

# TALES OF THE GLENS

piano music by Philip Hammond with storytelling  
by Liz Weir and Colin Urwin

Anthony Capparelli, piano

 | divine art

# Tales of the Glens

PHILIP HAMMOND: (b.1951)

## Selections from *Miniatures & Modulations* (2011)

1. <i>If to a foreign clime you go</i> - trans. Edward Bunting (1773-1843)	2:09
2. <i>If to a foreign clime you go</i> (added 2018) - Hammond	2:33
3. <i>An Irish Lullaby</i> - trans. Bunting	0:54
4. <i>An Irish Lullaby</i> - Hammond	2:37
5. <i>Old Truagh</i> - trans. Bunting	0:56
6. <i>Old Truagh</i> - Hammond	2:04
7. <i>The Little and Great Mountain</i> - Turlough O'Carolan (1670-1738), trans. Bunting	1:37
8. <i>The Little and Great Mountain</i> - Hammond	2:02
9. <i>The Fair Woman</i> - trans. Bunting	0:40
10. <i>The Fair Woman</i> - Hammond	1:50
11. <i>The Lamentation of Owen O'Neill</i> - trans. Bunting	1:03
12. <i>The Lamentation of Owen O'Neill</i> - Hammond	2:43
13. <i>Open the Door Softly</i> - trans. Bunting, Modulation by Hammond attacca	2:22

## Selected Solo Works

14. <i>Aoife Óg</i> (2020)	1:55
15. <i>Forgotten Longing</i> (2011)	7:47

## *Tales from the Sea of Moyle, for piano and storyteller* (2021) with stories by Liz Weir (b. 1950) and Colin Urwin (b. 1964)

16. I. <i>Prelude</i>	3:01
17. II. <i>The Rathlin Fairies</i> , Liz Weir, narration	6:26
18. III. <i>Marina Jane</i> , Colin Urwin, narration	7:39
19. IV. <i>The Graveyard Under Wave</i> , Liz Weir, narration	6:02
20. V. <i>The Last Wolf</i> , Colin Urwin, narration	13:32
21. VI. <i>The Green Isle</i> , Liz Weir, narration	7:49
22. VII. <i>Postlude</i>	1:58

Total playing time 79:47

Anthony Capparelli, piano

## FORWARD

Ten years ago, I traveled to Ireland, Scotland, Sweden, Iceland, and Norway on a Thomas J. Watson Fellowship, an award given each year to roughly forty graduating seniors from selected liberal arts colleges around the USA to pursue a year of research abroad in a topic of their choosing. My project centered around exploring traditional storytelling and music cultures in Celtic and Scandinavian countries to understand how these traditions positively affected rural communities. I spent an extensive amount of time during the Watson year in the village of Cushendall in the Glens of Antrim, Northern Ireland. Landing there first through a chance meeting of storyteller Liz Weir, I soon came to feel right at home in the Glens. I shadowed Weir in her work as storyteller and learned so much from her guidance and commitment to the storytelling tradition. I have now spent the past ten years regularly visiting this region of County Antrim, and I have been forever changed by the many people I have met there. It was thus my endeavor to record an album of music that aurally portrays this place and its people for the listener. Further, I wanted to perform repertoire which crossed genres, bringing in elements of the traditional art forms I had spent a year exploring. With his extensive *oeuvre* for the instrument and prominence as a composer in Ireland, Philip Hammond's rich colour palette and deeply pianistic writing was the perfect medium for this project. It was a true pleasure to work with Hammond, to choose from his repertoire, and to record and premiere new works. The music recorded, through thematic reference, inspiration, and use of traditional melodies, centers in focus on the Antrim people, folklore, and landscape. For me, so much of this music holds deep nostalgic meaning. I hear the sounds of waves on Cushendun beach with the Mull of Kintyre shrouded in mist across the water, the clinking of glasses and the rush of

fiddle tunes in the pub, mournful curlews in the bog, and stories being told around a turf fire. It is my hope that this music inspires listeners to make a journey to this wonderful corner of the world.

Anthony Capparelli, 2024

## PROGRAM NOTES

### **Selections from Miniatures and Modulations:**

The cycle *Miniatures and Modulations* (2011) consists of over twenty pieces inspired by traditional harp tunes from the 1792 Belfast Harp Festival collected by Edward Bunting. Each of Hammond's *Modulations* transcribes a short tune from the Edward Bunting Collection in innovative ways, bringing new life to these ancient melodies. Hammond uses a wide variety of colors within the music, and his sense of humor is evident throughout, particularly in *The Little and Great Mountain* and *Open the Door Softly*. They change from lyrical to playful, from meditative to bombastic, each depicting a variety of images and characters. Performed here with the Bunting original transcriptions, one is transported back in time and then to a new world entirely with Hammond's take on them.

### **Aoife Óg:**

This short work, written and dedicated to the young daughter of a friend of Hammond's, is a beautiful yet often volatile and excitable character piece. One immediately imagines a toddler at play with moments of humor and mischievous unpredictability. It offers here an interlude within the album, a brief memory of childhood. This is the premiere recording of this work.

### **Forgotten Longing:**

Philip Hammond's most expansive solo work on this album is perhaps *Forgotten Longing*. Inspired by the poem "Ireland" by the late John Hewitt, it is truly reminiscent of the mysterious landscape of the Glens of Antrim. It is brooding and turbulent, full of unsettling harmonies and rhythms. Hammond describes the longing as being directed toward the sea, looking out from the shore. The entire work is restless, every chord feeling unsettled in both harmony and intervallic structure, thus creating the sense of "forgotten longing" Hewitt and Hammond describe. The phrasing is often short and gestural. The form repeats in on itself, coming back to the same motives with deeper unrest in each reiteration. He marks the removal of pedal for the final measure, leaving the last chord in solitude. It ends, as if in a final question, in absolute ambiguity. This is the premiere recording of this work.

### **Tales from the Sea of Moyle:**

This premiere recording is the result of a collaboration between Hammond and two professional storytellers, Liz Weir and Colin Urwin. Together with Weir and Urwin, Hammond's new work explores the landscape, folklore, and history of the Glens of Antrim. The listener is taken on a journey across the Antrim coastline and the Sea of Moyle which connects this region of Ireland to the closest point in Scotland. The piano music paints the backdrop for the characters of Weir and Urwin's stories.

The first story *The Rathlin Fairies*, is a traditional tale from Rathlin Island passed down from the late Thomas Cecil. The sinister nature of the fairies in this tale is accompanied by Hammond's snarky writing. An etude of seconds with a tempo marking of quarter note equals 360. The work pokes and jabs the listener, an aural representation of the thorns of a fairy tree.

The second story of the cycle follows Colin Urwin's original tale *Marina Jane*, which documents the life of a mysterious woman who lived in a stone hut on the beach of Ballygally bay. The work opens with a rush of virtuosity in the piano part, and then, as the storm calms down, mournful music accompanies Urwin's poignant tale. Hammond quotes another melody from the Bunting Collection here, *The Brink of the White Rocks*, a nostalgic reference to the *Miniatures and Modulations* cycle.

*The Graveyard Under Wave*, a vivid adaption by Liz Weir of a traditional tale told to her first by storyteller Mabel Jenkins, is set high on the cliff at Layd Church outside of the village of Cushendall. Here the land around the church slopes down toward the cliff edge where parts of the hill have slipped into the sea. The gravestones are scattered without order, and the ones closest to the edge seem ready to fall into the ocean as well. The ruins of the church are shaded by enormous beech and sycamore trees. It is an inspiring and mysterious backdrop for the tale, and Hammond's music further creates this atmosphere of mystery with its echoing low strings at the opening and the undulating *ostinato* under the storyline.

The fourth story *The Last Wolf* tells of an encounter between a wolf and priest in the forests outside of Carnlough. Urwin stated the story itself was, "inspired by an innocent conversation. The local council had painted up, on various gable walls in the local town, these historical facts that stretched into our past, and one of them was that the last wolf was shot in the Glens of Antrim in 1712 at a place called Cranny Falls in Carnlough." He also stated that he often writes and tells stories about "animals and animals that change shape." The tale is an entirely different take on what one may expect from such a story of werewolves and the like. Hammond's music brings life to the

characters, filling the work with small motives of which many create a sense of doom and foreboding for the listener.

The final story is *The Green Isle* by Liz Weir. A traditional tale documented both in story as well as in a song about the isle from the Sam Henry Collection, Weir states that- “There are many many variants of it and people being taken by the fairies...it is told as a true story because it is told that this happened. That this actually happened to that girl, that she got taken away there. And who am I to doubt that?” Set in the village of Ballycastle, and the mysterious island appearing off the coast, Weir’s tale gives a final warning to the listener to always be careful in dealings with the fairies. Hammond’s music depicts the magical flight to the island with rhapsodic virtuosity and swirling harmonies evocative of the mist so common on this coastline. The melody sourced from the Sam Henry Collection forms a leitmotif throughout. The work flows directly into the postlude, concluding the cycle. There is a final wash of notes in the left hand, reminiscent of Ravel, taking the end of the cycle to E major, a half step up from its E flat major first opening in the prelude. Then, as if there is one last fairy left loose playing tricks on the world, Hammond ends the work with a short and light motive from *The Rathlin Fairies*. The candle is blown out, the mysteries and characters of the five stories swirl into a dark room like wisps of smoke.

## BIOGRAPHIES

### **Anthony Capparelli:**

Anthony Capparelli is a pianist and piano teacher originally from Wisconsin, USA. He lives in Gent, Belgium, and teaches piano at Kunstacademie Deinze (KADE). He holds a Masters of Arts in piano performance and a Doctorate of Musical Arts in performance and pedagogy from the University of Iowa under the tutelage of Dr. Ksenia Nosikova. In 2023, he received a Postgraduate Soloist Diploma from KASK/Conservatorium where he studied with Daan Vandewalle. His research for his doctoral dissertation centered on traditional Irish storytelling and the piano works of composer Philip Hammond.

Anthony has had an extensive background in teaching. In 2020, he was an instructor of music at Clarke University in Dubuque, Iowa. Previously, he was a teaching assistant for four years at the University of Iowa. His previous principal teachers include Jane Coop and Marc Durand at the Centre d'Arts Orford in Quebec, Canada, and Dr. Catherine Kautsky at Lawrence University. As a child, he studied with Dr. Paul Wirth of the Wirth Center for the Performing Arts, a specialist in training young artist pianists, with whom he toured the Midwestern region of the USA presenting on piano technique. He has participated as a soloist in masterclasses with Gabriel Kwok, Laura Melton, Robert McDonald, Yefim Bronfman, Tamás Ungár, and Frank Levy.

An active collaborative pianist, Anthony has enjoyed an eclectic career both in instrumental chamber music and working with vocalists. As a chamber musician, he has toured across the Midwestern area of the USA and also in Ireland and the UK. Anthony has had coachings and performed in masterclass



with prominent ensembles such as the Elias String Quartet, Kronos Quartet, the JACK quartet, and with pianists Orion Weiss and Emanuel Ax. In his work with vocalists, Anthony was on staff at Lawrence University as a staff pianist for the voice studio of John T. Gates in 2016. He has performed in masterclass for Dietrich Henschel, Dale Duesing, Lawrence Brownlee, Eric Owens, Charlotte Margiono, Martin Wölfel, and with members of the Lorelei Ensemble. He has a deep love for the operatic and art song repertoire and has trained for a year at the International Opera Academy (BE) in 2021/22 as a pianist-repetiteur where he worked on multiple productions.

As a soloist, Anthony has performed in six countries, and in concert with the Kenwood Symphony Orchestra, the St. Croix Valley Symphony Orchestra, and the Minnesota Orchestra. He has begun working extensively on modern piano repertoire, particularly works by composers from the USA and Ireland.

### **Philip Hammond:**

Philip Hammond was born in Belfast in 1951. He graduated from Queen's University Belfast in 1974 as a Bachelor of Music and Master of Arts. He was awarded a Doctorate of Music from Queen's in July 2003. His career has encompassed teaching, performing and writing. His work as a broadcaster and composer brings him regularly before public attention either on radio, television or on the concert platform. He was appointed a director of the Arts Council of Northern Ireland in 1988 and seconded to the Department of Culture Arts and Leisure from 2005-2007 in order to programme [sic] and direct a four month arts festival in Washington DC as part of "Rediscover Northern Ireland". He retired from the Arts Council in 2009.

As a composer, Philip Hammond has been regularly commissioned by individuals and groups in Ireland and in Britain such as the Ulster Orchestra, the contemporary ensemble Lontano, the Brodsky String Quartet, James Galway, Sarah Walker, Suzanne Murphy, Tasmin Little, Barry Douglas, Nikolai Demidenko and Ann Murray. He is often commissioned as an "occasional" composer and his "Waterfront Fanfares" (1997) were written to open the Waterfront Hall in Belfast. His "...the starry dynamo in the machinery of night..." was specially commissioned by Queen's University to celebrate the visit of President Clinton in May 2001. The National Youth Orchestra of Ireland commissioned and performed his "Carnavalesque" for Double Orchestra and Percussion in July 2003.

In 2005, his "...while the sun shines", was commissioned by BBC Radio Three to celebrate the music of the great Irish conductor and composer Sir Hamilton Harty (in 1979, Philip Hammond contributed two biographical chapters to a book on Sir Hamilton Harty pub. Blackstaff). Philip Hammond's "Requiem for the Lost Souls of the Titanic" for choruses and brass was premiered in April 2012 on the hundredth anniversary of loss of the ship.

### **Liz Weir:**

Liz Weir is an Irish storyteller with an international reputation. She was the first winner of the International Story Bridge Award from the National Storytelling Network, USA, which cited her "exemplary work promoting the art of storytelling between Ireland and other countries". She has told her stories to people of all ages on five continents. She has performed in

pubs and prisons and hospital rooms. She worked on stages in the mighty Vanderbilt Hall of New York's Grand Central Station and in the Royal Albert Hall. Liz has written two collections of stories for children *Boom Chicka Boom* and *Here, There and Everywhere* (O'Brien Press) and *When Dad Was Away* (Frances Lincoln Books), a picture book based on her work in prisons. Liz Weir is Storyteller in Residence with the Armstrong Storytelling Trust and Director of the Glens Storytelling Festival [www.armstory.org.uk](http://www.armstory.org.uk). She is also a committee member of the Cape Clear International Storytelling Festival [www.capeclearstorytelling.com](http://www.capeclearstorytelling.com)

In 2013 she wrote "A Wailing on the Wind" a piece for voice and string quartet, with music composed by Ian Stephens, In 2014 she wrote "All for the Dead Man's Penny" with fiddle music composed and played by Ciaran Mulholland. In 2019 she was awarded an MBE for her services to the arts and to education.

### **Colin Urwin:**

Colin Urwin is a singer, songwriter storyteller, workshop facilitator and recording artist. Hailing from the Glens of Antrim in the northeast of Ireland, he has been mainly influenced by traditional Irish and Scottish music. He has been playing and singing folk songs for over four decades and for the last twenty years he has been the caller and singer in 'Haste to the Wedding' ceilidh band, who are always in great demand at functions all over Ireland. In recent years Colin has been working closely with the world-renowned storyteller Liz Weir MBE on a variety of exciting live, virtual and recording projects. He also performs solo and with other musicians and storytellers regularly at local storytelling venues, schools, community groups, private

functions and international storytelling festivals as far apart as Edinburgh, Texas and Marrakech.

Colin has also performed and recorded for events hosted by The Causeway Coast and Glens Heritage Group, Library NI events in conjunction with the Armstrong Storytelling Trust, National Storytelling Network (US), Artists Standing Strong Together (US), North East Story Telling conference (US) and the World Storytelling Cafe.

Through the Armstrong Storytelling Trust and Libraries NI, Colin also works regularly with Dementia NI and special needs Groups. He describes this as among the most satisfying and rewarding work he does.

Colin serves on the committee for Storytellers of Ireland and is Storyteller in Residence for The Waterways Community; a charitable social enterprise creating opportunities for people, schools, businesses and organisations [sic] in Northern Ireland.

### **Technical Information and Acknowledgements**

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Piano technician: Jeremy Herrera.

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*Anthony Capparelli*



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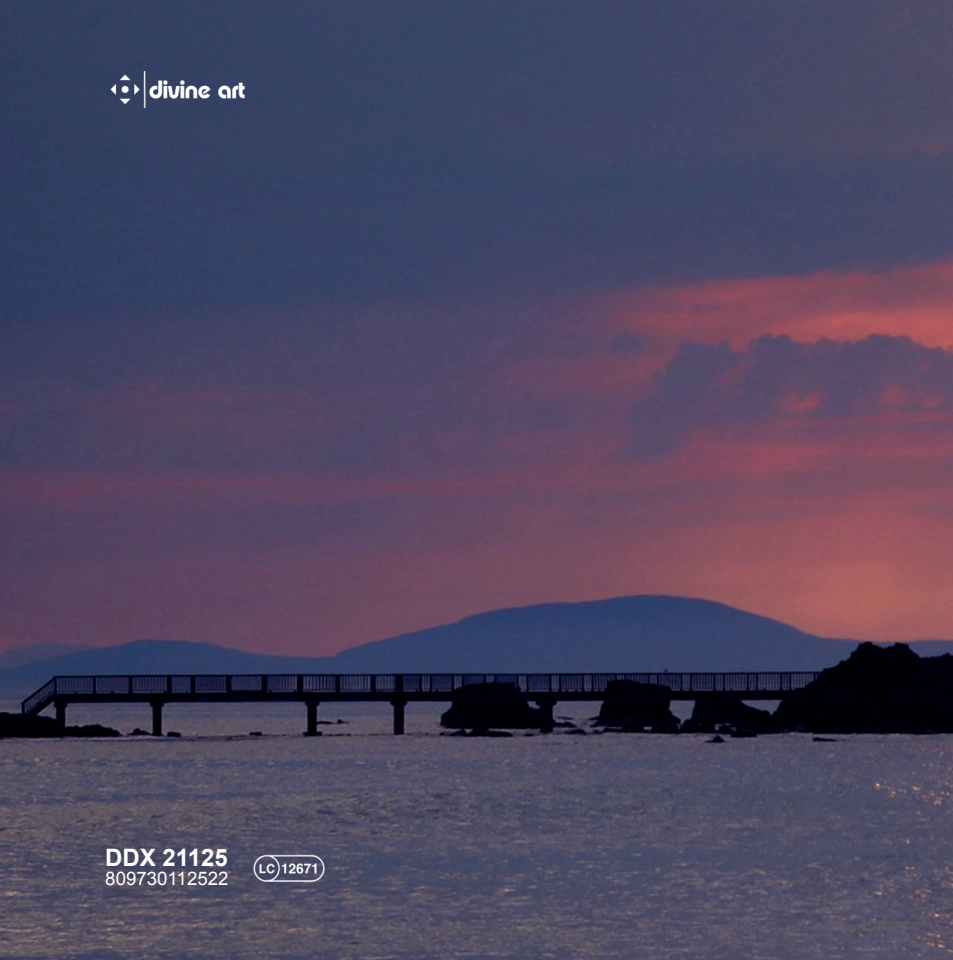
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