**Cornet Concerto (2016) Edward Gregson**

The Cornet Concerto was commissioned by Black Dyke Band for their principal cornet, Richard Marshall, and was premiered at the European Brass Band Festival’s Gala Concert in Lille, France, on 30 April 2016 by the same performers, conducted by Nicholas Childs.

It is challenging work, both musically and technically, and one that exploits the wide range of the instrument’s capabilities. Lasting for some 17 minutes, it is in the usual three movements: Sonata, Intermezzo (subtitled ‘Of More Distant Memories’) and Rondo.

The first movement presents four main ideas:

Cadenzas (which recur throughout the movement, and indeed appear at the end of the work); a fast and rhythmically energetic motive; Bugle calls (echoing the ancestor of the cornet), and a lyrical and expressive melody, full of yearning. These four ideas are juxtaposed within the broad shape of a Sonata form structure, although here the word ‘Sonata’ is used in its original meaning of ‘sounding together’.

The second movement is music in search of a theme, which eventually comes at the end of the movement. In the middle section there are brief quotations, albeit mostly hidden, from three cornet solos written by the Swedish/American composer Erik Leidzen for the Salvation Army in the 1940s and 50s; these are solos I loved as a teenager, and my use of them is by way of tribute, not imitation – a sort of memory bank, just as the main theme of the movement, when it eventually comes, is reminiscent of the tune from my earlier work for brass band, ‘Of Distant Memories’.

The final Rondo**,** the shortest of the three movements, is a lively and ‘fleet-of foot’ Scherzo, its main theme full of cascading arpeggios, but with a contrasting lyrical second theme intertwined in the structure. There is much interplay between soloist and band in the development of the music, but eventually a brief reprise of the opening cadenzas leads to an exciting and climactic coda.

Edward Gregson 2016