**Euphonium Concerto Edward Gregson**

The Euphonium Concerto was commissioned by the Euphonium Foundation UK and was written for, and dedicated to, David Childs. Lasting some 22 minutes, it is a large-scale symphonic work in both its structure and scale. Its three movements, subtitled *Dialogues, Song without Words*, and *A Celtic Bacchanal,*explore the full range of the technical, musical, and emotional scope of the euphonium.

The first movement, *Dialogues*, is concerned with contrast and development, using as a reference point a five note musical cypher (BACH – B flat, A, C, B natural – followed by a tritone F). This cypher is used in various guises throughout the movement and beyond and acts as a ‘pillar’ in an ever-changing musical canvass. The movement’s sonata form structure contrasts highly charged rhythmic ideas with a lyrical second section, where perhaps the euphonium takes on the cloak of a cello with its soaring melodicism. This leads to a central section, with scurrying semiquavers culminating in a frenetic fugal climax before returning to the opening ideas, now further explored and developed.

An extended cadenza, with brief but dramatic interruptions from the timpanist, leads directly into the slow movement - *Song without Words*. Here, the peaceful mood of the opening tutti section leads to a wistful ballad for the soloist, which pays nostalgic homage to another era long since gone. The opening music returns, this time developing into an intense climax, before quietly sinking into a reprise of the opening music, with the soloist’s ballad now transferred from minor to major. The movement ends quietly and leads without a break into the final movement.

*A Celtic Bacchanal* is, as the title suggests, a wild dance that takes on some of the character of Celtic folk music (the dedicatee is a Celt, and the composer half-Celt!). Whilst primarily being a technical *tour-de-force,* a lyrical central section once again exploits the euphonium’s singing qualities, reaching a majestic peroration before subsiding into tranquility. The folk-like dance starts up again, this time culminating, via a reference to the first movement, into an exuberant and life-affirming coda.

The work exists in two versions, with orchestra or brass band.

**Edward Gregson 2018**