



FOLK TALES • 2

British and Irish Miniatures

BAX • BREATNACH • BRIDGE • CLARKE • ELGAR
HUGHES • IRELAND • VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

Gerald Peregrine, Cello • Antony Ingham, Piano
Lynda O'Connor, Violin



Frank Bridge (1879–1941)		
1	Berceuse (1901)*	3:08
2	Serenade (1903)*	2:51
3	Élégie (1904)	3:54
Edward Elgar (1857–1934)		
4	Salut d’amour (Liebesgrüss), Op. 12 (1888) (arr. anonymous for cello and piano)	3:18
Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979)		
5	Epilogue (1921)	5:30
6	Passacaglia (?1940–41)*	5:08
7	I’ll bid my heart be still (1944)*	3:34
John Ireland (1879–1962)		
8	Decorations – No. 1. The Island Spell for piano solo (1912)	3:31
9	Columbine for piano solo (1949)	4:27
10	Spring Sorrow (1918) (arr. Julian Lloyd Webber [b. 1951])*	3:24
11	Four Preludes – No. 3. The Holy Boy (1913, arr. 1919)*	2:50
Arnold Bax (1883–1953)		
12	Nereid for piano solo (1916)	3:53
Traditional		
13	The Last Rose of Summer (arr. Gerald Peregrine for cello solo)	2:47
Herbert Hughes (1882–1937)		
14	Down by the Salley Gardens (1909) (arr. L. O’Connor and G. Peregrine for violin and cello)	3:05
Máire Breatnach (b. 1956)		
15	The Swans at Coole (c. 1993) (version for violin solo)	3:08
Traditional		
16	An Chúilfhionn (The Coolin) (arr. Michele Esposito [1855–1929] and G. Peregrine for cello solo)	2:07
17	She Moved Through the Fair (arr. L. O’Connor and G. Peregrine for violin and cello)	3:45
18	The Lark in the Clear Air (arr. Thomas Christopher Kelly [1917–1985] for piano trio)	2:36
Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)		
19	Songs of Travel – No. 1. The Vagabond (1904)*	2:59
20	How Can the Tree but Wither? (?1896)*	4:10
21	Songs of Travel – No. 7. Whither must I Wander? (1901)*	4:39

*version for cello and piano

Gerald Peregrine, Cello 1–7 10 11 13 14 16–21

Antony Ingham, Piano 1–12 18–21

Lynda O’Connor, Violin 14 15 17 18

Folk Tales • 2

British and Irish Violin, Cello and Piano Miniatures

When Richard Wagner's *Tristan* was unleashed in 1865, an earthquake was felt that disturbed forever the classical foundations on which tonal stability and harmony had been based for over 300 years. From that moment, atonality and Impressionism were set to confront artists and audiences alike in a battle for acceptance into the indefinite future. In addition, Wagner, knowingly and loudly, threw artistic 'nationalism' into the forum, and by the beginning of the 20th century composers were unable to work without their national roots being questioned as another layer upon their chosen influences.

While it cannot be questioned that all of the composers featured here were part of a new growth of an 'English style' (and no less a composer than Maurice Ravel admiringly asserted as much), their influences, though ranging far and wide, include, in their own innovative ways, a vivid response to their natural surroundings and the rich tapestry of living folk-song tradition in both England and Ireland.

What binds them more importantly, though, is the blending of a traditional lyricism with wide influences from Europe and Scandinavia, jazz, literature and drama, and a fruitful rebelliousness against the fearsome conservatism at the heart of the musical establishment, presided over by Charles Villiers Stanford for more than 50 years as professor of composition at the Royal College of Music and professor of music at Cambridge University.

Frank Bridge (1879–1941)

Berceuse • Serenade • Élégie

The early years of the 20th century were immutably a turning point for artists within all disciplines, but the towering conservative influence of Charles Villiers Stanford at the Royal College of Music on some of his composition pupils was hard to resist. Frank Bridge's creative instincts developed fully only when he had escaped the tug of Stanford's heroes, most notably Brahms. However, these three pieces, written between 1901 and 1904 while Bridge was still a student, *Berceuse*, *Serenade* and *Élégie*, are delicious miniatures full of charm but also fluency in melody and hints of a master craftsman at work, at ease in understanding and promise. The cello seems to speak with a voice that evokes sympathy and wistfulness. The composer's joy in yearning intervals and in the *Serenade* a cheeky pleasure in chromaticism that cannot have pleased his tutor at all serve to delight the ear and subtly tease the heartstrings. The *Élégie*, though, goes further, denying the listener any sense of security, with shifts of harmony that avoid simple resolution, conveying unease and questioning. Bridge's masterly sense of craft owes as much to his own instincts as a gifted violinist and viola player as to his perception of satisfying form.

Edward Elgar (1857–1934)

Salut d'amour

As popular when it was written in 1888 as it is now, *Salut d'amour* was published almost immediately in 1889 and has been the subject of numerous arrangements ever since then. Lyrics have been added too. Dedicated 'à Carice', it was the perfect engagement present to his beloved Caroline Alice; their daughter was two years later christened with the name 'Carice'. It is easily forgotten that although Elgar was born and brought up within a musical family, he received no advanced musical education at a conservatoire; he very largely listened and learned mixed with playing the violin as a jobbing musician. Just a few years before he met his future wife, he had toured Europe soaking up concerts and recitals, and wrote interestingly that he had been 'well dosed with Schumann (my ideal!!)...'. He must have loved Schumann's own freshness and seemingly innocent lyricism, such is the open-hearted and mature skill in this evergreen, melodic and romantic engagement present from a young man whose individual musical language and character encouraged by his future wife would flower so abundantly.

Rebecca Clarke (1886–1979)

Epilogue • Passacaglia • I'll bid my heart be still

Clarke lived a long life, dying in 1979 at the age of 93. Her childhood was dominated by her strict Victorian father who constantly unleashed painful physical punishment upon her and her siblings, the experience of which in later life surely contributed to her constant questioning of her artistic worth, only made worse by society's sometimes brutal unwillingness to see female composers as equal to their male counterparts. As a solo violist, however, her reputation couldn't be more radiant. Arthur Rubinstein referred to her as 'the glorious Rebecca Clarke'. It seems though that at last her considerable talent as a composer is being widely recognised, and her individual musical language shines through particularly in her better-known *Viola Sonata*.

The three pieces recorded here speak undeniably of her place within the company of Stanford's brilliant pupils, such as Bridge, Vaughan Williams and Butterworth. She was indeed Stanford's first female composition pupil.

The *Epilogue* (1921) has a dramatic purpose; one can imagine this brooding but sympathetic dialogue between cello and piano almost in poetry, summing up what has been witnessed and now has gone.

The *Passacaglia* (1940 or 1941) addresses the tune attributed to Thomas Tallis, *Veni Creator*, in a Baroque form well used by J.S. Bach, with a powerful grandeur and melting tenderness, weaving the constant repetitions of the melody into a multi-layered texture describing one great arch in structure.

The old Scottish Borders melody, *I'll bid my heart be still*, with original words by Thomas Pringle (1789–1834), surely lamenting a woman's loss of her lover at the Battle of Culloden, in Clarke's hands loses nothing of its stoical melodic beauty, but becomes a free-flowing meditation upon the grief of loss. It gives the feeling of spontaneous improvisation, but is finely wrought, paying respect to those now nameless tunesmiths whose melodies combine such depth with simplicity.

John Ireland (1879–1962)

Columbine • Spring Sorrow • The Holy Boy

Born in Cheshire in 1879, Ireland was yet another distinguished pupil of Stanford's at the Royal College of Music, who, while baptised into studies of Beethoven and Brahms, became enthused by Debussy and Ravel. Prolific as a young composer and more drawn to Impressionism and the spirit of place than to folk music like Vaughan Williams and Holst, his earlier works include much chamber music which was highly regarded. However, like Herbert Howells perhaps, his later creative reputation was more centred on song and church music. To this day his anthem *Greater Love* and his hymn tune *Love Unknown* are among the most loved of all his works, and his many songs form the backbone of English song repertoire. He spent his life as a church organist in London and taught composition himself to, among others, Ernest John Moeran and Benjamin Britten, with shrewd analytical wisdom and a lively predilection for rich but tasteful harmonic colour.

His works for piano are many, full of variety in tone and spirit. Some are comparable in harmonic innovation, virtuosity and grandeur even to Bax and Prokofiev. *Columbine*, in contrast, is a short miniature in A–B–A form, written relatively late, in 1949. Marked *Allegretto con grazia*, it has a fluidity suggestive of delicate choreography, with a waltz quality and teasingly fascinating harmony that gently bewitches the ear.

Spring Sorrow was originally composed as a song in 1918. It is a setting of a poem by Rupert Brooke, who had died on his way to Gallipoli in 1915. The poem speaks of the poet's heart in a frozen unfeeling state throughout the frosty winter months warmed by the advent of spring, only to waken pain. It's not hard to see the poem as a response to the darkness that overtook Europe between 1914 and 1918, and Ireland's sympathetic setting is poignantly simple, a timeless melody accompanied by the barest shifting harmonies. This is another work that was republished in arrangements for different forces, some without text, such is the beauty of the melody.

Ireland's first church appointment was as sub-organist at Holy Trinity, Sloane Street in 1896, before moving on as organist and choirmaster to St Luke's, Chelsea in 1904. Inspired by one of the choristers there called Bobby Glassby, at Christmas time in 1913 Ireland wrote *The Holy Boy – A Carol of the Nativity* as one of a group of piano preludes. Ireland's rich and creative harmonic sense in this instance underlines the beautiful solemnity of the lyrical melody.

Arnold Bax (1883–1953)

Nereid

Arnold Bax remains one of the most fascinating and enigmatic composers from what Ravel called the 'English School'. The fertility of his musical imagination where colours and harmonies are concerned was matched by his almost obsessive interest in old Celtic legend and perhaps no less in Greek mythology. It is no surprise that *Nereid* for piano solo is dedicated to the woman whom he loved more than any other from the moment they met. Harriet Cohen was a student pianist at the Royal Academy aged 19 and Bax was 31 when their affair began. They remained lovers and closely bound all his life, despite much turbulence and anguish, Cohen's extremely colourful life and many indiscretions and Bax's own taking of another mistress.

Cohen became one of the finest pianists of her generation, and the virtuosity in Bax's piano writing was undoubtedly inspired and encouraged by her exceptional skill and artistry. *Nereid* was composed just three years after their meeting, and there is no mistaking his feelings and the glow this piece generates. The Nereids in Greek mythology were sea nymphs, always beautiful, always singing and playing and in essence representing all that is good about the sea. The playfulness in the melodic writing intertwines with harmonic twists and turns that seem bold on the ear but are so evocative, and in the final glittering but gentle bars, the penultimate chord is immutably Bax's own, and it's one that jazz musicians had not discovered themselves at that time, but would make hay out of when they finally did many years later.

Folk Songs

The Last Rose of Summer • Down by the Salley Gardens • The Swans at Coole • The Coolin • She Moved Through the Fair • The Lark in the Clear Air

The treasure trove of old melodies or songs is incalculably deep, filled with tunes and texts, sometimes conjoined, that have simply been handed down from generation to generation, century by century anywhere in the world. Ever since musical language has been recorded, written down, there have been those whose voluntary obligation it was to find and archive them, either like Cecil Sharp who, from the middle of the 19th century and straddling the early 20th, collected over 4,000 English and American folk songs, or Vaughan Williams and Béla Bartók, who used them as inspiration for their own creativity. Traditional music is no more alive anywhere than in Ireland, where its content, performance skills and popularity as live music holds still a central place in the island's cultural life. And its content provides, to this day, a requisite reminder of 'everyman's' contemporary history, with depth of feeling and palpable emotion.

The Last Rose of Summer is the title of the exquisite poem written by the prolific Thomas Moore who was both a poet and musician. Dating from 1805, the text was written to join a melody collected by Edward Bunting in 1792 from a traditional harpist's performance in Belfast. Both the poem and the melody stand alone in their fame too, and the tune alone must be one of the most famous of all, used by a multitude of composers such as Mendelssohn and Flotow, and by numerous artists including Bing Crosby in addition to many film makers. In this recording, one is allowed to bask in the purity of a timeless and haunting melody, the form in which it was undoubtedly handed down from performer to performer.

W.B. Yeats's poignant poem *Down by the Salley Gardens* from around 1889 was inspired by dim recollections of an old ballad he had heard years before in County Sligo, and originally titled *An Old Song Re-Sung*.

Yeats's text was shortly afterwards taken by Herbert Hughes and fitted to the old melody *The Maids of Mourne Shore* but with a few adjustments which resulted in the melody that is so well known now, so perfectly attuned to Yeats's bitter-sweet and slightly mournful poem. Once again the popularity of the melody itself has been such that it has been used over and over again, not least by Benjamin Britten, in a great variety of arrangements.

The Swans at Coole, composed by Máire Breatnach (b. 1956) for solo fiddle, takes its inspiration from *The Children of Lir*, a profoundly affecting legend from Irish mythology, telling the story of four children's suffering over hundreds of years having been metamorphosed into swans by their jealous step-mother Aoife; swans, however, that can sing. This tale fascinatingly mixes ancient religious magic involving druids and spells and the children's eventual freedom resulting from their meeting with Christian goodness. But in addition to a final redemption of sorts it is full of sorrow, the pain of regret and loss, and seemingly eternal suffering. The magical idea of swans having a voice, though, and such a plaintive voice at that, has inspired much creativity, in poetry, and art, and in music. Breatnach is, of course, a giant in Irish traditional/folk music today as a performer and musicologist, and this soulful lament delves deep into the pain and beauty of the legend.

It is almost impossible for scholars to state with any accuracy exactly from when or where some of the most well-known melodies surviving today began, and such is the true nature of the tradition of handing down melodies from generation to generation that it is a wonder that any sense of them in their original form remains. But Irish tradition has remained alive over the centuries and one can be reasonably certain that performance practice and the melody of such as *The Coolin* have maintained much integrity in spite of the mist surrounding its derivation. This melody, so highly regarded by practitioners and audiences alike, seems to call from long ago, and has inspired many different texts, and diverse arrangements, including by Samuel Barber.

It seems likely that the song *She Moved Through the Fair* existed as melody with text centuries ago, and it's not difficult to imagine why, because this tune which is so simple in its construction has a distinctly archaic modal character, avoiding more contemporary sounding harmonic resolution. Thus, it seems to float ethereally, suggesting the quality of the ghost-like lover who appears before the young man at the fair in the text. The text is a sorrowful one, a story of young man unable to wed his lover before she dies. She haunts him, just as the melody haunts the listener.

The Lark in the Clear Air has attracted generations of composers and arrangers over the last century and well beyond, and the text is an exemplar of poetry extolling the nature of young love that is stirred by the song of the lark, high over the hill pasture, spurring the lover on to shower his beloved with the purest and sweetest affections on the morrow. The music is simple and ideal, tender and innocent, untroubled by care or doubt.

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872–1958)

The Vagabond • How Can the Tree but Wither?

Whither must I wander?

Vaughan Williams was 32 when he composed the song cycle *Songs of Travel*, the first song of which is *The Vagabond*. It would be another five years before he began to compose the large-scale symphonies and choral works that define his maturity. The cycle texts were poems by Robert Louis Stevenson, and around this time the composer was deeply engaged with travelling the English countryside collecting folk tunes, many of which provided him with inspiration for his major works and indeed his own musical language. The text elucidates the Traveller's credo, craving only the open sky, the elements around him and a clear road under his feet, having need of neither wealth nor comfort and love. The music is full of resolute spirit, in the words of the poet, 'All I ask, the heaven above and the road below me'.

An earlier song, probably composed around 1896 setting a poem by the 16th-century poet Thomas, Lord Vaux, *How can the Tree but Wither?* is infused with the young composer's love of modes and Elizabethan music, a love that would be evident throughout his life. But the lyricism and shapeliness of his melodic writing even in his apprenticeship years bestows a grace and maturity on the sentiments expressed.

Whither must I Wander? is the seventh song in the cycle *Songs of Travel*, reflecting upon a different scenario: of a traveller who remembers with such warmth the wealth of friends' generosity, a fire in the hearth of his comfortable home and so on, but also the tragedy that has taken from him those he loved, leading consequently to his wandering life, and sad resignation. Vaughan Williams' music lends a gently noble stature to the deeply nostalgic heart of the poem, the seeming simplicity of which is a tribute to his perceptive insight.

Stephen Barlow

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Lynda O'Connor



Lynda O'Connor made her debut appearance at the National Concert Hall, Dublin when she was just four years old, and has subsequently performed as a soloist, chamber musician and orchestral musician throughout Ireland, Europe, Asia and the United States. Her solo career features many memorable performances including the violin concertos of Tchaikovsky, Saint-Saëns, Beethoven, Bruch and Mozart with Camerata Ireland, Dublin Orchestral Players and Greystones Orchestra, among others. As a chamber musician, she has collaborated with musicians such as Barry Douglas, Nobuko Imai, John O'Connor and Alessio Bax. She enjoys performing on a regular basis with the Ficino Ensemble, Musici Ireland, The Wilde Trio, her traditional Irish group The Wild Turkeys and her traditional Irish crossover group Trio Elatha. In demand as an orchestral leader, O'Connor has performed as a principal player with all the major Irish orchestras, the International Mahler Orchestra, oneMusic Orchestra, Plano Symphony Orchestra and Aalborg Symphony Orchestra, among many others. lyndaconnorviolin.com

Gerald Peregrine



Photo: Anthony Woods

Gerald Peregrine is an Irish cellist who has established a career as a solo, chamber and orchestral performer. Peregrine released his acclaimed international solo debut recording, *Folk Tales*, on Naxos in May 2019 (8.574035). Born in Dublin to a large musical family, he studied at the Royal Irish Academy of Music and the DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama before commencing his studies in London aged 14 with William Pleeth. He subsequently studied at the Royal College of Music and Indiana University. As a chamber musician, Peregrine has performed with Ensemble Avalon, Trio Festivale and Camerata Ireland, among others, in venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center and the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées. He has also appeared as a concerto soloist with all the major orchestras in Ireland, and regularly performs and interviews on national TV and radio. He has been featured as a soloist on film productions for RTÉ, Sky One and BBC One. In May 2020 Peregrine created a new project, 'Covid Care Concerts', in rapid response to the pandemic, and has since delivered over 2,000 live concerts in 23 counties.

www.geraldperegrine.com
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Antony Ingham



Pianist Antony Ingham enjoys a varied musical career of accompanying and coaching strings, woodwind and voice. He has worked as official accompanist for the orchestra of St Martin-in-the-Fields, the Royal College of Music, Trinity College London, London College of Music and The Purcell School. He has performed at the Royal Festival Hall, Purcell Room and St Martin-in-the-Fields. Recent projects have included working with the 2012 winner of the BBC Young musician competition cellist Laura van der Heijden, as well as chamber recitals at Wigmore Hall and the Royal Albert Hall. He has also performed in venues across Ireland with cellist Gerald Peregrine and given recitals on BBC Radio 3 and Classic FM. Ingham studied at the Royal Academy of Music and the Royal College of Music, and as a postgraduate student won the UCLA Piano Concerto Competition. He teaches piano at Westminster Cathedral Choir School and has been for many years the pianist for the classes of renowned singing teacher Janice Chapman.

Following the success of the first volume of *Folk Tales* (8.574035), Gerald Peregrine and Antony Ingham go further into their explorations of British and Irish music. These include rarely recorded works and new interpretations of traditional Irish songs that Peregrine presented during his more than 2,000 ‘Covid Care Concerts’ performed at health care settings during the pandemic. This is yet another treasure trove of poetic miniatures to treat the ear and tug at the heartstrings.

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A detailed track list and publishers’ details can be found inside the booklet.
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This album is dedicated to the memory of my beloved father, Edward Charles Peregrine.
With special thanks to Professor Jim Lucey • Booklet notes: Stephen Barlow
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