

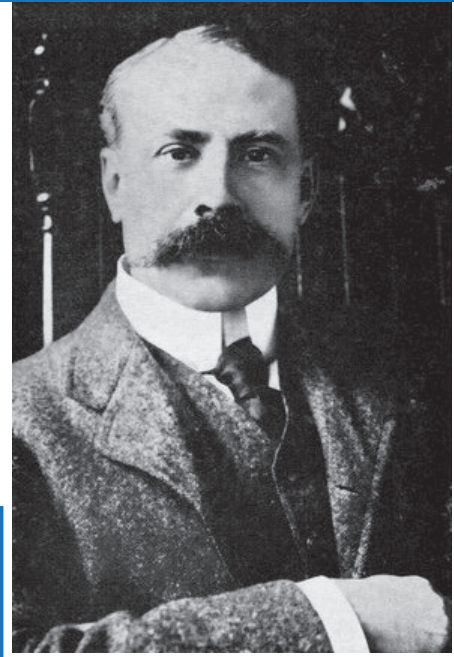
Sir John Barbirolli, CH (2 December 1899 – 29 July 1970), né Giovanni Battista Barbirolli, was a British conductor and cellist. He is remembered above all as conductor of the Hallé Orchestra in Manchester, which he helped save from dissolution in 1943 and conducted for the rest of his life. Earlier in his career he was Arturo Toscanini's successor as music director of the New York Philharmonic, serving from 1936 to 1943. He was also chief conductor of the Houston Symphony from 1961 to 1967, and was a guest conductor of many other orchestras, including the BBC Symphony Orchestra, London Symphony Orchestra, the Philharmonia, the Berlin Philharmonic and the Vienna Philharmonic, with all of which he made recordings.

Born in London of Italian and French parentage, Barbirolli grew up in a family of professional musicians. After starting out as a cellist, he was given the chance to conduct, from 1926 with the British National Opera Company, and then with Covent Garden's touring company. On taking up the conductorship of the Hallé he had less opportunity to work in the opera house, but in the 1950s he conducted productions of works by Verdi, Wagner, Gluck, and Puccini at Covent Garden with such success that he was invited to become the company's permanent musical director, an invitation he declined. Late in his career he made several recordings of operas, of which his 1967 set of Puccini's *Madama Butterfly* for EMI is probably the best known.

Both in the concert hall and on record, Barbirolli was particularly associated with the music of English composers such as Elgar, Delius and Vaughan Williams. His interpretations of other late romantic composers, such as Mahler and Sibelius, as well as of earlier classical composers, including Schubert, are also still admired.

ELGAR SYMPHONY N^o 1

SIR JOHN
BARBIROLLI
PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA



Elgar had first considered composing a symphony, to be based on the life of General Gordon, as early as 1898 but the work never materialised. He continued to toy with the idea of a symphony in the years that followed, prompting his close friend Alfred Rodewald to offer him a commission to produce it. Elgar declined that offer but accepted a commission from the Leeds Festival Committee to write a symphony for the 1904 festival, before soon changing his mind again. This incurred some displeasure with the committee, but Elgar realised that a work on the scale he intended could not be rushed.

Eventually, shortly after his fiftieth birthday in 1907, he settled down to work in earnest on the symphony. What emerged proved to be a totally different work from the Gordon symphony he had for so long contemplated. It begins with a broad, noble

theme which binds the work together, recurring at intervals throughout the four movements before eventually emerging as a triumphant march at the very end of the symphony. The third movement (adagio) is widely considered to be the most perfect and lyrical of all Elgar's output.

The symphony was an immediate success, with Elgar being recalled to the platform several times both during and after the symphony's first performance and the first London performance four days later. The symphony received around 100 performances during its first year and remains a standard of the classical repertoire, still performed regularly today.

ELGAR

SYMPHONY N° 1

SIR JOHN

BARBIROLI

PHILHARMONIA ORCHESTRA

- 1 Andante nobilmente e semplice
Allegro 21:39
- 2 Allegro molto 7:03
- 3 Adagio 12:15
- 4 Lento - Allegro 12:46
- Total Time: 53:43

Recorded by EMI records released 1963



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