

Edward
ELGAR

Spanish Serenade
Stars of the Summer Night
op. 23

Coro (SATB)
2 Flauti, 2 Oboi, 2 Clarinetti, 2 Fagotti, 2 Corni
Timpani, Triangolo e Tamburino
2 Violini, Viola, Violoncello, Contrabbasso

Text: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow

herausgegeben von / edited by
Barbara Mohn

Urtext

Klavierauszug / Klavierfassung vom Komponisten
Vocal score / Version for choir and piano by the composer



Carus 10.411/03

Vorwort

Als Edward Elgar im Mai 1892 die *Spanish Serenade* komponierte, war er außerhalb seiner Heimat Worcestershire als Komponist noch kaum bekannt. Die *Spanish Serenade* gilt als sein erster Versuch, ein Werk für Chor und Orchester zu schreiben. Er komponierte sein Chorlied zunächst in der Form eines Klavierauszugs und sendete diesen am 22. Mai an den Verlag Novello mit der Bitte um Veröffentlichung.¹ Novello erteilte am 11. Juni eine Publikationszusage, bat den Komponisten jedoch, den Klavierauszug zu vereinfachen. Elgar bearbeitete sogleich den Klavierauszug und orchestrierte das Werk innerhalb eines einzigen Tages. Der Klavierauszug erschien noch im gleichen Jahr im Druck, die Partitur und die Stimmen blieben jedoch bis 1904 unveröffentlicht. Es ist daher davon auszugehen, dass es schon damals viele Aufführungen nur mit Klavierbegleitung gab, sodass sich der Klavierauszug als eine Art Klavierfassung etabliert hat. 8 Jahre später schuf Elgar noch eine reizvolle Bearbeitung der *Spanish Serenade* für zweistimmigen Frauenchor, Klavier und 2 Violinen.² Die Uraufführung der *Spanish Serenade* fand am 7.4.1893 in Hereford durch die dortige Philharmonic Society statt; ob mit Klavier oder Orchester, ist leider unbekannt.³

Die *Spanish Serenade* verwendet einen Text aus dem Versdrama *The Spanish Student* (1842) von Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, das auf Miguel de Cervantes' Novelle *Gitanilla* (1613) zurückgeht. Die Geschichte handelt von der Liebe des Studenten Victorian zu der unter Roma aufgewachsenen Tänzerin Preciosa. Das von Elgar ausgewählte Gedicht steht in der 3. Szene des 1. Aktes, als Victorian Preciosa des Nachts heimlich aufsucht und seinen Diener Chispa bittet, der Geliebten vor dem Fenster mit Musikern ein Ständchen zu singen.

Offensichtlich hat gerade das „spanische Setting“ Elgar zur Komposition motiviert. Entsprechend vertonte er die *Spanish Serenade* als geheimnisvoll-leises Ständchen ganz im Stile der romantischen Vorstellung von spanischer Musik, ihren Klangfarben, Rhythmen und ihres Instrumentariums. Die Viola und die Streicherbässe geben mit ihrem synkopierten Ostinato-Motiv auf dem Basson A den Rhythmus vor, dazu erklingt das Tamburin, das im Mittelteil durch Triangel und Pauke ersetzt wird. Die ersten Violinen spielen *divisi* und *con sordini* kaskadenartige Sechzehntel-Läufe in Terzparallelen, die Assoziationen an Gitarrenklänge wecken. Die Bläser setzen vor allem Farbtupfer, sie übernehmen kurze Motive aus den Chor- oder Streicherstimmen. Doch ist die Stimmung des Chorlieds auch von Nacht, den sanften Sommerwinden und Leidenschaft geprägt. Die Musik bleibt verhalten und bricht nur im – stets leicht variierten – Refrain „My Lady sleeps“ kurz aus der leisen Grundstimmung heraus. Elgar gelingt damit schon bei seinem ersten Versuch, für Chor und Orchesterstimmen zu komponieren, ein sehr feinsinniges musikalisches Stimmungsbild.

Stuttgart, im April 2026

Barbara Mohn

Zu diesem Werk liegt folgendes Aufführungsmaterial vor:
Partitur / Orchesterfassung (Carus 10.411),
Klavierauszug / Klavierfassung (Carus 10.411/03),
komplettes Orchestermaterial (Carus 10.411/19).

¹ Brief von Elgar an Novello vom 22.5.1892, zit. nach: *Elgar and his Publishers. Letters of a Creative Life*, hg. von Jerrold Northrop Moore, 2 Bde., Oxford 1987; hier: Bd. I, S. 10–11. Zur Entstehungsgeschichte und für Nachweise und Quellen siehe Vorwort und Kritischen Bericht in der Partitur der Orchesterfassung.

² Carus 10.411/50.

³ Michael Kennedy, *The Life of Elgar*, Cambridge 2004, S. 42.

Foreword

When Edward Elgar composed the *Spanish Serenade* in May 1892, he was as yet hardly known as a composer outside his native Worcestershire. The *Spanish Serenade* is regarded as his first attempt to write a work for choir and orchestra. Elgar initially composed his choral song in the form of a vocal score and sent it to the publisher Novello on 22 May with a request for publication.¹ Novello agreed to publish the work on 11 June, but asked the composer to simplify the vocal score. Elgar edited the vocal score and orchestrated the work within a single day. The vocal score was published in the same year, the full score and parts remained unpublished until 1904. It can be assumed that even at that time there were many performances with piano accompaniment only, so that the vocal score established itself as a kind of piano version – tolerated by the composer. 8 years later Elgar also created a new charming arrangement of the *Spanish Serenade* for two-part female choir, piano, and 2 violins.² The premiere of the *Spanish Serenade* took place on 7 April 1893 in Hereford, performed by the local Philharmonic Society; whether with piano or orchestra is unfortunately unknown.³

The *Spanish Serenade* is based on a text from the verse drama *The Spanish Student* (1842) by Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, which is based on Miguel de Cervantes' novella *Gitanilla* (1613). The story is about the love of the student Victorian for the dancer Preciosa, who grew up among the Roma. The poem chosen by Elgar is found in the third scene of Act 1, when Victorian secretly visits Preciosa at night and asks his servant Chispa to serenade his beloved with musicians in front of the window.

Clearly, it was precisely the “Spanish” character that motivated Elgar to set the work to music. Accordingly, he set the *Spanish Serenade* as a quietly mysterious serenade, entirely in the style of the Romantic concept of Spanish music, its timbres, rhythms, and instruments. Viola and string basses set the rhythm with their syncopated ostinato motif on the bass note A, accompanied by the tambourine, which is replaced by triangle and timpani in the middle section. The first violins, *divisi* and *con sordini*, play cascading semiquaver runs in parallel thirds, evoking associations with the sound of the guitar. The winds mainly add splashes of color, echoing short motifs from the choral or string parts. However, the mood of the choral song is also characterized by the night, the gentle summer winds, and by passion. The music remains restrained and only briefly breaks out of the quiet mood in the – always slightly varied – refrain “My Lady sleeps.” Thus even in his first attempt to compose for choir and orchestral voices, Elgar succeeds in creating a very subtle musical atmosphere.

Stuttgart, April 2026

Barbara Mohn

Translation: Gudrun and David Kosviner

The following performance material is available for this work:
full score / orchestral version (Carus 10.411),
vocal score / piano version (Carus 10.411/03),
complete orchestral material (Carus 10.411/19).

¹ Letter from Elgar to Novello dated 22 May 1892, cited in: *Elgar and his Publishers. Letters of a Creative Life*, ed. by Jerrold Northrop Moore, 2 vols, Oxford, 1987; here: Vol. I, pp. 10–11. For more information on the genesis of the work and the references see the Foreword und Critical Report in the score of the orchestral version.

² Carus 10.411/50.

³ Michael Kennedy, *The Life of Elgar*, Cambridge, 2004, p. 42.

Spanish Serenade op. 23

Stars of the Summer Night

Edward Elgar
1857–1934

A street in Madrid. Enter Chispa, followed by musicians,
with a bagpipe, guitars, and other instruments.

Text: Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1807–1882)

Allegretto ♩ = 72

VI I (con sord.)

2 Fl, 2 Ob
2 Clt, 2 Fg
2 Cor, Timp
Tmb, Trg
Archi

Va, Vc, Tmb

+ Fg

VI II, Va

+ Clt, Vc

Va, Vc

Stars of the summer night!
Moon of the summer night!
zizza voce

Far in yon
Far down yon

- 1. Stars of the summer night!
- 2. Moon of the summer night!

Far in yon
Far down yon

- 1. Stars of the summer night!
- 2. Moon of the summer night!

+ Fg

Aufführungsdauer / Duration: ca. 5 min.

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Urtext
edited by
Barbara Mohn

pp

1. Stars of the sum - mer night!
2. Moon of the sum - mer night!

dolce

a - zure deeps, -
west-ern steepes, -

hide, hide your gold-en light,
sink, sink in sil-ver light,

dolce

a - zure deeps, -
west-ern steepes, -

hide, hide your gold-en light,
sink, sink in sil-ver light,

Stars of the sum mer
Moon of the sum

-Fg

pp *olcissimo*

She sleeps, she sleeps, my la - dy

dim.

hide, hide
sink, sink

en light!
ver light!

She sleeps, my la - dy

mf

your - gold-en light!
in - sil-ver light!

She sleeps, my la - dy

mf

night! Hide your - gold-en light!
night! Sink in sil-ver light!

She sleeps, my la - dy

VI

Fl, Ob

mf

Cor

dim.

p

pp *dolcissimo*

Va

Ped. *

Ped. * Ped. *

Ped. * Ped. *

sleeps, she sleeps, my la - dy sleeps! _____
 sleeps, my la - dy sleeps, she sleeps, my la - dy sleeps! _____
 sleeps, my la - dy sleeps, she sleeps, my la - dy sleeps! _____
 sleeps, she sleeps, my la - dy sleeps! _____

fp *p* *pp*

Leod. * Leod. * Leod. * Leod. * Leod.

27 *poco* *a tempo* | 2. *poco rit.*

Clt, Cor

dim. *poco rit.* *a tempo* *poco rit.*

Leod. *

32 **B** a tempo

Wind of the sum-mer night! Where yon-der wood-bine creeps,
Wind of the sum-mer night! Where yon-der wood-bine creeps,
Wind of the sum-mer night! Where yon-der wood-bine creeps,
Wind of the sum-mer night! Where yon-der wood-bine creeps,

Fl, Ob VI, Va
mf
+ Trg Vc, Cb
a tempo

35 *p* *cantabile*

ld, fold thy pin - ions light,
thy pin - ions,
fold thy pin - ions,
fold thy pin - ions,

mf *dim.* *p* *Tutti*
Ob, VI, Vc
Ped. *

fold, fold thy pin - ions light! She sleeps, my la-dy
 fold thy pin - ions! Wind of the sum-mer night!
 fold thy pin - ions! She sleeps, my la-dy
 fold thy pin - ions! She sleeps, my la-dy

p *p* *p* *p*

poco marcato

Red. * Red. *

she sleeps, my la - dy sleeps, she sleeps, my la-dy
 she sleeps, my la - dy sleeps, she sleeps, my la-dy
 sleeps, she sleeps, my la - dy sleeps, she sleeps, my la-dy

p *fp* *pp* *p* *fp* *pp* *p* *fp* *pp*

Fl, Clt VII *pp*

Vc, Cb Timp

45

dim. *ppp*

sleeps, she — sleeps, my la-dy sleeps, she sleeps, my la-dy sleeps!

dim. *mezza voce* *pp*

my la-dy sleeps! Dreams _____

dim. *mezza voce* *pp*

sleeps, she sleeps, my la-dy sleeps! Dreams _____

dim. *ppp*

sleeps, she sleeps, my la-dy sleeps, she sleeps, my la-dy sleeps!

Fl, Clt, Cor

8va

Ped. Ped. * Ped. *

51 **C**

of the sum-mer night, dreams _____ of the

of the sum-mer night, dreams _____ of the

pp

Dreams of the sum - mer night!

VI

Va, Vc, Tmb

+ Legni, Cor

pp

Dreams of the sum - mer night!

sum-mer night! —

Tell her, her lov-er keeps

sum-mer night! —

Tell her, her lov-er keeps

Tell her, her lov-er ke

dolcissimo

She sleeps, she sleeps, my

ch! While

in slum - bers light,

she sleeps,

in slum - bers light,

she sleeps,

watch! While in slum - bers light,

she sleeps,

Cor, Va

Fl, Ob

VI

pp dolcissimo

70

sleeps, my la - dy sleeps, she sleeps, my la - dy

My la - - dy sleeps, my la - dy

sleeps, my la - - dy sleeps, my la - dy

My la - - dy sleeps, my la -

f *p dim.*

+ Fl Tutti

f *p*

Ped. * Ped. * Ped.

74

sleeps, sleeps,

sleeps, sleeps,

sleeps, sleeps,

sleeps, sleeps,

Ob Fl, Clt VI Legni

Cor Vc, Cb

77 *molto dim.*
 sleeps! _____
molto dim. *pp*
 sleeps! _____ Dreams of the sum-mer night! _
molto dim.
 sleeps!
molto dim. *pp*
 sleeps! _____ Tell her her

pp
 Timp Va, Vc mb
 Ped.

80
dim.
 lov - er keeps watch! _____

Fg *pp* VI
 Cor *dim.*
 Va, Vc
 Ped. * Ped. *