## Quintet for Brass

Quintet for Brass is a seminal work in Edward Gregson’s output. Composed in 1967 as a graduation piece, it won the Royal Academy of Music’s most prestigious composition prize established as a memorial to one of its most influential composition teachers, Frederick Corder (1952-1932). Interestingly, Gregson’s teacher Alan Bush (1900-1995) was a pupil of Corder at the Royal Academy of Music. In the audience at the Quintet’s first performance, given by a student brass quintet, was Philip Jones, who was impressed with the confidence and skill it revealed and took on a UK Tour with his ensemble. It was also broadcast in the finals of the BBC Young Composers Competition. When the work was published the following year, it bore the dedication to the Philip Jones Brass Ensemble. ‘I owe Philip a huge debt of gratitude for promoting a work by a then unknown young composer’, Gregson writes.

The Quintet is a remarkably assured work in two finely balanced movements. In the first a wild *Allegro* - full of leaping sevenths, muted trills and glissandi - is framed by a contrapuntal *Andante*. The opening horn ‘call’ together with its ‘response’ on muted trumpets brings all 12 semitones into play. It returns in canon to bring the movement to a tranquil close. The second movement is a lively rondo. A quick march introduction leads to a fanfare-like main theme, built from trumpet arpeggios in a ‘nod’ to Malcolm Arnold, whose Brass Quintet No. 1 (1961) had become a staple of the PJBE repertoire. In a ‘bluesy’ first episode, the horn takes the lead, while the theme of the fugato second episode extends the work’s opening theme to encompass all 12 semitones. The rondo tune returns to propel the piece to a brilliant finish.