**Euphonium Concerto Edward Gregson**

The Euphonium Concerto was commissioned by the Euphonium Foundation UK and was written for, and dedicated to, David Childs. This three-movement work, lasting some 22 minutes, is a truly 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 is used is various guises throughout the movement 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 straight into the slow movement (*Song without Words*). Here, the peaceful mood of the opening tutti section (band alone) 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 (muted trombones) and leads without a break into the final movement.

*A Celtic Bacchanal* is, as the title suggests, a wild dance that takes on the character of Celtic folk music (the dedicatee is Celtic, and the composer half-Celtic!). It is a technical *tour-de-force* for both soloist and band. However, at the heart of the movement, the euphonium changes mood with a more lyrical utterance to the undulating accompaniment of triplet figurations in the band, 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.

**Edward Gregson 2018**