

## Music written for piano and violin:

Title	Year	Approx. Length
<b>Allegretto on GEDGE</b>	1885	4 mins 30 secs
<b>Bizarrerie</b>	1889	2 mins 30 secs
<b>La Capricieuse</b>	1891	4 mins 30 secs
<b>Gavotte</b>	1885	4 mins 30 secs
<b>Une Idylle</b>	1884	3 mins 30 secs
<b>May Song</b>	1901	3 mins 45 secs
<b>Offertoire</b>	1902	4 mins 30 secs
<b>Pastourelle</b>	1883	3 mins 00 secs
<b>Reminiscences</b>	1877	3 mins 00 secs
<b>Romance</b>	1878	5 mins 30 secs
<b>Virelai</b>	1883	3 mins 00 secs

Publishers survive by providing the public with works they wish to buy. And a struggling composer, if he wishes his music to be published and therefore reach a wider audience, must write what a publisher believes he can sell. Only having established a reputation can a composer write larger scale works in a form of his own choosing with any realistic expectation of having them performed.

During the latter half of the nineteenth century, the stock-in-trade for most publishers was the sale of sheet music of short salon pieces for home performance. It was a form that was eventually to bring Elgar considerably enhanced recognition and a degree of financial success with the publication for solo piano of *Salut d'Amour* in 1888 and of three hugely popular works first published in arrangements for piano and violin - *Mot d'Amour* (1889), *Chanson de Nuit* (1897) and *Chanson de Matin* (1899). Elgar composed short pieces for solo piano sporadically throughout his life. But, apart from the two *Chansons*, *May Song* (1901) and *Offertoire* (1902), an arrangement of *Sospiri* and, of course, the *Violin Sonata*, all of Elgar's works for piano and violin were composed between 1877, the dawning of his ambitions to become a serious composer, and 1891, the year after his first significant orchestral success with *Froissart*.

As with the works for solo piano, there is a certain similarity in most of the shorter works for piano and violin, although *Gavotte* makes distinctive if somewhat quirky use of *pizzicato* and, as its marking of *Andante Religioso* suggests, *Offertoire's* broad, stately melody places it closer to *Chanson de Nuit* than to most of the other works reviewed here. But, despite their lack of depth and the inherent simplicity, the works throughout display a level of craftsmanship that one expects

from the mature Elgar but is surprising in such early compositions. The mastery of form and structure, the pure, skilful and often extended melodies, the harmonic inventiveness, the encapsulation of charm without descending into sentimentality, make these pieces distinctively Elgar in miniature.

The dedications of the pieces also add to their interest, painting as clear a picture of Elgar's social circle of the time as did the selection of friends portrayed in the Enigma Variations some 10-15 years later. *Reminiscences* and *Romance* were both dedicated to Oswain Granger, a fellow local amateur musician and a grocer by profession; *Pastourelle* to Miss Hilda Fitton, sister of Isabel who became rather better known as Ysobel of the Variations; and *Virelai* to Frank Webb, another local musician and fellow member of the Worcester Amateur Instrumental Society. The Allegretto on GEDGE was written for and dedicated to the Gedge sisters, two of Elgar's pupils in Malvern; as with other composers before and after, Elgar based the piece on the notes represented by their name. *Bizarrie* was composed for, but not dedicated to, another of Elgar's pupils, Fred Ward, who, to judge by the writing of the piece, must have been a particularly skilled violinist. Two years later, Elgar dedicated *La Capricieuse* to Ward, thereby rectifying the omission of the earlier piece.

Elgar dedicated Gavotte, arguably the least inspired of the pieces, to his long-standing friend Dr Charles Buck of Settle, Yorkshire. The previous year, Buck had encouraged his brother-in-law John Beare, a London-based music publisher, to publish *Une Idylle*, the first work that Elgar had succeeded in having published. It was possibly as a token of his gratitude to Buck that Elgar dedicated Gavotte to him. And it is *Une Idylle* that carries the most intriguing dedication - to "Miss E E of Inverness". All that is known about the young lady is that Elgar met her during a Scottish holiday he took in 1884 and took a fancy to her. But her name, whether she ever knew of the dedication, and whether Elgar would have struck up the temporary friendship had she not shared his initials remains a matter of speculation.