, saviour, world renowned!
Rustula!

Like a girl before her lover, (Rustula!)
How thou falterdst, like a slave; (Rustula!)
Sank and fainted, low and lower,
When thy mission was to save.
Coward, traitress, shameless! Rustula!

On thy narrowed, niggard strand, (Rustula!)
Despairing, now the tyrant's hand (Rustula!)
Grips the last remnant of our land,
Wounded and alone I stand,
Tricked, derided, impotent! Rustula!

Sea Pictures, Op.37 (1899)

i. Sea-Slumber Song *words: Roden B W Noel*

Sea-Birds are asleep,
The world forgets to weep,
Sea murmurs her soft slumber-song,
On the shadowy sand
Of this elfin land;
"I, the Mother mild,
Hush thee, O my child,
Forget the voices wild!
Isles in elfin light
Dream, the rocks and caves,
Lulled by whispering waves,
Veil their marbles bright,
Foam glimmers faintly white
Upon the shelly sand
Of this elfin land;
Sea-sound, like violins;
To slumber woos and wins,
I murmur my soft slumber-song,
Leave woes, and wails, and sins,
Ocean's shadowy might
Breathes good-night,

Good-night!”

ii. **In Haven** *words: Caroline Alice Elgar*

Closely let me hold thy hand,
Storms are sweeping sea and land;
Love alone will stand.

Closely cling, for waves beat fast,
Foam-flakes cloud the hurrying blast;
Love alone will last.

Kiss my lips, and softly say:
“Joy, sea-swept, may fade to-day;
Love alone will stay.”

iii. **Sabbath Morning at Sea** *words: Elizabeth Barrett Browning*

The ship went on with solemn face:
To meet the darkness of the deep,
The solemn ship went onward.
I bowed down weary in the place;
For parting tears and present sleep
Had weighed mine eyelids downward.

The new sight, the new wondrous sight!
The waters around me, turbulent,
The skies, impassive o’er me,
Calm in a moonless, sunless light,
As glorified by even the intent
Of holding the day glory!

Love me, sweet friends, this sabbath day,
The sea sings round me while ye roll
Afar the hymn, unaltered,
And kneel, where once I knelt to pray,
And bless me deeper in your soul
Because your voice has faltered.

And though this sabbath comes to me
Without the stoled minister,
And chanting congregation,
God’s Spirit shall give comfort. He
Who brooded soft on waters drear,
Creator on creation.

He shall assist me to look higher,
Where keep the saints, with harp and song

An endless sabbath morning,
And on that sea commixed with fire,
Oft drop their eyelids raised too long,
To the full Godhead's burning.

iv. **Where Corals Lie** *words: Richard Garnett*

The deeps have music soft and low
When winds awake the airy spry
It lures me, lures me on to go
And see the land where corals lie.

By mount and mead, by lawn and rill,
When night is deep and moon is high,
That music seeks and finds me still,
And tells me where the corals lie.

Yes, press my eyelids close, 'tis well;
But far the rapid fancies fly
To rolling worlds of wave and shell,
And all the lands where corals lie.

Thy lips are like a sunset glow,
Thy smile is like a morning sky,
Yet leave me, leave me, let me go
And see the land where corals lie.

v. **The Swimmer** *words: Adam Lindsay Gordon*

With short, sharp, violent lights made vivid,
To southward far as the sight can roam,
Only the swirl of the surges livid,
The seas that climb and the surfs that comb
Only the crag and the cliff to nor'ward,
And the rocks receding, and reefs flung forward,
Waifs wreck'd seaward and wasted shoreward,
On shallows sheeted with flaming foam.

A grim, grey coast and a seaboard ghastly,
And shores trod seldom by feet of men -
Where the batter'd hull and the broken mast lie,
They have lain embedded these long years ten.
Love! when we wandered here together,
Hand in hand through the sparkling weather,
From the heights and hollows of fern and heather,
God surely loved us a little then.

The skies were fairer and shores were firmer

The blue sea over the bright sand roll'd -
Babble and prattle, and ripple and murmur,
Sheen of silver and glamour of gold.
So, girt with tempest and wing'd with thunder
And clad with lightning and shod with sleet,
And strong winds treading the swift waves under
The flying rollers with frothy feet.

One gleam like a bloodshot sword-blade swims on
The sky line, staining the green gulf crimson,
A death-stroke fiercely dealt by a dim sun
That strikes through his stormy winding sheet.
O, brave white horses! you gather and gallop
The storm sprite loosens the gusty reins;
Now the stoutest ship were the frailest shallop
In your hollow backs, on your high-arched manes,

I would ride as never a man has ridden
In your sleepy, swirling surges hidden;
In gulfs foreshadow'd through strifes forbidden,
Where no light wearies and no love wanes.

Ivor Gurney (1890-1937)

Lights Out (1918-25) *words: Edward Thomas*

i. The Penny Whistle

The new moon hangs like an ivory bugle
In the naked frosty blue;
And the leaves of the forest, already blackened
By Winter, are blackened anew.

The brooks that cut up and increase the forest,
As if they had never known
The sun, are roaring with black hollow voices
Betwixt rage and a moan.

But still the caravan hut by the hollies
Like a kingfisher gleams between;
Round the mossed old hearths of the charcoal burners
First primroses are to be seen.

The charcoal burners are black, but their linen
Blows white on the line;
And white the letter the girl is reading
Under that crescent fine;

And her brother who hides apart in a thicket,
Slowly and surely playing
On a whistle an olden nursery melody,
Says far more than I am saying.

ii. Scents

Today I think only with scents
Scents dead leaves yield.
And bracken wild carrot seed
and the square mustard field.

Odours that rise when the spade wounds the root of tree,
rose currant raspberry or gout weed
Rubarb or Celery
The smoke's smell too blowing
from where the bonfire burns the dead
The waste the dangerous and all to sweetness turns.

It is enough to smell to crumble the dark earth
While the Robin sings over again
Sad songs of autumn mirth.

iii. Bright Clouds

Bright clouds of may
Shade half the pond.
Beyond,
All but one bay
Of emerald
Tall reeds
Like criss-cross bayonets
Where a bird once called,
Lies bright as the sun.
No one heeds.

The light wind frets
And drifts the scum
Of may blossom.
Till the moorhen calls
Again.
Naught's to be done
By birds or men.
Still the may falls.

iv. Lights Out

I have come to the borders of sleep,

The unfathomable deep
Forest where all must lose
Their way, however straight,
Or winding, soon or late;
They cannot choose.

Here love ends,
Despair, ambition ends;
All pleasure and all trouble,
Although most sweet or bitter
Here ends in sleep that is sweeter
Than tasks most noble.

There is not any book
Or face of dearest look
That I would not turn from now
To go into the unknown
I must enter and leave, alone
I know not how.

v. Will You Come?

Will you come?
Will you ride
So late
At my side?
O, will you come?

Will you come ?
Will you come
If the night
Has a moon,
Full and bright?
O, will you come?

Would you come?
Would you come
If the noon
Gave light,
Not the moon?
Beautiful, would you come?

Would you have come?
Would you have come
Without scorning
Had it been
Still morning?

Beloved, would you have come?

If you come
Haste and come,
Owls have cried;
It grows dark to ride.
Beloved, beautiful, come.

vi. **The Trumpet**

Rise up, rise up, and as the trumpet blowing
 chases the dreams of men,
As the dawn glowing the stars
 that left unlit the land and water,
Rise up and scatter the dew that covers the prints
 of last night's lovers.
Scatter it, scatter it.

While you are listening to the clear horn,
Forget, men, ev'ry thing
 on this earth new born
Except that it is lovelier
Than any mysteries
Open your eyes to the air that has
 wash'd the eyes of the stars
 all the dewy night.

Up with the light,
Up with the light,
To the old wars, to the old wars arise.

Michael Hurd (1928-2006)

Shore Leave (1962) *words: Charles Causley*

i. **Convoy**

Draw the blanket of ocean
Over the frozen face.
He lies his eyes quarried by glittering fish
Staring through the green freezing sea-glass
At the Northern Lights.

He is now a child in the land of Christmas:
Watching, amazed the white tumbling bears
And the diving seal.

The iron wind clangs round the ice-caps,

The five-pointed dog-star
Burns over the silent sea,
And the three ships
Come sailing in.

ii. **Elizabethan Sailor's Song**

My love, my love is a green box-tree
And the scarlet hawthorn berry.
Give me five cocky starlings
On a grass-grown sea
And a lute to be merry.

Then shall we wander in star-sewn meadows
Frosted by ancient October
Where ice like iron rims the shadows
And never, never be sober.

O what is the brightness behind her eye?
O let me taste her
Sweet mouth, begin,
As under the sky we freezing lie
Cold it is out but not within.

O cease your singing my darling my swallow
And put away your brown fiddle
For the ship is a-sailing and you cannot follow
And I have the middle.

iii. **Shore Leave**

See the moon her yellow landau
Draws against the fainting sky.
The white owl round my window wanders
As I hurry by.

Night the Negro lays his fingers
On the lily-breast of day.
Sleep beckons like a gentle lover
But I hasten away.

On the sea the ships are leaping
To the islands of the sun.
On the deck the sailors sleeping
Would I were one!

In my ear no more the music
Of the tree the summer long.

Only the unfaithful ocean
And the Sirens' Song.

iv. **Able Seaman Hodge remembers Ceylon**

O the black-thorn and the wild cherry
 and the owl in the rotting oak tree
Are part of the Cornish landscape
Which is more than can be said for me.

O the drum and the coconut fiddle
And the taste of Arabian tea
The Vimto on the verandah
And the arrak shops on the quay.

I wish I'd never heard of Kandy
Or the song in the white flow'r tree
*There's a thousand loafing matelots
 in the old base ship
An' I wish the one of them was me.*

O the pineapple salads of Colombo
The wine bar at Tricomali
My bonnie lies over the ocean:
The brilliant Arabian Sea.

v. **Sailor's Carol**

Lord, the snowful sky
In this pale December
Fingers my clear eye
Lest seeing, I remember

Not the naked baby
Weeping in the stable
Nor the singing boys
All round my table,

Not the dizzy star
Bursting on the pane
Nor the leopard sun
Pawing the rain

Only the deep garden
Where green lilies grow.
The sailors rolling
In the sea's blue snow.