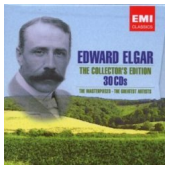
Elgar - The Music Makers - The Sanguine Fan (2007)



The Music Makers Op. 69 *1 - Moderato e nobilmente 2 - We are the music makers 3 - With wonderful deathless ditties 4 - We, in the ages lying 5 - A breath of our inspiration 6 - They had no vision amazing 7 - And therefore to-day is thrilling 8 - But we, with our dreaming and singing 9 - For we are afar with the dawning 10 - Great hail! we cry to the comers*
The Sanguine Fan Op. 81
1 - A glade 2 - Pan enters piping, then curls up to sleep 3 - A Young Man enters, awaiting someone 4 - Two Girls enter gaily; the Young Man returns the fan which the First Girl has dropped in the excitement of meeting 5 - The Young Man declares his passion for the First Girl and is blindfolded; a quarrel 6 - Echo awakes Pan, who falls in love with her; they dance till exhausted 7 - Three Shepherdess bring gifts for Pan 8 - The First Girl and the Young Man enter, she angry, he pleading 9 - Echo Snatches Pan's Pipes and Tempts the Young Man 10 - Echo, Now Disguised as a Mortal, Captivates the You 11 - Pan Rouses and, Full of Jealous Wrath 12 - Echo, Sans Disguise, Run Back to Pan
Dame Janet Baker – mezzo-soprano London Philharmonic Choir London Philharmonic Orchestra Sir Adrian Boult – conductor

The Music Makers is frequently criticised on two counts. Firstly, Elgar took as his libretto a poem by Arthur O'Shaunessey whose works were then in fashion but now seem curiously dated. And secondly, Elgar includes a number of quotations from his earlier works (Sea Pictures, The Dream of Gerontius, The Enigma Variations and both symphonies), leading to accusations that the work lacks originality and inventiveness.

Both criticisms are ill-founded. Whatever the past and current views of O'Shaunessey, there is no doubting that Elgar felt a strong affinity with the words of the poem, identifying himself with the 'dreamer of dreams' in the first line of the poem. And accepting the autobiographical links Elgar saw in the work, what should be more natural than that he should recall his earlier career through a series of quotations from those works.

Fortunately, the public does not slavishly follow the critics. The work achieved an immediate popularity, receiving frequent performances in the years following its composition. And while its initial popularity may have declined somewhat, the work is still performed regularly if infrequently, with the quotations adding a certain novelty value to what is undoubtedly a mellow and heartfelt work. ---elgar.org

It was Elgar's close friend and confidante Lady Alice Stuart-Wortley (Windflower) that asked Elgar in January 1917 if he would write The Sanguine Fan. The ballet was to be included in a matinée performance to be staged in London in March of that year for the benefit of wartime charities. The name derives from the fact that the theme of the ballet was inspired by a scene depicting Pan and Echo that a local artist had drawn in sanguine on a fan. The title is thus incidental to the theme.

Elgar, attracted both by the cause and the whimsical nature of the theme, responded willingly to Windflower's request and within a month had composed the original score. After the first performance, which he himself conducted, Elgar added a further piece - a shepherd's dance - which was premièred at a second charity performance in May 1917. ---elgar.org

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