

## ELGAR, WHAT PEOPLE SAY ABOUT HIM

### A COMPILATION

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Have you ever encountered any Elgar?

Yes, I have just trod in some.

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If Elgar was an undertaker, people would stop dying.

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If Elgar's music is played badly, you blame the orchestra; if it is played well, you blame Elgar (Boult)

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(Malcolm Arnold, in serious mood) Ladies and gentlemen, we should all be glad that Elgar never wrote any music

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The best piece that Elgar wrote was 20 years after he died (Beecham)

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Elgar wrote a series of marches called Pimps and Jerks of all circumstances (Ruth Gipps)

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Dear Sir Edward,

I am sitting in the smallest room in the house with your Cello Concerto before me, but, thankfully, it will soon be behind me. (Sir Charles Villers Stanford)

This story is also quoted about other composers but I have Elgar's letter referring to this!

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Listening to Elgar is the quickest and more efficient way cure for constipation (Holst)

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Elgar's music is like waiting for a very important letter to arrive and when you receive it you can't read it because the writing is illegible (Ralph Vaughan Williams)

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The Elgar Cello Concerto had only one really good point... in a quite passage the conductor farted... it was the best moment in a turgid and tedious piece. (Manchester Guardian)

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The conductor, Alexander Gibson, asked his son about Elgar's Second Symphony after he had conducted it when his son Jamie was in the audience. Gibson asked Jamie if it was too long.

The boy replied, 'Ach, it were nae too long, Daddy... it just seemed too long!'

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Listening to Elgar is a marvellous way to catch on your sleep (Maurice Ravel)

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I don't know what is the best part of any Elgar work. The silence before it starts or the tremendous relief when it is all over (Karajan)

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I shall never sing in the choir any work by Elgar again. He inspected us before the concert by lifting our skirts with his stick and if we were not wearing blue knickers he told us to get changed into some that were blue, preferably navy blue. (Several women have said this)

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When he lifted my skirt high he shouted at me, "You're no Virgin Mary!" (Emma Rowland)

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Every copy of his work, particularly the Cello Concerto, is another death of an innocent tree.

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I love his song, Land of Dopes and Tories (George Weldon)

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I would rather read a list of his works than hear any of his music (Percy Grainger)

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If music be the food of love, play on. If it is by Elgar make sure a lavatory is very close nearby

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Sir Neville Cardus was being interviewed about British music in a live radio broadcast. With a minute to go, the interviewer panicked because they had not mentioned one particular composer. "But what about Elgar?" he exclaimed.

Sir Neville replied, "Why? Is he dead?"

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Standford and Parry were discussing a performance they had just attended of *The Dream of Gerontius*.

"All smells and bells," said one, "It stinks of incense!"

"Oh, my friend you are wrong," replied the other, "It just stinks!"

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"There is something wrong with a composer who, in his *Enigma* variations, writes about the women he would like to —, and then writes about a composer's dog called Dan!"

"Oh, that is because he was fascinated by the animal and could not keep his eyes off the dog licking his —"

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The best thing Elgar did, and his finest achievement, was to decompose.

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The Violin Concerto is toilet paper music

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Elgar kept on about his music being enigmatic meaning something puzzling or mysterious. It is not. It is just about his pomp and pride and the women he wanted to violate as well as his clandestine affair with his publisher Jaegar. However, I am not so sure about Dan the bulldog which dog belonged to George Sinclair the organist (Percy Pitt)

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Elgar complained about Walton's *Viola Concerto* being abuse of the instrument. Even if that were true, he would know... since his *Cello Concerto* is the abuse of the instrument. (Paul Hindemith)

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After an performance of the *Elgar Cello Concerto*, Beecham, who was anti-women being in orchestras, turned to the cello section which were mostly women and said, "Ladies, you have lovely instruments between your legs. It is a pity that you don't pluck it!" Some versions say scratch it.

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Yes, I know Elgar. I climbed it once. It is in the Bernese Alps in Switzerland. (Edmund Hilary)

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It is said that when Fritz Kreisler premiered the *Elgar Violin Concerto* he appeared nervous. He denied this saying that he was apprehensive because the concerto was very poor and at 47 minutes long was 46 and a half minutes too long! (Interview with Kreisler, 1928)

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Elgar is the only composer to have had a Deprecation Society made up of first-rate musicians who knew both his music and the man. The Society was not designed to rubbish Elgar but to encourage him to take lessons in all aspects of music in which he was sadly lacking.

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Sir Ivor Atkins befriended Elgar although most people eventually walked away from him because of his arrogance, petulance and disreputable life style. This also happened to Benjamin Britten. There were times when Sir Ivor had to chastise Elgar for his voyeurism and navy blue knicker fetish and for the way he treated musicians and his disgraceful philandering with other men's wives.

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If Elgar lived to be an hundred, he would still not be able to write an allegro. (Basil Cameron)

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