

# NOT NOW, BERNARD and other stories



ORCHID CLASSICS

**Alexander Armstrong**, *narrator*

Orchestra of the Swan

Tom Hammond, *conductor*



Music by Judith Weir,  
Malcolm Arnold, John Ireland  
& Bernard Hughes

## **Not Now, Bernard** and other stories

**Bernard Hughes**

### ***Not Now, Bernard***

1	Part 1	5.06
2	Part 2	6.00

**Malcolm Arnold**

### ***Toy Symphony, Op.62***

3	I. Allegro	2.25
4	II. Allegretto	3.23
5	III. Vivace	2.02

**Bernard Hughes**

### ***Isabel's Noisy Tummy***

6	Part 1	6.04
7	Part 2	5.36
8	Part 3	4.51

**John Ireland**

9	<b><i>Annabel Lee</i></b>	3.55
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**Bernard Hughes**

### ***The Knight Who Took All Day***

10	Part 1	6.06
11	Part 2	5.31

**Judith Weir**

### ***Thread!***

12	Part I	6.30
13	Part II	7.09
14	Part III	3.30

**Total time**

**68.11**

Alexander Armstrong, *narrator*

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Tom Hammond, *conductor*

*Bernard Hughes writes*

***Not Now, Bernard*** was always a favourite book of mine as a child – not least because I shared my unusual name with the protagonist. As a book it is brilliant for carrying different messages at the same time: for children it is a story about a boy being eaten by a monster, for adults it is a cautionary tale about being too busy to engage with our children. When conductor Tom Hammond asked me to write a family-concert piece I had no doubt which book I wanted to set. The commission was from the British Police Symphony Orchestra, the national orchestra for those associated with the police force, and they gave the premiere at Symphony Hall in Birmingham in December 2010.

***Not Now, Bernard*** is the first half of a double-bill with ***Isabel's Noisy Tummy***: the two can be performed individually or as a pair, and are linked by a shared overture and David McKee's sense of the ridiculous. *Isabel* has the added element of audience participation in a live performance, as everyone in the room provides the sounds of Isabel's tummy. In this recording Alexander Armstrong heroically creates all the sounds himself.

*Bernard* and *Isabel* have gone on to have a large number of performances around Britain, both separately and together. In 2015 I made a reduction for chamber forces that was first performed by the Assembly Project at the St Magnus Festival in Orkney, conducted by Alasdair Nicolson in front of a crowd of several hundred schoolchildren from nearby islands, and this is the version we have recorded.

A few years later Tom Hammond came back to me with another similar commission, this time for Hertford Symphony Orchestra. This time I chose to set ***The Knight Who Took All Day*** by James Mayhew which, like *Not Now, Bernard*, starts out like a clichéd story about knights and dragons but turns into a fable about female empowerment and peace-making. In live performances James Mayhew brings the story to life by live-painting as he narrates, the knight, squire, princess and dragon conjured into being through the course of the piece.

Malcolm Arnold's **Toy Symphony** is a good example of his penchant for combining the serious and the ridiculous. In this piece a quintet of professional players is pitted against a battery of comic percussion, including a train guard's whistle, a quail whistle and three parping toy trumpets, played, at its premiere, by notable people of the day. It was premiered on 28 November 1957 in the Savoy Hotel, London, at a fundraising dinner for the Musicians Benevolent Fund. The composer conducted and the VIP performers included Australian pianist Eileen Joyce, composer Eric Coates, musical broadcaster Joseph Cooper and cartoonist Gerard Hoffnung. The music has an inimitable sense of fun, with Arnold happy to garland some wonderful tunes with the most outrageously noisy barrage.

The earliest of the pieces on this recording, John Ireland's **Annabel Lee** was written in about 1910, but the dating is uncertain. It wasn't published until 1998, long after Ireland's death. Scored originally for piano and speaker and styled as a 'melodrama' it sets a poem by Edgar Allan Poe, first published on the day of his death in 1849. I made a new arrangement specially for this album, expanding the scoring from piano alone to a quintet of piano, flute, clarinet, violin and cello. This enabled me to widen the coloristic palette without losing the hypnotic desolation of the original.

Judith Weir's **Thread!** is an early piece in her catalogue which, like the other pieces on the album, has hitherto escaped being recorded. Judith Weir has written of the piece:

It was written for Edward Harper and his New Music Group of Scotland in 1981. Its subject matter is the Bayeux Tapestry, in particular the laconic Latin text spread throughout the upper horizontal border, which is declaimed by a narrator. An octet of instruments creates a musical equivalent of the tapestry, providing continuous musical flow like a long sheet of linen, but also attempting to depict the constant incident of

the story. Percussion (representing swords, axes, armour and so on) is an important feature of the score; in the original performances, some of this was played on junk metal and wooden objects found on building sites and beaches around Scotland.

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**Alexander Armstrong** is an English comedian, actor, television presenter and bass-baritone singer. He has hosted the BBC series *Have I Got News For You* more than 20 times and has co-presented the hugely popular TV quiz show *Pointless* alongside Richard Osman since 2009. He is a regular on Classic FM, presenting both the Saturday and Sunday afternoon programmes, and returned to his musical roots releasing his debut solo vocal album, *A Year of*



*Songs*, in November 2015. *Upon a Different Shore* was Alexander's second studio album released in October 2016 and he released his seasonal album *In a Winter Light* the following December.

The dynamic, award-winning conductor **Tom Hammond** is known for his exciting and thoughtful programming, and is equally at home working with top-flight artists or conducting leading non-professional and youth orchestras. Recent collaborators include pianist Stephen Hough, clarinettist Emma Johnson, violinist Ray Chen and cellists Steven Isserlis and Matthew Sharp. Tom received mentorship from the late Sir Charles Mackerras and has given many premieres of new music by, among others, Matthew Taylor, James Francis Brown and Bernard Hughes. Tom is Co-Artistic Director and founder of the Hertfordshire Festival of Music, which since its launch in 2016 has rapidly grown to become one of the leading celebrations of classical music in the UK.

[www.tom-hammond.org.uk](http://www.tom-hammond.org.uk)





**Orchestra of the Swan** was founded in 1995 and is based in Stratford-upon-Avon, Warwickshire, with an annual programme of over 45 concerts throughout England and Wales. The OOTS catalogue of over 20 recordings features works by Copland, Elgar, Finzi, Mahler and Shostakovich, and the orchestra has premiered more than 70 new works by composers including Joe Cutler, Tansy Davies, Roxanna Panufnik, Joseph Phibbs and Dobrinka Tabakova. OOTS has been enormously successful in making a positive and effective contribution to the communities at the heart of its 'immersive residencies', with an ambitious programme of work in care homes, schools and rural areas.

**Judith Weir** was born in 1954 to Scottish parents in Cambridge, England, and studied composition with John Tavener, Robin Holloway and Gunther Schuller. On leaving Cambridge University in 1976 she taught in England and Scotland, and in the mid-1990s became Associate Composer with the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and Artistic Director of Spitalfields Festival. She was appointed Master of the Queen's Music in 2014. In 2015 she became



Associate Composer to the BBC Singers. She is the composer of several operas and has written orchestral music for the BBC Symphony, Boston Symphony and Minnesota Orchestras.

**Bernard Hughes**'s music has been performed at major British venues including Symphony Hall, Birmingham and St Paul's Cathedral in London. He has won a number of awards both in the UK and internationally and is regularly broadcast on BBC Radio 3. After studying music at Oxford University and composition privately with Param Vir, Bernard was awarded a PhD in composition by London University in 2009. A CD of Bernard Hughes's choral music, *I am the Song*, performed by the BBC Singers, was released in 2016, and he wrote music for the film *Bill* (2015). He lives in London, where he is Composer-in-Residence at St Paul's Girls' School.

[www.bernardhughes.net](http://www.bernardhughes.net)



Northampton-born **Malcolm Arnold** (1921-2006) was a towering figure of the 20th century. His remarkable catalogue contains music written for every genre, including a major cycle of nine symphonies. He was also one of the first British composers ever to win an Oscar, for his film score *Bridge on the River Kwai* (1957).

**John Ireland** (1879-1962) was an English composer who, as a teacher, included Benjamin Britten and Ernest Moeran among his pupils. His music is predominantly in small forms – piano miniatures and songs – and he is best known for his evocative and moving setting of John Masefield's *Sea-Fever* for voice and piano.







## **Photography**

Armstrong: David Schienmann

Weir: Benjamin Ealovega

Hughes: Sarah-Jane Field

OOTS: Cliff Armstrong

## **Production**

Recorded and engineered by Chiaro Audio ([www.chiaro-audio.uk](http://www.chiaro-audio.uk))

Produced by Bernard Hughes and Tom Hammond

Engineered and edited by John Croft

Instrumental parts recorded at Clarendon Muse, Watford School of Music  
on 21 and 22 July 2019

Narration recorded at Evolution Studios, Oxford on 6 September 2019

## **Performers**

Conducted by Tom Hammond

Narrated by Alexander Armstrong

Orchestra of the Swan: David le Page (violin I, all tracks), Samantha Wickramasinghe (violin II, all tracks), Vanessa McNaught (viola, all tracks), Nick Stringfellow (cello, all tracks), Stacey Watton (double bass, 1-2, 6-8, 10-14), Diane Clark (flute 1-2, 6-14), Sally Harrop (clarinet, 1-2, 6-11), Tom Caldecote (clarinet/bass clarinet, 12-14), Neil Brough (trumpet, 1-2, 6-8), Tim Farmer (percussion, 1-8, 10-14), Joanna Smith (piano, all tracks)

Additional percussion for *Toy Symphony*: Helen Bool (dulcimer), Neil Brough (melodica), Alexa Butterworth (quail), Gareth Ceredig (toy cymbals), Diane Clark (nightingale & train whistle), Sally Harrop (cuckoo & guard's whistle), Vicky Lee (triangle), Bruce Parry (dulcimer), Tom Peverelle (toy drum), Paolo Pezzangora (toy trumpet in G), Peter Wright (toy trumpet in C)

## Publishers

*Not Now, Bernard*, *Isabel's Noisy Tummy* and *The Knight Who Took All Day* are published by Wild Woods Music, an imprint of Black Swan Press Ltd

Tracks 1-2, & 6-8 © 2010 by Black Swan Press Ltd and are based on the books *Not Now, Bernard* © 1980 David McKee and *Isabel's Noisy Tummy* © 1994 David McKee, first published by Andersen Press Ltd London

Tracks 10-11 © 2016 by Black Swan Press Ltd and are based on *The Knight Who Took All Day* © 2005 James Mayhew

Track 9 by John Ireland © 1998 Stainer & Bell Ltd 23 Gruneisen Road London N3 1DZ, arrangement by Bernard Hughes © 2019 Stainer & Bell Ltd



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The Malcolm Arnold Society

The John Ireland Trust

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*Not Now, Bernard* contains elements from the theme tunes 'Coronation Street' (Spear), 'Countdown' (Hawkshaw), 'Mastermind' pka 'Approaching Menace' (Richardson) and 'Eastenders' (Osborne/May). Published by EMI Music Publishing Ltd/Granada Media Group Ltd/Mercury Music Co Ltd/Chevron Music Publishing Ltd/KPM Music Ltd/Sony/ATV Music Publishing (UK) Limited. Used by permission. All rights reserved.





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