

A foreword by Hilary Elgar

My great-uncle Edward Elgar loved Germany and its music and thought of himself as a musician working in the tradition of Johannes Brahms, Richard Wagner and other European composers.

As a young man he and his wife Alice used to visit Germany on a regular basis and they attended many performances of Wagner's operas in Munich or Bayreuth. Later on they travelled to excellent performances of his oratorios "The Dream of Gerontius", and "The Apostles" in Duesseldorf, Cologne and Mainz. They both could speak German, although Alice was more fluent than he was. He enjoyed the story of himself needing a ticket for a ride on a tram in Munich. Not knowing the correct word for "Final Stop" he asked for "letzte Ruheplatz", and was put off at a cemetery!

Until the First World War Elgar's music was very well known in Germany and it enjoyed a good reputation. But nowadays his "Land of Hope and Glory" has become so popular that it seems as if it was the only piece of music written by him! Nevertheless I am quite aware of the fact that more and more his music is being performed in Germany. Against the background of these very positive developments I am delighted about the great commitment that Thomas Neuhoff and the Bach-Verein Cologne have shown in developing, organizing and executing a project that offers more than ten different events – including a thrilling school-project – dealing with Elgar and his music over a period of five months, and culminating in a great performance of his oratorio "The Kingdom" in the Cologne Philharmonie.

I am sure that this has been one of the most impressive and comprehensive projects on Elgar which Germany has seen so far. I know that this excellent initiative is supported by the Elgar Society and the Elgar-Freundeskreis Deutschland, and I am glad that the Elgar Family Charity Trust has helped substantially to make this exceptional project happen.

On behalf of the Elgar family I hope that you have the chance to enjoy as many of the fascinating events as possible. How wonderful if this project's impetus leads to other similar events and in this way helps to rekindle interest in Germany in my great-uncle and his legacy of music.

Best wishes

Hilary Elgar

