**Voices of Youth**

**(Suite)**

The Suite *Voices of Youth* is one of Gregson’s very earliest brass band scores, written while he was still a student at the Royal Academy of Music in London. It marked the start of a series of pieces which appeared under the R Smith imprint (one of the oldest brass band publishers in the UK) and which effectively made his name. *Voices of Youth* was commissioned by the National Youth Brass Band of Great Britain and was premiered by them under the baton of Geoffrey Brand. It was surely no coincidence that he was also the inspiration behind Gregson’s R Smith contract.

The work has three movements: *Nobility of Youth, Sadness and Tenderness* and *Gaiety*. In *Nobility of Youth* there are the rich sonorities beloved of Salvationist composers such as Eric Ball and, particularly, Ray Steadman Allen, whose music he admired. The modal contour of the melodies here and at the climax of the slow movement *Sadness and Tenderness* reveal lessons well learned from Holst and Vaughan Williams. *Gaiety* is probably the most interesting amalgam of all. Beginning in the harmonic world of Gilbert Vinter – whose influence Gregson readily acknowledges at this time – the music is transformed into a bravura waltz of which Percy Grainger might have been proud. It then veers off via a contrapuntal episode of academic correctness, into a coda that takes us into more adventurous harmonic realms.

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