

## Introduction and Allegro, op 47

For string quartet and string orchestra : Moderato/Allegro.

<b>Approximate Length:</b>	15 minutes
<b>First Performance:</b>	
<b>Date:</b>	8 March 1905
<b>Venue:</b>	Queen's Hall, London
<b>Conductor:</b>	the composer
<b>Orchestra:</b>	London Symphony Orchestra
<b>Dedicated to:</b>	Professor S S Sanford, Yale University (Elgar received an honorary degree from the University in 1905)

The idea for the Introduction and Allegro was first put to Elgar by August Jaeger- Nimrod of the Enigma Variations - who suggested that he write a piece for the recently founded London Symphony Orchestra. Jaeger's proposal was for "a brilliant, quick scherzo", an apt description for this exhilarating work.

Elgar's normal method of composition included the use of themes which he had jotted down in his sketchbooks as they occurred to him, often years earlier, waiting for the right work in which to use them. The Introduction and Allegro contains one such theme in particular, what Elgar himself referred to as the 'Welsh tune'. It had come to him in August 1901 when the Elgars had been on holiday in Cardiganshire, West Wales, supposedly inspired by the distant singing of Welsh folk tunes. Elgar believed it to capture a Welsh musical idiom and had planned to use it in a projected Welsh Overture. That work never materialised, however, so Elgar used the theme in this work instead.

Despite a number of early champions, the work took many years to gain the popularity and esteem it has today. After an initial handful of performances which were generally coolly received, the work remained largely ignored for the next thirty years or so. Perhaps the complexity of the work deterred performers, for it was only with the general improvement in the standard of orchestral string sections since the Second World War that the work gained a foothold in the concert repertoire. Today, its position is secure.