At last the opportunity to explore all aspects of Elgar's life through his letters and the family diaries – a uniform hardback edition, published at approximately 6-monthly intervals and available to regular purchasers at a substantial discount.

EDWARD ELGAR: COLLECTED CORRESPONDENCE

Series Editors: Martin Bird and Robert Anderson

LETTERS OF A LIFETIME

Edited by Jerrold Northrop Moore
Elgar was not only a composer; he was also a skilled and prolific writer of letters. In his day the Post Office provided several deliveries a day, making it possible to receive an answer to a letter written the same morning. On a letter-writing day Elgar was capable of penning twenty-five letters and notes at a sitting. Many were to regular correspondents: family, friends, acquaintances in publishing offices who often became friends. Elgar could be generous in responding, often through Alice, to letters seeking advice on aspects of performance of his works or from younger composers seeking help. But he rarely suffered fools gladly.

While Elgar’s changeable moods are reflected in his music, his letters and diaries offer additional, fascinating insights into the man. Elgar’s biographers were among the first to recognise this. Percy Young published the first collection of Elgar’s letters in 1956, while Jerrold Northrop Moore edited five substantial volumes of Elgar’s correspondence published by Oxford University Press between 1974 and 1990. Others, notably Wulstan Atkins with The Elgar-Atkins Friendship (1984), followed Dr Moore’s lead. But all of these cherished and much sought-after volumes have long been out of print, with some now changing hands at prices in excess of £100 a copy, several times their original retail price.

With a clear need to protect such a precious heritage, Elgar Works agreed with Dr Moore to republish his own five volumes of Elgar correspondence, and then to extend the series to include other out-of-print volumes under the series title of Edward Elgar: Collected Correspondence. But why limit the edition to reprints of previously published volumes? Over the past ten years or so, Martin Bird, editor of the Elgar Society Journal, has transcribed some 15,000 letters written to, by or about Elgar and his immediate family, as well as the Elgar family diaries. Not every letter demands publication, but the breadth of the amassed correspondence, carefully collated and presented, provides a fascinating insight into all aspects of Elgar’s life, personal and professional. The publication in 1997 of the delightful series of postcards Elgar wrote to Carice while he was away from home provided a new insight into the relationship between father and daughter; but who has read his extensive correspondence with Richter and with Troyte, or the letters Alice wrote from Brinkwells to the servants at Severn House. The project provides a strong extension to the Elgar Complete Edition, which offers the model of volumes published at regular intervals, sold mainly on subscription to secure the income to cover publication costs and minimise the sales effort required.

Anyone interested in Elgar’s life and relationships will find the new edition essential reading. The series will be launched in Autumn 2012 with the republication of Dr Moore’s Letters of a Lifetime, an overarching volume illustrating the breadth of Elgar’s writing style with a multitude of correspondents. Thereafter, under the General Editorship of Martin Bird and Elgar biographer Robert Anderson, our intention is to publish a further volume every 6-8 months, initially alternating newly edited volumes with those previously published. As with the Complete Edition, it is our intention to publish all volumes at a uniform price, initially of £40. But those intending to purchase volumes regularly can obtain significant discounts on the full publication price by taking out a subscription (see final page), with those who do so before 30 September 2012 obtaining Letters of a Lifetime at a 50% saving on the full publication price.
The Structure of the Collected Correspondence

The series will embrace all known Elgar correspondence, both to and from the composer, and between third parties where it addresses matters integral to our understanding of his own correspondence, his music and the man himself. Building on the model established by Dr Moore’s volumes, the correspondence will provide the main narrative thrust to each volume, with a minimum of explanatory text. Throughout the series, each volume will be arranged chronologically but will confine itself to one aspect although, as with Elgar and his Publishers, some subjects will perform be divided chronologically between more than one volume, while other volumes may similarly embrace more than one subject, each with a separate chronology.

It is too soon to describe this edition as the Complete Correspondence: such a conceit is only just being attempted for Wagner and even Mozart, and more Elgarian correspondence is certain to emerge over the period during which this series is published. Thus, while we have constructed a schema for the whole series, it is premature to announce a detailed list of volumes whose scope and boundaries will inevitably require subsequent adjustment to accommodate newly discovered material. Instead, to provide the flexibility for such adjustments, we have divided the edition, like the Complete Edition, into a number of separate series, each dealing with one of the main aspects of Elgar’s life:

Series I: Letters of a Lifetime, providing an introduction to Elgar the correspondent;

Series II: Family and friends, comprising correspondence with Carice, Alice, Elgar’s parents, brother and sisters, nieces and nephews; the ‘friends pictured within’ the Variations and other Worcester/Malvern friends such as Rosa Burley and the Leicesters; sponsors, supporters and dedicatees such as Dr Buck, Canon Gorton, Kilburn, Embleton, Rodewald, Schuster, the Speyers, and George Bernard Shaw; The Windflower Letters and The Elgar-Atkins Friendship; and letters of condolence on Alice’s and Edward’s death.

Series III: Elgar at work, covering his correspondence with his collaborators, performers, promoters and the critics, matters of church and state, correspondence with academia, and including Elgar and his Publishers and Elgar on Record.

Series IV: Elgar and the arts, covering his correspondence with other composers and musicians, those in the theatre, artists and painters, writers, literary figures and scholars.

And then there are the diaries, not just Alice’s but also Edward’s and Carice’s, enough for a series to themselves (Series V). Previously published incomplete and only in facsimile on microfilm at a four-figure price by Birmingham University in the 1990s, our volumes of the diaries are already in an advanced state of preparation, with a commentary relating them to the personalities and events to which each entry refers, bringing a new understanding to the often oblique entries.

Previously published volumes will not be re-edited, although the opportunity will be taken to update and expand references, correct typographical errors and include the occasional, more recently discovered letter. To assist those directed to a republished volume from one of the multitude of references already in the literature, each will contain an index relating the page numbering of the earlier edition to that in the new edition.

Inevitably, many of Elgar’s close correspondents will be encountered in several volumes. To avoid repetition of essential biographical background, it is our intention to publish at an early stage a volume of short biographies of these correspondents and many of the 5,000 or so people mentioned in the diaries. And when our task is completed, we shall issue a general index to the whole series.
HOW TO PURCHASE COLLECTED CORRESPONDENCE VOLUMES

The Collected Correspondence is published by Elgar Works, the publisher of the Elgar Complete Edition, in association with the Elgar Birthplace Museum. Individual volumes of the Collected Correspondence can be purchased at any time from the Elgar Birthplace Museum, either by telephone (+44 (0)1905 333224) or by visiting its on-line shop (www.elgarbirthplacemuseum.co.uk/**), or from any good book shop.

Those who wish to purchase Collected Correspondence volumes regularly, however, can do so at a significant saving on the Recommended Retail Price by purchasing directly from the publisher in one of two ways:

➢ Monthly Subscription Payments: If you intend to purchase volumes regularly but would rather not pay the full retail price of £40 for each volume at the time of purchase, you can open a monthly subscription account, making regular payments by standing order or automatic deduction from your credit card of £5 per month. Not only does this enable you to spread your payments throughout the year; you will also receive each volume at a 25% discount on the full retail price, reducing the price you pay to £30 a copy, subject to your having a positive balance in your account when you place your order. There is no obligation to purchase each new volume on publication; and if you wish to buy more than one copy, you will receive the same 25% discount on all copies that you purchase. If you also wish to purchase volumes of the Elgar Complete Edition, you can use the same account to do so. As a monthly subscriber, you can cancel your payments at any time, providing your account remains in credit, or request a full or partial refund of money in your account.

➢ Mailing List Customers: If you prefer not to commit yourself to monthly payments, you can still make a worthwhile saving on the full purchase price by joining our subscriber mailing list. We will notify you of the publication of each new volume and, should you choose to buy it, you will receive a 10% discount on the full retail price, reducing the cost to £36 per copy. Unless you have opted to pay in advance, you will be invoiced with the volume.

§ Back Volumes: Should you subsequently wish to purchase additional copies of the latest volume, or of earlier volumes, you can obtain these from us at similarly discounted prices (25% for monthly subscribers; 10% for others) for as long as you remain a subscriber and the volumes remain in print.

§ Postage: To maintain our low cover price and discounts for subscribers, we are forced to pass on postage costs in full. We will always use the cheapest delivery method, including surface mail for overseas delivery, unless you request otherwise.

§ Payment: Because of the high charges levied by banks on foreign currency transactions, we can only accept payment in sterling. We can however accept payment by credit card (Visa, Mastercard or Maestro).

If you wish to take up one of the above options and would like a copy of this prospectus and a subscription application form, or if you would like further information about the Collected Correspondence, please contact:

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