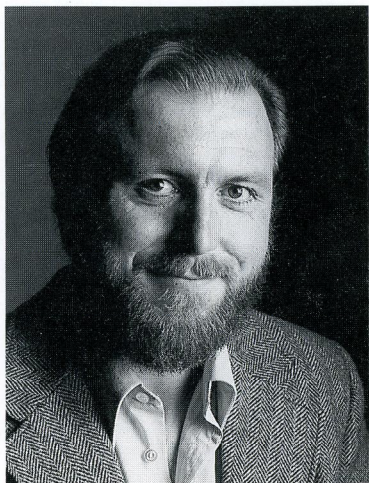


Chandos

CHAN 8438



Peter Pettinger

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CHANDOS RECORDS LTD., LONDON, ENGLAND



SIR EDWARD ELGAR (1857-1934)

- | | |
|---|--|
| 1 *Chantant (c.1872) (5:10) | 9 Dream Children, Op. 43 (1902) (6:04) |
| 2 *Pastourelle (1881) (2:17)
(Air de Ballet) | 10 *Skizze (1903) (1:12) |
| 3 Rosemary (1882) (3:45) | 11 *In Smyrna (1905) (4:54) |
| 4 *Griffinesque (1884) (0:22) | 12 *Concert Allegro (1901-1906) (10:00) |
| 5 *Sonatina (1889) (3:27)
(Original Version)
I – Allegretto (1:45)
II – Allegro (1:42) | 13 Carissima (1913) (4:50) |
| 6 *Presto (1889) (2:01) | 14 *Sonatina (1931) (3:59)
(Published Version)
I – Andantino (2:31)
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| 7 Minuet, Op. 21 (1897) (4:12) | 15 *Serenade (1932) (3:06) |
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*Original piano music

DDD

TT = 62:45

PETER PETTINGER piano

Assembling the final programme for this record has been a fascinating task. In trying to arrive at a definitive list of original piano music, however, one finds oneself on a sticky wicket.

The early stages were easy enough. I already knew of the *Concert Allegro*, *In Smyrna* and a number of other pieces currently in print from Novello. I next consulted the list of works in Michael Kennedy's *Portrait of Elgar*. The very first piano piece, *Chantant*, written at around the age of 15, and still unpublished, led to the first of many absorbing hours in the British Library Department of Manuscripts. Out-of-print pieces were sought in libraries and publishing houses. A good list was building up, although I was beginning to feel more like a scholar than a pianist. After much pondering and reassembling of titles I felt the need for more authoritative information on what constituted genuine, as opposed to 'border-line', pianoforte material. I sought the help of Jerrold Northrop Moore.

He immediately introduced me to two unfamiliar items, the *Pastourelle* and the original version of the *Sonatina*, both recorded here for the first time.

The *Pastourelle* is the curiosity of the collection. Written under the pseudonym of Gustav Francke, it was intended to encourage the composer's young brother Frank in his own creative efforts. Boosey's published it as the latter's Op. 10(!) in 1903. This competently-turned-out *morceau de salon* is included more for the sake of thoroughness than with a view to enhancing Edward's own reputation. It is not to be confused with the *Pastourelle* for Violin and Piano Op. 4., No. 2.

The MS title sheet of the *Sonatina* states "Sonatina (Allegretto + Allegro) composed expressly for May Grafton by her affectionate Uncle, Edward Elgar. January 4: 1889." The Allegro is marked "as fast as you can!" for the eight-year-old May. The piece had to wait until 1931 to appear in print, for which purpose the composer changed the first movement to Andantino, tightened up the Allegro and refined details in general.

A year or so later Keith Prowse also published *Mina*, *Serenade* and *Adieu*, all sent in as short score sketches. As it turned out, *Mina* never had a life of its own for piano

solo (it came out for small orchestra), but *Serenade* and *Adieu* are original piano gems, the latter ending delicately suspended in the dominant minor. At the time, Elgar told the publishers: "they can be adapted to any 'arrgt' you think fit."

This remark encapsulates the whole problem of deciding which is the true version of these small pieces. Elgar produced his own arrangements for piano of a large body of material ranging in size from the complete *Enigma Variations* down to a number of the short pieces here. In including such items as *Rosemary*, *May song* and *Carissima* at the expense of others, an arbitrary line has had to be drawn. These pieces, along with the *Minuet* Op. 21 and *Dream Children*, exist in other instrumentations. So indeed do such perennial favourites as *Chanson de Nuit*, *Chanson de Matin* and *Salut d'Amour* and so where are they, one might wonder? Well, these all lay best claim as violin pieces, although familiar enough in their piano versions (in the case of the *Chansons*, not by Elgar anyway).

From this confused scene genuine piano music re-emerges in the shape of the Schumannesque *Griffinesque* whose title remains unexplained, and the untitled *Presto*. (This tempo indication is added in fainter ink on the MS.)

Skizze too is real piano music, a tiny but highly significant composition. One can do no better than to quote Jerrold Northrop Moore: "... a microcosm of the musical world with which the composer surrounded *The Apostles*."

Elgar's output for piano was small. He was never fond of the instrument, and all his life felt a need to live down the image of the piano-tuner's son. Above all, he always thought immediately in terms of orchestral colour, and in *that* instrument his true heart lay. Nevertheless his two most important piano compositions, *In Smyrna* and the *Concert Allegro* contain very fine, even great music.

In the Autumn of 1905 he joined a private cruise of the Mediterranean, the farthest-flung port-of-call being Smyrna (now Izmir, Turkey). The best possible account of the background to this composition is contained in Elgar's own diary, all very evocative stuff:

"Sunday, Oct. 1. Rose late. Very, very hot & sirocco blowing – Peculiar feeling of

intense heat and wind"

The hauntingly beautiful opening could indeed be thought redolent of a heavy Asian heat, but the 'grandioso' climax is vintage Elgar belying all notions of climate and location.

The *Concert Allegro* is the only Elgar piano work uncompromisingly designed for the concert hall. It was written in some haste for Fanny Davies to include in her St. James's Hall recital on December 2nd, 1901. As played on that occasion it did contain many repetitions which Elgar later boldly removed in a massive tightening-up operation. He also came to have thoughts of turning it into a piece for piano and orchestra, and the MS is liberally marked with rough plans to this effect – tantalisingly so, as it would undoubtedly have worked brilliantly in this way. Unfortunately he never achieved a definitive version, so many questions arise as to exactly what to play. At one point I was tempted to record two performances – the original full-length piece of 1901, and then the truncated (and almost entirely improved) revision, which represents his last written thoughts on the piece. When involved in the MS, the differences seem dramatic enough, and possibly two recorded versions would have been of academic interest. However, as this would have meant repeating most of the work, and as the passages cut were to a great extent repetitions in the first place, I have chosen to play the most revised version, and take the opportunity of including such idyllic 'border-line' music as *Carissima* and *Dream Children*.

So, Elgar's entire output of true piano solo music is here, along with a personal selection of pieces, all in piano versions by the composer.

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Peter Pettinger was born in Peterborough in 1945. From an early age he was a keen pianist and, whilst his sights were always focussed on the classical repertoire, he also became much intrigued by the jazz music of Dave Brubeck, Gerry Mulligan and Miles Davis.

His classical training took place at the Royal Academy of Music, studying with pianist Vivian Langrish and composer Hugh Wood. He has since travelled extensively throughout Europe, Japan, Australia and the USA.

He is active in many fields, including composing and arranging for television, as well as playing jazz.

Other recordings include the Bartok Violin and Piano Sonatas with Sandor Végh, the Elgar Violin Sonata and pieces with Nigel Kennedy (Chandos ABRD/ABTD 1099 & CHAN 8380) and "Strad Jazz", an album of jazz standards also with Nigel Kennedy (Chandos LBRD/LBTD 011 & CHAN 8350).

A Chandos Digital Recording.

Recording Producer: Brian Couzens.

Sound Engineer: Ralph Couzens. Assistant Engineer: Philip Couzens.

Recorded in St. Silas Church, Belsize Park, London in June 1985.

Front cover painting: Landscape by H. W. B. Davis (1833-1914)

reproduced by courtesy of the Christopher Wood Gallery, London.

Sleeve Design: Roderick White. Art Direction: Janet Osborn.

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ELGAR: Piano Music
Concert Allegro · In Smyrna · Sonatina
Serenade · Skizze · Adieu · Chantant and other pieces

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