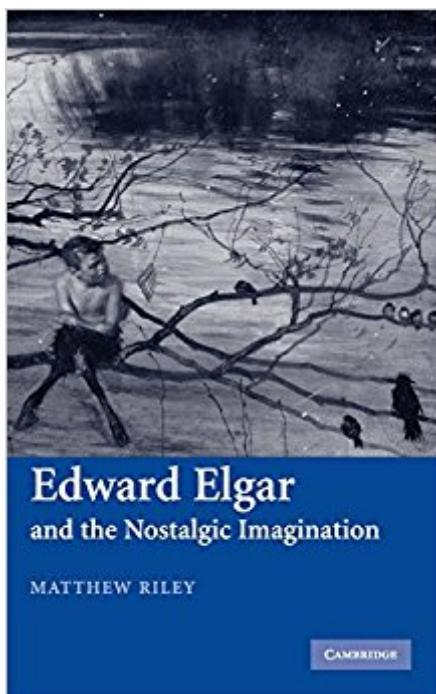


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Edward Elgar And The Nostalgic Imagination



Synopsis

During his lifetime, and in the course of the twentieth century, Edward Elgar and his music became sites for a remarkable variety of nostalgic impulses. These are manifested in his personal life, in the content of his works, in his critical and biographical reception, and in numerous artistic ventures based on his character and music. Today Elgar enjoys renewed popularity in Britain, and nostalgia of various forms continues to shape our responses to his music. From one viewpoint, Elgarian nostalgia might be dismissed as escapist, regressive and reactionary, and the revival in Elgar's fortunes regarded as the symptom of a pernicious 'heritage industry' in post-colonial, post-industrial Britain. While there is undeniably a grain of truth to that view, Matthew Riley's careful treatment of the topic reveals a more complex picture of nostalgia, and sheds light on Elgar and his cultural significance in the twentieth and twenty-first centuries.

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Elgar is today arguably the most popular British classical composer. During his lifetime, and since

his death, Elgar's work has become closely associated with nostalgia of various forms. A controversial topic in contemporary Britain, nostalgia has been condemned as escapist, but here Riley offers a cautious defence of Elgarian nostalgia.

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