

NAXOS

John
IRELAND

**Music for
String Orchestra**

**Sonata in G minor
A Downland Suite
In a May Morning**

**Raphael Wallfisch, Cello
Orchestra of the Swan
David Curtis**



John Ireland (1879-1962)

Music for String Orchestra

John Nicholson Ireland was born in Bowdon near Manchester on 13th August 1879. His father, Alexander Ireland, was manager and publisher of the *Manchester Examiner* and his mother, Anne (Annie) Nicholson, was also an author and critic. At the age of 13 Ireland took himself to sit the examination for the Royal College of Music and shortly after his 14th birthday he entered the College as a student of piano, organ, rudiments of music and eventually composition, for four years under Charles Villiers Stanford.

His first success came in 1906 with his *Phantasie in A minor* for piano trio which was awarded second prize in the Cobbett chamber music prize, and then in 1909 with his *First Violin Sonata* which won first prize. During World War I he was rejected for military service on medical grounds and remained at his post as organist and choirmaster at St Luke's, Chelsea until 1923, when he was appointed Professor of Composition at the RCM. His pupils included Benjamin Britten, E.J. Moeran, Richard Arnell, Alan Bush and Geoffrey Bush. He taught at the College until 1939 when he moved with his friend John Longmire to Guernsey in the Channel Islands. They had to leave Guernsey at very short notice when the Nazis invaded in June 1940. In 1953 Ireland bought a converted windmill near the village of Washington, West Sussex, within sight of his beloved Chanctonbury Ring. He died aged 82 on 17th June 1962 and is buried in Shipley churchyard in West Sussex.

Sonata in G minor

(arranged for cello and strings by Matthew Forbes)

Ireland's *Sonata for Cello and Piano in G minor* dates from 1923 and is in three movements marked *moderato e sostenuto*, *poco largamente* and *con moto e marcato*. It was first performed at the Aeolian Hall, London on 4th April 1923 by Beatrice Harrison (cello) and Evelyn Howard-Jones (piano). Ireland himself took part as pianist in many subsequent performances, many of which featured the

Catalan cellist Antoni Sala, who also recorded it with the composer. Since then it has taken its place in the repertory of such prominent cellists as Ivor James, Florence Hooton, Anthony Pini, Julian Lloyd Webber, André Navarra, Derek Simpson, Emma Ferrand, Karine Georgian, Raphael Wallfisch, Alice Neary, Paul Watkins, Richard Jenkinson and Razvan Suma.

It is one of Ireland's most expressive and passionate works. In the first movement, two clues suggest its possible significance: the first comes in bar 102 where, in a passage marked *secreto*, Ireland quotes the phrase that in his earlier setting of Aldous Huxley's poem *The Trellis* accompanies the words 'None but the flowers have seen/Our white caresses'. The second is at bar 137 where the repetitive cello figuration is played under a sequence of piano chords which has been identified as Ireland's 'passion' motif that recurs at moments of climax in several works. At the time of writing the *Cello Sonata* and throughout the 1920s, Ireland maintained a close friendship with a boy in his late teens, Arthur Miller, to whom he dedicated several works and who was a central figure in his life at the time.

The slow movement unveils one of Ireland's broad, songlike melodies in E flat (another occurs in *In a May Morning*). The finale erupts with violent, whip-like arpeggios, said to have been inspired by a set of Bronze Age round barrows at a remote spot on Ireland's beloved South Downs.

Summer Evening

(arranged for strings by Graham Parlett)

This evocative piano piece was written in 1920.

In a May Morning

(arranged for strings by Graham Parlett)

When Ireland moved to Guernsey he embarked on a three-movement work for piano called *Samia*. The first

movement, *Le catioroc*, was inspired by a stretch of coast adjacent to the house in which he and his friend John Longmire had lodgings, Fort Saumarez on the L'Eree peninsula. Later on he was offered the post of organist and choirmaster at St Stephen's Church in St Peter Port. He moved to the Birnham Court Hotel very near the church. The second piece of *Samia* is *In a May Morning*, the inspiration for which was the Guernsey spring combined with the hotel owners' young son, Michael Rayson, to whom the piece is dedicated.

Soliloquy

(arranged for cello and strings by Graham Parlett)

This exquisite miniature was written for piano and published in 1922. The pianist Alan Rowlands, who got to know Ireland well in the 1950s and recorded Ireland's complete piano music for the Lyrita label, recalls in his article 'Meeting John Ireland' in *The John Ireland Companion* edited by Lewis Foreman (Boydell Press, 2011) that when he was studying the work he felt a strong resemblance of the opening phrase to something else. He thought it might be something by Vaughan Williams. He asked Ireland, who replied that it was not by VW but cribbed from Butterworth's setting of Housman's poem *Is my team ploughing*. Rowlands also points out that Ireland used the same five-note figure in his setting of Housman's *The Lent Lily*.

Bagatelle, Berceuse and Cavatina

(arranged for cello and strings by Graham Parlett)

These three short pieces, originally for violin and piano, were all composed between Ireland's leaving the RCM and the outbreak of World War I. Written in a completely different style from his later music, they show Ireland to have been adept at producing charming and tuneful pieces often described as salon music in the manner of, say, Elgar's *Salut d'amour*.

A Downland Suite

(arranged for strings by John Ireland/Geoffrey Bush)

In 1932 Ireland was commissioned to write the test piece for the National Brass Band Championships of Great Britain. In 1941, after his return from Guernsey, he orchestrated the middle two movements, *Elegy* and *Minuet*, for string orchestra. In 1978 Geoffrey Bush orchestrated the two outer movements, *Prelude* and *Rondo*, and the complete work has established itself as one of Ireland's most attractive compositions, especially the *Minuet* which has been used as a signature tune or background music for several radio and television programmes. Ireland also arranged the two middle movements for piano, and the *Elegy* has also been arranged for organ by Alec Rowley.

Bruce Phillips

John Ireland Charitable Trust

Recorded at Townsend Hall, Shipston-on-Stour, England, on 26th June, 2015 (tracks 1-3, 6-9), and 5th July, 2015 (tracks 4-5, 10-13)

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Raphael Wallfisch



Photo: Benjamin Ealovega

Raphael Wallfisch was born in London into a family of distinguished musicians, his mother the cellist Anita Lasker-Wallfisch, and his father the pianist Peter Wallfisch. At an early age he was greatly inspired by hearing Zara Nelsova play and, guided by a succession of fine teachers including Amaryllis Fleming, Amadeo Baldovino and Derek Simpson, it became apparent that the cello was to be his life's work. While studying with the great Russian cellist Gregor Piatigorsky at the Thornton School of Music in California, he was chosen to perform chamber music with Jascha Heifetz in the informal recitals that Piatigorsky held at his home. At the age of twenty-four he won the Gaspar Cassadó International Cello Competition in Florence. Since then he has enjoyed a worldwide career playing with such orchestras as the London Symphony, London Philharmonic, Philharmonia, BBC Symphony, English Chamber Orchestra, Hallé, City of Birmingham Symphony, Leipzig Gewandhaus, Berlin Symphony, Westdeutscher Rundfunk, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Indianapolis Symphony, Warsaw Philharmonic, and the Czech Philharmonic. He is regularly invited to play at major festivals such as the BBC Proms, Edinburgh, Aldeburgh, Spoleto, Prades, Oslo and Schleswig Holstein, and holds professorships in Switzerland at the Zürich Winterthur Konservatorium and in Manchester at the Royal Northern College of Music. With a discography of over seventy discs Raphael Wallfisch is one of the most recorded classical artists in the world. He plays the 1865 Vuillaume "Sheremetev" and a 1760 Gennaro Gagliano cello.

www.raphaelwallfisch.com
www.trioshamerewallfisch.com

Orchestra of the Swan



Photo: Lorentz Gullachsen

Orchestra of the Swan from Shakespeare's Stratford-upon-Avon is Associate Orchestra at Birmingham's Town Hall, and has performed in St David's Hall, Cardiff, Symphony Hall, Birmingham, The Bridgewater Hall, The Sage, Liverpool Philharmonic Hall, Glasgow Royal Concert Hall and the Royal Albert Hall. In 2014 OOTS toured China and 2016 sees the orchestra performing in Mexico and Istanbul. OOTS records for Avie, Naxos, Nimbus, Signum, MSR and Somm including repertoire by Barber, Bax, Berlioz, Brahms, Copland, Debussy, Finzi, Gal, Ireland, Mahler, Mendelssohn, Mozart, Schumann, and several world première recordings. TV appearances include *The South Bank Show* and their recordings have been made Gramophone Choice, Classic FM and Washington Public Radio CD of the Week, and the top 20 Classical Albums on Chicago Public Radio. OOTS is a major champion of new music and has commissioned over 60 works from composers including Joe Cutler, Tansy Davies, Joe Duddell, Alexander Goehr, Roxanna Panufnik, Paul Patterson, Joseph Phibbs, Julian Philips, Dobrinka Tabakova, Errollyn Wallen and John Woolrich.

David Curtis

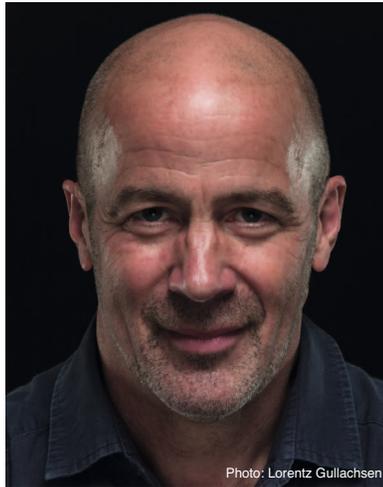


Photo: Lorentz Gullachsen

David Curtis is Artistic Director of Orchestra of the Swan and his thought-provoking programming, infectious enthusiasm and refreshing interpretations see him working in Belgium, China, the Czech Republic, Finland, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Iceland, Italy, Romania, Singapore, Slovakia, Sweden and the USA, with orchestras such as the Academy of St Martin's-in-the-Field, the Prague Chamber Orchestra, the Prague Radio Symphony Orchestra and the North Hungarian Symphony Orchestra. He has appeared as soloist and conductor in Finland with the Mikkeli City Orchestra, and with the Roveniemi Chamber and Jyväskylä Symphony Orchestras in the concert hall and on Finnish Radio. He has also conducted the North Hungarian Symphony Orchestra and Festival Chorus at the prestigious annual Olomouc Dvořák Festival and the Policka Martinů Festival. For Icelandic Radio he has conducted premières by Snorri Sigfús Birgisson, Lars-Petter Hagen, Thuridur Jónsdóttir and Marie Samuelsson at the Nordic Music Days Festival. He gave the world première of a new work by Sampo Haapamäki with the Mikkeli City Orchestra.



The **British Music Society** (Registered Charity No. 1043838), founded in 1979, brings together professional and amateur musicians, students and scholars, and music enthusiasts young and old from around the globe to promote, preserve and celebrate British music, pre-dominantly from the Twentieth century, both at home and abroad. Its extensive discography is now being re-issued by Naxos, bringing to a wider audience many highly-acclaimed performances, often world premières, of neglected British works. The Society's Historic label includes a number of famous vintage recordings by artists such as Noel Mewton-Wood and Walter Goehr.

In addition the Society produces a Journal, *British Music*, packed full of scholarly articles and reviews, as well as a regular e-newsletter for members. Our website lists forthcoming BMS events as well as performances of British music, and also provides a forum for discussion and debate.

www.britishmusicsociety.com

John Ireland's music is often a response to landscape and romantic sensitivities. With its significant musical clues, broad, songlike melodies and turbulent finale, the *Sonata in G minor* is one of his most expressive and passionate works. A *Downland Suite* is one of Ireland's most attractive compositions, especially its exquisite *Elegy* and popular *Minuet* made familiar through its use in radio and television. Ireland's evocative piano works lend themselves well to string orchestra arrangements. They include the exquisite miniature *Soliloquy* and *In a May Morning*, the second movement of *Sarnia*, inspired by spring on Guernsey.



John
IRELAND
(1879-1962)



Sonata in G minor (1923)* (arr. Matthew Forbes)	20:28	7 Bagatelle (1911)* (arr. Graham Parlett)	2:36
1 I. Moderato e sostenuto	9:12	8 Berceuse (1902)* (arr. Graham Parlett)	3:06
2 II. Poco largamente	5:44	9 Cavatina (1904)* (arr. Graham Parlett)	5:09
3 III. Con moto e marcato	5:32	A Downland Suite (1932/78) (arr. Ireland/Geoffrey Bush)	17:18
4 Summer Evening (1920) (arr. Graham Parlett)	4:24	10 I. Prelude – Allegro energico	4:01
5 In a May Morning (from <i>Sarnia</i>) (1940-41) (arr. Graham Parlett)	6:59	11 II. Elegy – Lento espressivo	5:30
6 Soliloquy (1922)* (arr. Graham Parlett)	3:33	12 III. Minuet – Allegretto grazioso	4:22
		13 IV. Rondo – Poco allegro	3:25

WORLD PREMIÈRE RECORDINGS 1-9

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