

# Clara Butt

## A Critical Survey, Volume 1 The Acoustic Years

### LINER NOTES

For many years record purchasers, opening the catalogue of the English Columbia Gramophone Company, would find the first page dedicated to the long list of records by Dame Clara Butt, "the Voice of the Century". Another clue to her status is to be found in chapter one of Winfred Ponder's biography *Clara Butt, Her Life-Story* (Harrap & Co., 1928): "She stands out head and shoulders from among her contemporaries in personality as she does in stature, and the amazing range and power and beauty of her voice have placed it beyond comparison with all others. That superb voice alone must inevitably have won worldwide fame for her. Yet to Clara Butt her voice is only a means to express something greater than any voice - greater even than music herself - a spiritual force that must have found expression through her by some means even if she had had no voice at all."

We might well ask what other singer known to us could have earned this exalted kind of praise; the amazing thing is that most of the very many people who bought the book at the time must have heartily agreed with Miss Ponder. Maybe there is something in the contralto voice (which Rossini described as "the foundation stone of all music") that makes a specially deep appeal to the ordinary music lover, the kind who "knows what he likes and likes what he knows"; Ernestine Schumann-Heink occupied a similar place in American hearts, and Nadeshda Obukhova in Russian. Thanks to the researches of Martin Carrington, quoted in Dennis Foreman's article "Dame Clara Butt" in the magazine *The Record Collector*, Volume 44, No. 2, June 1999, we know now that Clara Ellen Butt was born at Southwick, near Brighton, on 1 February 1872, and not 1873 as everybody previously thought. The year 1873 would have placed her birth in the same month as that of Caruso, Chaliapin and Rachmaninov, a fitting place for her.

Her father was at different times a sea-captain and an oyster-dredger; she inherited her voice from her mother. Clara's first teacher, a Miss Brooks, trained her as a soprano, but after she had been taken to hear the great American contralto Belle Cole at the Colston Hall, Bristol, Clara realized that she, too, was a contralto and set about at once to try to imitate the great Belle Cole. A few Columbia records made in 1903, when Cole was past her prime, show a magnificent, dark and opulent voice; her majestic style is obviously Clara's model.

Dan Rootham, the organist of St. Peter's Church, Bristol, and conductor of the Bristol Festival Choir, was a famous singing teacher (later he also taught Dame Eva Turner). He recognized Clara's potential and taught her for several years, giving her also the opportunity to sing in the choir, enabling her to study from nearby the methods of famous singers like Lillian Nordica and Sir George Henschel.

In January 1890 she auditioned for a scholarship to the Royal Academy of Music in London. The examiners sat up and took notice when a very pretty girl, already over six feet two inches in height, walked on and boomed out the octave leap from E to E that begins Hatton's song "The Enchantress". Miss Butt noticed the growing excitement of the examiners but believed they were laughing at her, so when she came to the line "Kings have trembled when I came, reading doom upon my face!" she sank down to the low E with all the power she could muster. "I don't know about the Kings," said Dame Clara many years later, "but those examiners, they certainly trembled!" When Miss Butt was asked to sing something quieter, she chose Mendelssohn's "Woe unto them!" She got her scholarship. Her teacher was Henry Blower.

Whilst she was still a student Sir Joseph Barnby offered her the contralto solos in performances of *The Golden Legend*, *Israel in Egypt* and *Elijah* with the Royal Choral Society, and she made her debut at the Royal Albert Hall in Sullivan's *Golden Legend* with Emma Albani, Ben Davies and George Henschel on 7 December 1892; this was indeed beginning at the top. Three days later she sang the role of Orfeo in Gluck's opera in a student performance put on by the College at the Lyceum Theatre, London and conducted by Stanford. It was a triumph for the young singer, and *The Times* enthused: "That she is by far the best singer that has ever come from the Royal College of Music is beyond dispute."

The Prince of Wales commanded a repeat performance of the opera at the same theatre on 11 March 1893; amongst the many stars who came to hear her was Giulia Ravogli, the greatest Orfeo of the time. As a result of the Royal Family's interest, she was invited to sing at a State Concert at Buckingham Palace, and, later, more privately, for the Queen at Windsor Castle. After she had sung "The promise of life", Queen Victoria said to her: "I have never liked the English language before, but in your mouth it is beautiful." She was to sing very often for royalty, and her services were commanded for innumerable royal occasions, such as coronations and jubilees.

In the summer of 1893 the College sent her to Paris to study for three months with Henri Louis Duvernoy, Queen Victoria paying her expenses. Her career began to unfold and expand along the

familiar Victorian lines: concert and oratorio performances all over the British Isles, with Handel Festivals at the Crystal Palace (where the great voice finally found room to expand, soaring over 4,000 choristers and orchestral players) and the great provincial music festivals such as Bristol, Birmingham, Leeds, Norwich and so on. She sang often in Handel's Messiah, Samson, Solomon and Israel in Egypt, Elgar's Dream of Gerontius, Gounod's Rédemption, Parry's Judith and the Stabat Mater both of Rossini and Dvorak; she kept up these oratorio appearances until about 1921. Meanwhile, it was becoming increasingly clear that what the public wanted from her, and what she was ever more inclined to give them, was generous quantities of "ballads" old and new, tuneful songs that lay in a hazily defined and not quite respectable field, somewhere between really classical songs and popular music. Germany had Erik Meyer-Helmund, Eugen Hildach and Philipp zu Euelenberg, France had Rabey, Bachelet and De Fontenailles, England had Sir Frederick Cowen and Sir Arthur Sullivan, Liza Lehmann and Grace Torrens (whose immortal "How pansies grow" Dame Clara recorded on an unpublished disc sadly lost to us). In those days an elegant system of "payola" prevailed: a singer would receive royalty payments lasting many years on the sales of sheet music of the new songs that she introduced in her concerts. This is why we find the heading "Sung by Madame Clara Butt" above the title on so many front pages of songs of the day. Although the practice was discontinued or modified at the turn of the century, Clara Butt managed "by the force of her personality" to bully Boosey's into continuing their royalties to her. The successful young contralto was quickly roped into the highly lucrative business of singing at private musical entertainments during the London "season", often at two or three different great houses on the same evening. This introduced her into a whirl of social life bewildering to a girl so recently at College; at one party she was kissed by Plançon and slapped his face, at another she became (temporarily) engaged to Hermann Bemberg.

In 1896, thanks to a loan from an anonymous well-wisher, she was able to return to Paris for six months to study with Jacques Bouhy; she also studied repertoire with Bemberg. For another six months she studied in Berlin with Etelka Gerster. In 1897 she made concert appearances in Berlin, Vienna, Paris, Budapest and Prague.

In Paris she studied the role of Dalila with Saint-Saëns, who became very excited at the idea of pairing her with another giant, the tenor Albert Alvarez, in a possible Covent Garden production of Samson et Dalila, but his plan was frustrated by the Lord Chamberlain, the "censor" who at that time still refused to license plays or operas on biblical subjects. Already in 1892 Augustus Harris had offered her a contract to sing in opera at Covent Garden, which she wisely refused. It is difficult to imagine what roles, apart from Orfeo, she could have sung. Had she lived earlier she might have sung Alboni's repertoire: Arsace, Malcolm, transposed versions of Norma and Amina, or Edgardo in Lucia! A six-foot-two Carmen was unthinkable, and the Wagnerian roles - Waltraute, Erda, Brangaene - were unattractive.

Any further ideas about opera were put paid to when, in about 1897, she met and began often to sing with the baritone Robert Kennerley Rumford (1870-1957), whom she married in 1900. Her sister, Ethel Hook, told Michael Scott in an interview in 1973 that "Bertie" was jealous and did not want her to appear on stage simulating love scenes with other men. This embargo was lifted just once, when Dame Clara appeared at Covent Garden in 1920 in her old role of Orfeo (this time in the French version), conducted by Sir Thomas Beecham; it seems that the all-female cast did not cause Bertie any qualms!

Clara and Bertie were married in Bristol Cathedral on 26 June 1900: "The doors were closed when the cathedral was full to suffocation, and thousands were left outside, knocking vainly and clamouring for admission" (Miss Ponder, page 132.) Albani sang an anthem, "O God, Thou art worthy to be praised", especially composed by Sullivan, and among the guests were her inspiration Belle Cole, Melba, Edward Lloyd, Ben Davies, Andrew Black and Forbes Robertson, all names well-known to record collectors. Clara paid for the vocal tuition of her three sisters; she sent Pauline (soprano) and Ethel (contralto) to Henry Blower, and Hazel (contralto) to Hilda Wilson in Bristol. All three adopted Hook (their mother's maiden name) as their professional name - a case of "Thou shalt have none other Butts but me" perhaps?

She made an enormous success during a brief tour of America and Canada in 1899; in New York she sang at Carnegie Hall and at the Albert Morris Bagby concerts in the Waldorf Hotel. On later visits, in 1914 and 1922, she sang at the Sunday evening concerts at the Metropolitan. She made further concert appearances in Europe in 1910, 1912 and 1914, but more typical of her activities were wide-ranging tours of outposts of the British Empire; Mr. Foreman reports tours of Australia and New Zealand in 1907 and 1925, South Africa in 1911, and world tours including Canada, the U.S.A., New Zealand and Australia in 1912-14 and 1919-20. She sang in India in 1927, in Japan in 1931.

"Britannia in Song" is the title given by Ivor Newton to his chapter on Clara Butt (by far the most informative, illuminating, understanding and entertaining essay ever written on her) in his book *At the Piano, the World of an Accompanist* (Hamish Hamilton, London, 1966). "Clara Butt died in 1936... Her death came within a few days of those of King George V and Rudyard Kipling. To many of us they seemed to symbolize the close of a phase in the history of the British Empire as we had always known it." He also tells us that "She had a tremendous sense of theatre. At her concerts she wore beautiful jewels, and was the first to use a spotlight in the concert hall - an effect which shocked audiences in places like the Free Trade Hall, Manchester...When the vast stage in Blackpool Tower was set with black velvet curtains, she entered not from the wings but from the back of the stage in a shimmering white dress and made her way majestically towards the audience, picked out by spotlights; it was a wonderful sight. When she took my hand to acknowledge the applause, friends told me I looked like an infant prodigy."

Photographs document her progress from the delightfully attractive Miss C. E. Butt to the monumental Dame Clara; her sense of dress was always extremely dramatic. In Monte Carlo, where she often went for a naughty "flutter" on the gambling tables, they called her "La Grande". Her speaking voice was so like a man's that comic embarrassments on the telephone were frequent.

In her private life she had much sorrow to bear; her elder son died whilst still at school, and the younger shot himself. During the nineteen-twenties she became seriously ill of cancer of the spine, but her faith gave her the strength to continue working; she made many of her later records seated in a wheelchair. She was a Christian Scientist, and on occasions would deliver a sermon in the Albert Hall; dressed in silver sequins, she glittered like an enormous mackerel (as Mr. Harold Burros delightfully recalled). Nobody laughed; who would have dared? In her majestic and awe-inspiring presence the listener felt inspired by the "Message of hope" which she believed it was her duty to deliver through her songs.

She gave the first performance of Elgar's Sea Pictures at the Norwich Festival in 1899, and at a later performance in London she heard his march "Pomp and Circumstance No. 1". "What a tune!" she exclaimed to Elgar, "Why don't you write a song for me, and use that as a refrain?" And so "Land of hope and glory" was born, her "signature-tune" which she would bellow all over the Empire for the rest of her life. Sir Thomas Beecham was believed to have said that, on a clear day, she could be heard across the Channel! The song originally formed the closing part of the "Coronation Ode" written for the coronation of King Edward VII in 1902.

In May 1916 Clara arranged a whole week of performances of Elgar's Dream of Gerontius at the Queen's Hall, London, in aid of the British Red Cross Society; dressed in white lace, she delivered the Angel's music from the organ behind the orchestra. The music had been written for her, but at the first performance at the Birmingham Festival Marie Brema created the role, an economy on the committee's part. Throughout the First World War Clara worked incessantly to raise money for charity, earning over a hundred thousand pounds - an enormous sum then. It was in recognition of this war work that King George V gave her the title of Dame of the British Empire.

Clara Butt's is the most important contralto voice to be heard on records, the greatest since Alboni (whose virtuosity, however, she could scarcely rival). In her youth it had the fresh bloom of a peach, and something of this exquisite quality can be heard on her earliest records. Sir Adrian Boult told Michael Scott that he heard her vocalizing "between four B flats"; on records her range is from the low E to the high A flat. She transposes "O don fatale" a third down; Verdi's great "mezzo-soprano" roles are too high for a true contralto, no matter how high she could go in her well-developed head voice. (In an article in The Times, Ivor Newton related that, at their rehearsals, Dame Clara would instruct him: "Play this a third up, and I will sing an octave down"!)

The voice we hear on the records is usually firmly supported on the breath, although sustained notes at the ends of phrases can be slightly tremulous, a mannerism that she may have cultivated as an effect. In later years age, illness and vocal abuse somewhat undermined the solidity of her support. When on her best behaviour she can spin out an impeccable legato, and she obviously loved to do this in competitive duet with the 'cello, played on many records by her friend Mr. W.H. Squire, a famous 'cellist who played at her funeral. Throughout the whole range of her voice there is plenty of head resonance, which is the secret of the preservation into old age of the precious vocal timbre of such singers as Patti, Melba, Battistini, Maggie Teyte - and Clara Butt.

She possesses remarkable agility when singing softly, as in the famous record of Handel's "Lusinghe più care" (CD 1, Track 1); when singing at full volume, as in the "Brindisi" from Lucrezia Borgia (CD 1, Track 5), she is not so agile - though Harry Burgess, a lecturer for the Gramophone Company, in his delightfully naïve book My Musical Pilgrimage (Simpkin, Marshall & Co., London 1911) says that her extraordinary honking noises are meant to represent "lurid, sardonic laughter". She has an excellent trill.

She is always intensely dramatic, and with her flawless diction and invariable sensitivity to both the words and the moods of the music, her interpretations are always utterly convincing. She is able to call upon a wide range of vocal effects, from booming fortissimo to the lovely light pianissimo often recalled with delight by Ivor Newton. "It is very apparent," wrote The Times on one occasion, "when she is changing gears." Indeed, her pushing the chest register up above its natural limit of E, first line, often causes an audible "yodel" effect that reduces modern listeners to tears of laughter. She should not have done this (but I should not have liked to be the person to tell her so). Records reveal that she had, in fact, learned to blend her registers perfectly and could sing a "seamless scale" when she wanted to. In Leoni's charming song "The leaves and the wind" (CD 2, Track 13) she declaims "Soon fast asleep in their earthy beds" on low G in rich, fruity tones, then climbs up the C major scale ("The snow laid a coverlet over their heads"), passing effortlessly from chest register into mixed tones on the low B, then passing again imperceptibly into her medium register (with no audible break or "yodel"), and ending on a sustained C, third space. But there is a Butt-Hyde as well as a Butt-Jekyll, and you can hear her in "The promise of life" (CD 2, Track 24) recorded the same day, another splendidly close and lifelike recording revealing opulent, golden tone. She sings so slowly that there is room only for the second stanza, in which her singing is marvelously tender and compelling, rising to an overpowering top F sharp near the end; rashly, she sings all the lower F sharps (first space) and some of the Gs in a rich, round and ruby-coloured chest register. This is naughty. In the electric Columbia recording of this song (made twenty years later, in 1929) cracks have become noticeable in the monolithic structure of her voice, owing to years of this kind of forcing, but even here, after a violent attack upon the upper F (she is now singing in D flat rather than D) she is still able to command a limpid tone in her soft singing. When she got carried away by her own enthusiasm she was unable to resist indulging in what Philip Hope-Wallace called her "Fee-Fi-Fo-Fum" baritone effects.

In her four sides from *The Dream of Gerontius* (CD 2, Tracks 1-4) she is careful not to “crash gears” and uses her chest voice with admirable discretion. She sings throughout with beauty and eloquence, keeping her chest register and her medium register bound together by the use of mixed tones, all the notes “telling” because of the open throat and the head resonance. I cannot think that anyone has ever rivaled her legato and her intensity in this music. These primitive records tell us a lot about music making in England in 1916; the well-known tenor Maurice D’Oisly sings so well, and with such a thrilling high G, that one can only wonder whatever happened to English tenors. Sir Henry Wood’s conducting is very grand and, like Elgar, he uses a lot of tempo rubato, conceiving the music in broad, sweeping paragraphs with plenty of pauses for “deep breaths” in between. The much-vaunted “Chorus of Angelicals”, personally recruited by Clara, suffers from paucity of numbers; not all the parts are covered, and here and there we can detect Clara quietly filling in.

The “port-wine” or “ruby-velvet” contralto voice, so intimately involved with Victorian and Edwardian music-making, sounds odd to us today, because so few teachers know how to teach the chest register (they don’t know how to teach the head register, either, so things have come to a pretty pass). The vocal opulence that we can admire on records by Butt, Kirkby Lunn, Thornton, Braslau and Schumann-Heink was followed by a period of restraint. The particular requirements of the radio microphone may also have played their part in the vocal manners of a singer like Kathleen Ferrier, gifted with a very voluminous and beautiful voice but with no hint of a chest register; singers of her generation would instinctively avoid any powerful splurging below the stave, decriing such effects as tasteless.

Apart from the unfamiliarity of the ballad repertoire and the “gear changes”, the most disconcerting aspect of Clara Butt’s singing is her tendency to overburden trivial songs with an impossible weight of lugubrious tone; this works in “Kathleen Mavourneen” (CD 2, Track 20), a very fine song, perhaps because of her overwhelming sincerity, perhaps because of her wonderful demonstration of a ‘cello-like legato. This portentous style, together with her enormous volume and an unfamiliar (to modern ears) low tessitura, often makes people laugh when they hear her for the first time. To enjoy her records thoroughly, as I do, you must listen on two levels: you can smile at the manner and the material whilst admiring the voice and the art.

She worked hard and was proud of it. Her frequent trips to the recording studio and the vast numbers of unpublished records bespeak the perfectionist. It is a pity that she did not have a person of impeccable taste to guide her; Bertie may have been the best-dressed man in London, but as Ivor Newton so succinctly puts it: “He seemed determined to be a gentleman first and a musician afterwards.” Some of his solo records are quite decent performances and he supports Clara with charm in “Snowdrops” (CD 1, Track 21) and the traditional “The Keys of Heaven” (CD 1, Track 22).

Like John McCormack, Richard Tauber, Jeanette MacDonald and Andrea Bocelli, Clara Butt would mingle the classical and the popular in her concerts. Her lengthy discography includes many unpublished recordings that we should love to hear, like “Divinités du Styx”, “Printemps qui commence” and songs by Hahn, Elgar, Brahms, Schubert, Gretchaninov and Rachmaninov.

Her operatic records suggest the concert singer, despite her dramatic approach. Her vocalization is particularly fine in “O don fatale” (CD 1, Track 9), with its authentic, though simple, cadenza, in “O mio Fernando” (CD 1, Track 6) and in “Mon coeur s’ouvre à ta voix” (CD 1, Track 8). She sings “Che farò senza Euridice” (CD 1, Track 4), a rather muddy recording, in Pauline Viardot’s edition, carefully following the indications for appoggiature and portamento di voce, and I consider hers by far the best performance on records of this well-known aria.

In classical song, she finds plenty of scope in Beethoven’s “In questa tomba oscura” (CD 1, Track 11), which she views as an invitation to blast us out of our seats - not the modern way of doing it! She maintains an exemplary legato, and although she stresses rather than glosses over the contrast between her registers, this does not affect the flow of the line. In Beethoven’s “Creation Hymn”, which might have been written for her, she grossly overdoes the register contrasts and spoils the line by her violent forcing of the tone; however, committed Butt fans will revel in her devastating plunges from top to bottom.

“Ama nesciri” (CD 1, Track 12) is number two of “Three little French Songs” by Annie Scott, and consists mainly of a grandly managed crescendo with a mighty plunge into the chest register. She goes on to sing, most exquisitely, “En prière” (CD 1, Track 13) by Fauré.

The Victorian contralto generally made a speciality out of Handel; at the Crystal Palace on 24 June 1909 Clara sang the great scene “Where shall I fly?” from *Hercules* and “Lord, to Thee” from *Theodora*. She did not record these, alas, but beside her dazzling record of “Lusinghe più care” (CD 1, Track 1) we can treasure her strongly contrasting execution of the solid legato of “Ombra mai fu” (CD 1, Track 3) and “Rend’il sereno al ciglio” (CD 1, Track 2).

For Dame Clara herself, the most important part of her discography would undoubtedly have been the select group of songs in the “Message of hope” category that she recorded over and over again, in some cases, in search of perfection. She described “The lost chord” as “a truly great song with echoes of Beethoven” - her interpretation is truly a mighty thing. What matter if the words turn out to be nonsense? How could one chord of music spell out the polysyllable “Amen”? And what about the “noisy keys”? Noisy? Did they need oiling?

"The lost chord" is one of those songs that Michael Scott described as "hardly liturgical [but] somehow not decently secular either"; Sullivan's "God shall wipe away all tears" is in an altogether more exalted category, and she sings it most movingly despite the glottal jerk present in every one of her recordings of it. Cowen's "The promise of life" (CD 2, Track 24) is nearly a great song, for although the words are conventional the music is splendid, and so is Gounod's "O divine Redeemer". Of Liddle's "Abide with me" (CD 2, Track 25) Scott writes: "The words are an indifferent paraphrase of a text out of St. Luke, the music of surpassing sentimentality, yet so intense is the singer's utterance that the listener must steel himself against its awful power."

My own favorites would include "Husheen" (CD 2, Track 6), a delightful Irish lullaby sung partly in Gaelic; the 1909 HMV recording displays both her loud and her soft singing, her limpid and telling diction, the lovely round vowels and the ringing consonants that never interrupt the flow of the musical line. At the end she hums to her child, making ravishing sounds à bouche fermée. I daresay this was the lullaby she once sang to Melba's granddaughter; the little girl merely commented: "My Granny can sing much quicker than that."

"The little silver ring" (CD 2, Track 12), the words of which Clara has slightly sentimentalized, is another lovely recording of her voice in quiet singing, though it begins with a ferocious bout of throat-clearing. In each stanza of "Barbara Allen" (CD 2, Track 16) (a famous exhibition of gear-crashing) she cleverly varies her tone-color to sustain our interest in the delightful tale of a heartless flirt who, in the end, shares her victim's fate.

She is often particularly fine in less familiar songs, such as Sullivan's "Will he come?" (CD 2, Track 10), a deathbed-suspense drama, and Robert Batten's "Peace and rest" (CD 2, Track 23), an unpublished record only recently discovered, and one of her best. Another great record is "Three fishers went sailing" (CD 1, Track 18) in which, again, she draws upon all her imaginative resources to tell the story. "Women of Inver" (CD 1, Track 19), a splendidly dramatic and moving song, is an "arty" variant on the same theme - "Men must work and women must weep, Though storms be sudden and water deep" - and yet another is "Have you news of my boy Jack" (CD 1, Track 20), a song that Clara commissioned from Edward German. In Kipling's poem it is the Cruel Hun rather than the Cruel Sea that seals poor Jack's doom.

In Elgar's song "Where corals lie" (CD 2, Track 5) we have an unforgettable example of her hauntingly floating tone, with the full power hinted at but never unleashed. Hatton's "The Enchantress" (CD 2, Track 9) was composed for Pauline Viardot; it is a magnificent, dramatic song in which Clara makes a telling contrast between the scary opening, with its octave leaps, in which the witch boasts of her awesome powers, and the slow section in which she croons to her beloved. The low E is sharp, but the record is one of the best examples of her interpretative genius.

Liza Lehmann's quartet "The birth of the flowers" (CD 1, Track 23) is a souvenir of many occasions in which Dame Clara condescended to share the platform with her three sisters. Ethel Hook was a famous singer in her own right and made some splendid solo recordings. Despite what Winifred Ponder says on page 124 of her biography, it is Ethel who sustains the low C for several bars; Clara can be heard singing the tune at the same time. In a long a cappella solo Clara wanders from the pitch, causing them all to go wrong; they are exposed when the piano comes in again.

Amongst the more trivial songs are some gems, like the beautiful singing in "The sweetest flower that blows" (CD 2, Track 14), in which she sings low without yelling. In "My treasure" (CD 2, Track 7) Dame Clara seems relieved when, after a hurried re-count, she establishes that her baby still has "ten little toes" Her excellent trill is to be sampled in "The fairy pipers" (CD 2, Track 8), an enchantingly light performance, and "My dear soul" (CD 2, Track 17) in which she employs a diverting "Mummerset" accent.

Generations overlap: in 1933 a little girl called Joan Sutherland was taken by her mother to hear Dame Clara Butt in Sydney, and she has never forgotten the experience. It was the biggest voice she ever heard in her life. It may have been Dame Clara's last appearance anywhere.

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## **TRACK LISTING**

### **CD 1 (79:30)**

#### **Handel**

1. ALESSANDRO: Lusinghe più care (Handel) 4:52  
*24 July 1912; (Ac6381f) HMV 2-053076*
2. SOSARME: Rend'il sereno al ciglio (Handel) 4:36  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6775-1) Columbia 74009*
3. SERSE: Ombra mai fu (Handel) 4:00  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6655-2) Columbia 7121*

#### **Opera**

4. ORFEO: Che farò (Gluck) 4:08  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6767-1) Columbia 74038*
5. LUCREZIA BORGIA: Il segreto [Brindisi] (Donizetti) 3:03  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6896-2) Columbia 74012*
6. LA FAVORITA: O mio Fernando (Donizetti) 3:44  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6606-2) Columbia 74002*
7. FAUST: When all was young (Gounod) 2:52  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6605-2) Columbia 74003*
8. SAMSON ET DALILA: Mon coeur s'ouvre à ta voix (Saint-Saëns) 4:07  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6656-1) Columbia 74004*
9. DON CARLOS: O don fatale (Verdi) 4:05  
*ca. 1915-16; (6557-1) Columbia 74000*

#### **Classical song**

10. Caro mio ben (Giordani) 3:44  
*19 December 1910; (2128c-1/2c) HMV 2-053210*
11. In questa tomba oscura (Beethoven) 3:20  
*30 August 1922; (75165-1) Columbia 7267*
12. Ama nesciri (Annie Scott) 1:08
13. En prière (Fauré) 3:05  
*20 July 1909; (3519f) HMV 2-033009*
14. A youth once loved a maiden (Heine/White) 2:17
15. The tears that night (Heine/White) 1:14  
*25 July 1912; (Ac6392f) HMV 03368*
16. A hymn for aviators (Sir Hubert Parry) 3:18  
*7 August 1919; (76025-1) Columbia 7174*
17. Soft-footed snow (Sigurd-Lie) 2:03  
*9 July 1925; (A2259-1) Columbia X330*

#### **The cruel sea**

18. Three fishers went sailing (Hullah) 4:12  
*29 October 1910; (4558f) HMV 03222*
19. Women of Inver (Loughborough) 4:12  
*25 July 1912; (Ac6389f) HMV 03305*
20. Have you news of my boy Jack? (Sir Edward German) 3:48  
*February/March 1917; (75414-2) Columbia 7145*

#### **Family music-making: Clara and "Bertie," Pauline, Hazel and Ethel**

21. Snowdrops (Lehmann) 3:43  
with husband Kennerley Rumford, baritone  
*20 July 1909; (3517f) HMV 04045*
22. The keys of heaven (Broadwood) 3:41  
with husband Kennerley Rumford, baritone  
*ca. 1915-16; (6690) Columbia 7300*
23. The birth of the flowers (Lehmann) 4:03  
with sisters Pauline (soprano), Hazel (contralto) and Ethel (contralto)  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6666-2) Columbia 7120*

**CD 2 (79:18)**

**Elgar**

**THE DREAM OF GERONTIUS:**

1. My work is done 3:51  
with Maurice D'Oisly, tenor  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6771-1) Columbia 75005*
2. I see not those false spirits 3:55  
with Maurice D'Oisly, tenor  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6772-1) Columbia 75006*
3. We now have passed the gate 3:49  
with Maurice D'Oisly, tenor  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6773-1) Columbia 75007*
4. Softly and gently 4:31  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6774-3) Columbia 75008*

**SEA PICTURES:**

5. Where corals lie 3:28  
*24 July 1912; (Ac6384f) HMV 03299*

**Songs about or for children**

6. Husheen (Fahy/Needham) 3:42  
*20 July 1909; (3511f-2) HMV 03152*
7. My treasure (Trevalsa) 1:57  
*ca. 1917-1921; (29903) Columbia X225*
8. The fairy pipers (Brewer) 1:59  
*ca. 1917-1921; (29901) Columbia X227*

**Dramatic ballads**

9. The enchantress (Hatton) 3:09  
*February/March 1917; (76016-2) Columbia 7123(1)*
10. Will he come? (Sullivan) 3:50  
*29 October 1910; (4559f) HMV 03224*
11. My son (Del Riego) 3:12  
*11 November 1914; (AK18492e) HMV 2-3056*

**Victorian ballads of sentiment**

12. The little silver ring (Chaminade) 2:17  
*20 July 1909; (3510f-1) HMV 03156*
13. The leaves and the wind (Cooper/Leoni) 1:47  
*20 July 1909; (3505f-1) HMV 03150*
14. The sweetest flower that blows (Cuthbert Hawley) 2:24  
*ca. 1917-1921; (29904) Columbia X226*
15. A summer night (Goring Thomas) 3:49  
*28 May 1925; (6687-4?) Columbia S158*

**The folk song in the drawing room**

16. Barbara Allen (Traditional) 3:02  
*7 February 1910; (4089f) HMV 03186*
17. My dear soul (Sanderson) 3:00  
*6 July 1921; (71315-1) Columbia X252*
18. The lover's curse (arr. Hughes) 1:56
19. I know my love (arr. Hughes) 1:45  
*ca. 1915-1916; (6540-3) Columbia 7116*
20. Kathleen Mavourneen (Crouch) 4:11  
*7 February 1910; (4086f) HMV 03178*
21. Bugeilio'r Gwenith Gwyn (Old Welsh Folksong) 2:42  
*ca. 1917-1921; (69148) Columbia X239*
22. Ye banks and braes o' Bonny Doon (Old Scottish Air) 3:18  
*ca. 1917-1921; (69149) Columbia X236*

**A Message of Hope**

23. Peace and rest (Batten) 4:03  
*28 October 1910; (4554f) HMV unpublished*

24. The promise of life (Cowen) 3:15  
*20 July 1909; (3498f) HMV 03157*
25. Abide with me (Liddle) 4:17  
*7 February 1910; (4088f) HMV 03179*

CD 1:

Accompaniment: Orchestra [1, 6, 9-1]; Orchestra conducted by Wood [2-5, 7-8]; Orchestra conducted by Hartly [11]; Piano [12-19, 21-23]; Orchestra conducted by Beecham [20]  
Languages: English [7, 14-23]; French [8, 12-13]; Italian [1-6, 9-11]

CD 2:

Accompaniment: Orchestra conducted by Wood [1]; Orchestra conducted by Wood with Chorus of Angelicals [2-4]; Orchestra [5, 9, 24]; Piano [6-7, 12-14, 16-22]; Celeste [8]; Piano and Organ [10-11, 23, 25]; Piano and 'Cello [15]  
Languages: English [1-20, 22-25]; Welsh [21]

Producer: Michael Aspinall

Audio Conservation: Ward Marston

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