

ASSEMBLY HALL

Sunday, 24th May, 1959, at 2.45 p.m.



# Choral and Orchestral Concert

in the presence of His Worship the Mayor  
to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the granting of the  
title "Royal" to the Borough



Royal Tunbridge Wells  
Choral Society

Royal Tunbridge Wells  
Symphony Orchestra

Leader : Lionel Bentley

**BRUCE BOYCE**

Conductors :

**Dr. HAROLD MAY**  
**JOHN HOLLINGSWORTH**

PRICE 6d.

# Programme

Conducted by **Dr. HAROLD MAY:**

**The National Anthem**

*arr. Elgar 1857-1934*

**Coronation Anthem, Zadok the Priest**

*Handel 1685-1759*

This is one of four anthems composed by Handel for the Coronation of George II in 1727. It is typical of Handel, who was a past master at producing music suitable for a special occasion. After an orchestral introduction of somewhat serene character the choir bursts in with fortissimo chords "Zadok the Priest and Nathan the Prophet, anointed Solomon King" moving quickly into an allegro movement of Handelian solidity "and all the people rejoiced and said", followed by the triumphant chorus, "God save the King", with long runs in the bass parts, taken up by the first and second sopranos and then all four parts interspersed with "Amens" and "Alleluias" reminiscent of "Messiah". A fine anthem for a festive occasion. c.w.

Conducted by **JOHN HOLLINGSWORTH:**

**Enigma Variations, Op. 36**

*Elgar 1857-1934*

This was Elgar's first big orchestral work. It appeared in 1899 and it both established his reputation and put England back on the musical map after an absence of over two centuries.

The "Enigma" has never been solved. It consists of guessing what the tune is that the composer, who delighted in puzzling people, said goes with the Theme but is never heard.

All music is personal because it is an expression of its composer's mind and personality. This work is perhaps even more personal than most because it is also about people. Elgar was a very human and likeable man with hosts of friends and these variations came into being when he thought out a tune and made it the basis for a set of musical portraits of some of his friends, or rather, of some aspects of them, and of course we find in the work something of the portrait painter himself as well: the colour and pageantry that he loved, mysticism, humanity, and fun.

The Theme is gentle and unassuming, first with short phrases and then, gaining confidence, it becomes a sweeping tune of wide leaps.

The Variations, "Dedicated to my Friends Pictured Within", are:

1. C.A.E.—Elgar's wife and constant inspiration.
2. H.D.S.-P.—David Stuart-Powell, the pianist of the trio in which Elgar played the violin. The variation suggests the finger exercises he did while the others put up the music-stands.
3. R.B.T.—R. B. Townsend, a man with a high voice who once, in some amateur theatricals, played a character with a deep bass voice, and in this variation we can hear how his voice kept breaking.
4. W.M.B.—W. M. Baker, R.B.T.'s brother-in-law, an energetic man who loved giving orders and organising other people. A peremptory variation.
5. R.P.A.—Matthew Arnold's son, who had a little nervous laugh, here suggested by the woodwind.
6. YSOBEL—Isobel Fitton, to whom Elgar gave viola lessons, and here the violas play part of an exercise he wrote for her.
7. TROYTE—Arthur Troyte Griffith, an architect. This is an explosive variation, and the composer seems bent on making the timpanist go through his drums.
8. W.N.—Winifred Norbury, a neighbour of the Elgars. This is almost all for strings and woodwind with the tune rising higher and higher. The violins hold on their last note into the next variation but the key changes and with it the mood, most wonderfully.
9. NIMROD—August Jaeger (Jäger is German for hunter, and Nimrod was "a mighty hunter"). Once when Elgar was in despair about his music and vowed he would never compose again, Jaeger told him to remember Beethoven and his troubles—*he* did not give up. At the beginning of this lovely satisfying variation, with its sense of warm friendship, the Theme is made to suggest the start of the slow movement of Beethoven's Pathetic Sonata.

10. **DORABELLA**—Mrs. Richard Powell, author of a book on Elgar. In this dainty variation, in which the brass are silent, the woodwind have a little hesitation on the first note of their four-note phrases, a reference to Dorabella's slight stammer.
11. **G.R.S.**—Dr. Sinclair, organist of Hereford Cathedral, but the "picture" is of his bulldog, Dan, who rushes about until a stick is thrown into the river, and then he plunges in and swims after it, growls, seizes it and brings it back, and it all happens again, with the brass "barking" the Theme.
12. **B.G.N.**—Basil Nevinson, the cellist in Elgar's trio. Here there is a cello solo, a decorated version of the Theme.
13. **ROMANZA** \* \* \*—Lady Mary Lygon, on a voyage to Australia. A soft timpani roll suggests a ship's engines throbbing and the clarinet plays a phrase from Mendelssohn's Overture, *Calm Sea and Prosperous Voyage*.
14. **E.D.U.**—Elgar himself (his wife called him "Edu") standing in the picture with his friends. There is a reference in the middle to C.A.E., preceded, on the woodwind, by the whistle, with which Elgar used to announce his coming, but in the main this variation gives us the composer's love of martial pageantry, with a blaze of splendour at the end. M.V.

#### INTERVAL OF TEN MINUTES

Conducted by **JOHN HOLLINGSWORTH**:

**These Things Shall be**, for Baritone Solo, Chorus and Orchestra

*John Ireland, b. 1879*

#### BRUCE BOYCE

We are honoured by the presence here today of John Ireland. Much of his music, with its very characteristic harmonies, its interesting rhythms and many lovely tunes, seems to have been inspired by non-musical things, such as the sea, in *The Island Spell* and *The Song of the Spring-Tides*, for piano; an ancient earthwork, Maiden Castle, in the orchestral piece *Mai Dun*; in one case by a trivial thing, a London bus-conductor's call of "Piccadilly", which became the germ of the *London Overture*; and poetry, too. It is not surprising that he should find pictorial ideas in words and translate them into music, in his songs and choral works.

This work is a setting of a poem by John Addington Symonds, looking forward to a happier and more peaceful world. There is a very short orchestral introduction, with a drum-roll, a loud chord, and then a phrase that recurs constantly almost throughout the work in different forms; here it seems to be questioning and fearful, fitting the mood of the opening words: "Say, heart, what will the future bring?" In the long and impressive orchestral interlude which soon follows the phrase is very prominent, but much quicker and extended. This interlude completely changes the mood of the music and leads up to the entry of the choir with the confident shout of "These Things shall be....." visualising the better world that will come, and here, in the accompaniment, the motto phrase, as one might perhaps call it, becomes almost triumphant, alternating with short brass fanfares. It is later heard, sounding ethereal high up on flute and violins at the words "All that may plant man's lordship firm on earth and fire and sea and air." Another, shorter orchestral interlude follows, on a ground-bass which seems to be a variant of the motto phrase. The sound dies away and then after a pause there comes a slower section marked "Broad and stately"—the tune really is broad and stately—with a baritone solo: "Nation with nation.....shall live as comrades free.....", women's voices take up the melody, and then the whole choir, and the big tune soars up to a big climax "when all the earth is paradise". Then comes another orchestral interlude, very short and quiet, but not really peaceful because the harmonies keep shifting, giving a restless feeling, as if the mood of triumphant hope is not a certainty. The altos and tenors whisper the opening question "Say, heart, what will the future bring?" but in a moment the big tune comes back, and the confidence too—"These Things, they are no dream, shall be for happier men when we are gone—those golden days shall dawn for them", and then very quietly, as if seeing a vision in the far distance, "transcending all we gaze upon". The voices change from words to humming and only strings and a soft tap on the bass drum accompany the end of the work.

M.V.

Conducted by **Dr. HAROLD MAY:**

**Prince Igor's Aria** } **Act II, Prince Igor** - *Borodin 1833-1887*  
**Polovtsian Dances** }

**BRUCE BOYCE**

Borodin was a spare-time composer, his real job being that of Professor of Chemistry, and so a composition would sometimes take him years, on and off, being written, as he himself said, when he was too unwell to give lectures. In fact he never did finish the opera *Prince Igor* and it was completed after his death by Rimsky-Korsakov and Glazounov. The story of the opera is based on an ancient Russian epic poem about an invasion by a Tartar tribe, the Polovtsi. Prince Igor and his army, trying to repel the invaders are defeated and Igor is captured. In Act Two, set in the Polovtsian camp, he sings this Aria, lamenting the days that are past, when he was happy at home, and the sadness of his present plight. The Khan of the Polovtsi tries to cheer his prisoner with an entertainment of dancing and singing, with the famous Polovtsian dances, in fact, which are the best-known part of the opera. M.V.

Conducted by **JOHN HOLLINGSWORTH:**

**March, Pomp and Circumstance No. 1** - *Elgar 1857-1934*

Elgar originally intended to write a set of six Pomp and Circumstance Marches, but actually he only composed five. This one appeared in 1901, and some time afterwards A. C. Benson's words "Land of Hope and Glory....." were set to the trio of the March. In recent years a pleasant tradition has grown up at the Proms—that the audience should join in the singing of the second chorus, and it is hoped that today's audience will also do this. C.W.

*(Programme Notes are Authors' Copyright)*

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**WE WISH TO ACKNOWLEDGE OUR THANKS to**



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