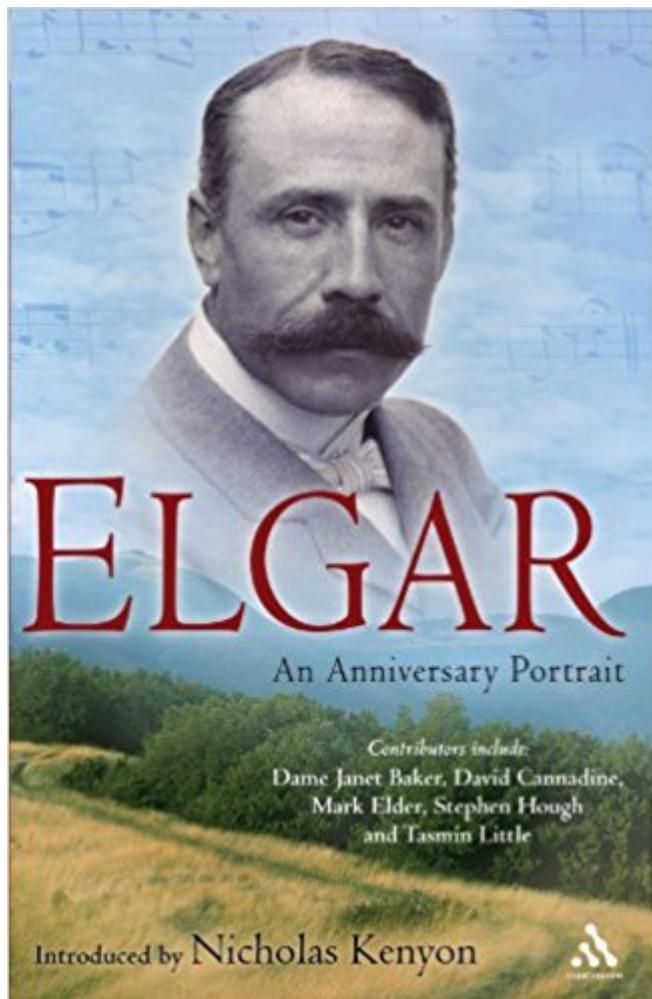


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Elgar: An Anniversary Portrait



Synopsis

"Too frequently a multi-author work on a composer obscures rather than illuminates its subject. This volume casts a genuinely prismatic light upon it."R.J. Stove, The New Criterion "An Anniversary Portrait succeeds in offering a sufficient yet panoramic view of Elgar's life and music. The impressive list of authors and concise nature of their contributions make this book an easily digestible and enjoyable read."Muso Edward Elgar was a man of many contradictions. He was born an outsider, into a family of lower-middle class, Catholic, origins. Yet his fame, and ability to write music that struck a chord in the national consciousness, led him to adopt a sycophantic attitude towards the Royal Family and high society, even though he always felt ill at ease with them. Elgar was a depressive with a problematic marriage, who craved recognition, but in many ways he regretted the piece of music which made him famous. 'Pomp and Circumstance' made him the leading English composer of his age, but also contributed to the jingoism which he so disliked during the First World War.Yet, unquestionably, he was the greatest musical genius that England had produced in centuries. This Portrait, by some of the scholars and musicians that understand him best, offers new light on a wide range of aspects of Edward Elgar's life and work.

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Nicholas Kenyon was Director of the Proms from 1996-2007. He was formerly head of Radio 3 and music critic for the Observer and the New Yorker. He is currently Managing Director of The Barbican in London.

This book contains several rewarding essays on Sir Edward Elgar that help provide a fuller picture of the composer of several well-known pieces (the Pomp & Circumstance March #1 being in the super-well-known category). Each reader is likely to find a different set of essays to be most interesting; mine are those by Diana McVeagh, Stephen Hough and Mark Elder. One problem is that the authors are not identified. Some, such as Hough, Janet Baker and Yehudi Menuhin are well-known, but the others are known mostly to persons already well familiar with the composer, and some will be new to most readers. Many chapters have notes, but the one by Hans Keller does not despite his quoting three sources.

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