

FROISSART, op 19

A concert overture for full orchestra.

Approximate Length : 15 minutes

First Performance :

9 September 1890

Three Choirs Festival

Conductor : the composer

Commissioned by: Worcester Festival Committee

Following their marriage in 1889, the Elgars settled in London. Edward hoped that the move would help him establish a national rather than purely provincial reputation but it was not to be. In truth, at that time Edward had written little to justify the status he aspired to. After eighteen months of comparative hardship and disappointment, he and Alice returned to live in their native Worcestershire.

It is therefore somewhat ironic that, while in London, he received a commission from his home town that was to lead to *Froissart*, his first published work to gain a measure of national recognition. The commission, from the Worcester Festival Committee in November 1889, was for a short orchestral work to be premièred at the 1890 Three Choirs Festival. Elgar composed most of the work during Spring 1890, completing it in July shortly before the birth of his daughter Carice and in good time for the festival.

The work received measured acclaim from the critics, tempering their praise for its originality and gusto with criticisms of a degree of repetitiveness and the lack of a coherent development. This is fair comment, for although the work contains in embryonic form many of the hallmarks that Elgar was to perfect in his mature output, *Froissart* displays a certain innocence and lack of polish. The more perceptive critics commented on the promise they saw in the work, a faith which Elgar fully repaid in the decade to come.