

Salut d'amour, op 12
Mot d'amour, op 13/1

Two short pieces in various arrangements for chamber ensembles or small orchestra.

Approximate Length : 3 minutes each

First Performance (Salut d'Amour - Orchestral Version)

11 November 1889 Crystal Palace, London Crystal Palace, London

Conductor: August Manns

Dedicated to: *à Carice* (Caroline Alice Elgar)

In the Summer of 1888, Edward Elgar and Alice Roberts were heading towards marriage. Edward decided on a holiday with his long-standing friend, Dr Charles Buck of Settle, Yorkshire. As he left Worcester, Alice presented Edward with a poem she had written and entitled Love's Grace. While on holiday in Settle, Edward reciprocated by writing a short piece of music for her, which he called Liebesgruss (Love's Greeting). The work carried the dedication "To Carice", a contraction of his future wife's forenames Caroline Alice with which they subsequently christened their daughter. On his return from Settle, Elgar presented the work to his wife and proposed to her. They married at the Brompton Oratory in South Kensington, London in May the following year.

Towards the end of 1888, Edward submitted three arrangements of the work - for solo piano, for violin and piano, and an orchestral arrangement - to the music publishing firm of Schott who agreed to buy the work outright for a fee of two guineas. At first, the work sold slowly. Apparently with Elgar's approval, Schott's retitled the work Salut d'Amour and gave the composer's name as Ed. Elgar, believing that the French title and a less obviously English composer would help the work gain wider international approval. It did, much to the publisher's satisfaction but with no financial benefit to Elgar.

It is easy to dismiss Salut d'Amour as an insignificant trifle, salon music not deserving a wider audience. However, for the work to establish itself so forcefully in what was a fiercely competitive field says much for its charm and quality. And, as Elgar's first published work, it has a historical value, containing pointers to the skills that Elgar was to develop and display in his later works.

Elgar subsequently composed a companion piece, Mot d'Amour (Liebesahnung or Love's Word). Although in many ways structurally and dramatically superior to the earlier work, it failed to capture the public affection of its predecessor and is rarely heard today.