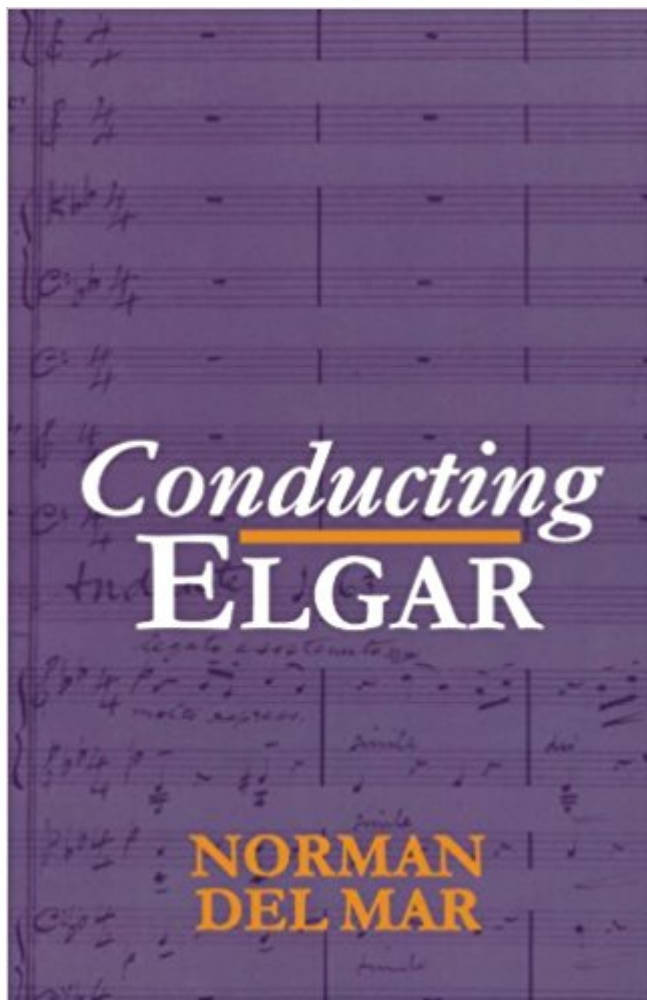


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Conducting Elgar



Synopsis

This is the final book in the series on orchestral conducting that Norman Del Mar had been writing until his death in February 1994. As with the previous books, each chapter is devoted to a specific work, and once again all the major orchestral works of this important composer are covered. The book culminates in an important study of *The Dream of Gerontius* completed by his son Jonathan, himself a conductor. Norman Del Mar was renowned in his generation as an interpreter of English music and in particular for his understanding of Elgar's music. His explanations of the subtleties of guiding an orchestra through these magnificent scores are an invaluable help to all those who seek to clarify this elusive music. Elgar's own recordings are frequently consulted but not always accepted.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

When you hear an orchestra play, how much is dictated by the score, and how much depends on the conductor? Norman Del Mar's outstanding series of books about conducting reveals the many decisions a conductor makes about tempo, phrasing, tone color, attack and orchestral balance. After earlier books about Beethoven, Berlioz, and Brahms, *CONDUCTING ELGAR* explores the music of this Late Romantic composer, whose *Enigma Variations* and *Cello Concerto* are among the most popular works in the repertory. Elgar's scores are known for their elaborate instructions, but, in many matters, there is wide latitude for interpretation, as Elgar's own recordings show. Drawing on decades of experience as one of Britain's leading conductors, Del Mar offers a page by

page--often bar by bar--discussion of 14 Elgar scores, including The Dream of Gerontius. Del Mar explains, for example, why parts of the opening Allegro of the Violin Concerto, marked "quarter note = 100" in the score, require tempos as slow as 80 and as fast as 112. He suggests ways of using rubato to give proper shape to such famous Elgar melodies as the great long tune of the First Symphony's Adagio and "Nimrod" of the Enigma Variations. He is equally good with Elgar's choral writing, devoting a full nine pages to a description of how to handle the complex counterpoint and other challenges of the "Praise to the Holiest" choruses in Gerontius. This book will be very useful to conductors and musicians, but listeners will enjoy it too. It is clearly and gracefully written, and anyone with a knowledge of basic musical terms will have little trouble understanding it. In greater detail than any other author I know, Del Mar tells how musicians turn notes into music.

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