

well as that of organist and is a distinguished accompanist. As a teacher and trainer he has given courses world-wide on behalf of the Royal School of Church Music and he is a member of the Royal College of Organists.

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BACK TO IRELAND – Irish Songs & Ballads /James Griffett, tenor

1. The Last Rose of Summer*	3.49
2. The Irish Reel**	1.22
3. Macushla *	2.34
4. Trottin' to the Fair**	1.18
5. Lullaby**	2.58
6. The Snowy Breasted Pearl *	2.13
7. The Salley Gardens (unacc.)	2.33
8. The Bold Unbiddable Child**	0.49
9. My Love's an Arbutus**	2.49
10. I Hear You Calling Me *	2.57
11. Tom Bowling *	3.52
12. Once Again *	3.13
13. More of Cloyne**	2.52
14. The Rose of Tralee *	2.33
15. A Soft Day**	2.06
16. Oft in the Stilly Night *	2.38
17. Jenny**	2.00
18. Thief of the World**	0.50
19. The Irish Lover (Derry Air)**	5.13
20. Fairy Lures**	1.20
21. She Mov'd thro' the Fair (unacc.)	2.11
22. Mother Macree*	2.34
23. The Ploughman's Whistle**	4.16
24. A Lament **	3.59
25. The Willow Tree**	2.44
26. Back to Ireland**	2.17

Total 69:50

With **Simon Lindley** – piano * (recorded in Leeds Parish Church

Clifford Benson – piano ** (recorded in London)

Re-mastered by Paul Arden-Taylor (www.dinmore-records.co.uk)

Back to Ireland

Irish Ballads for Tenor

James Griffett

includes:

Air from County Derry

Macushla • Jenny

I Hear You Calling Me

Last Rose of Summer

Rose of Tralee

Mother Machree

and many more...

Musical
CONCEPTS

This collection of Irish ballads includes many arranged by the man often considered to have been Ireland's premier composer, **Sir Charles Villiers Stanford** (1852-1924). Born in Dublin to Protestant parents and educated at Queens College, Cambridge, he was Organist at Trinity College and also conducted the University Music Society. From 1883 he taught at the Royal Academy of Music in London and among his pupils were several leading 20th century composers including Vaughan Williams, Holst, Howells, Bliss, Ireland, Gurney and Lambert. At the same time he was Professor of Music at Cambridge as well as being Music Director of the Bach Choir and of the Leeds Festival. As a conductor he introduced a considerable amount of new music to the UK (including Rachmaninov's *Isle of the Dead*) and in addition to his teaching duties Stanford wrote a highly influential treatise *Musical Composition*, much in use 100 years after its publication. Stanford was a prolific composer: amongst his noteworthy output are several symphonies, concertos and operas, chamber and keyboard works, and songs, but above all he is perhaps best remembered for his church choral works. Although his style was heavily influenced by 19th century European composers, Stanford prided himself on his Celtic heritage as evidenced by his collection of over 100 folk song settings. In his *Musical Composition* Stanford advised those setting folk songs to keep it simple: 'set them as you feel them, without straining after effects'.

Stanford's Irish Folk Song arrangements encompass every human emotion associated with the Irish and Ireland: joyfulness and energy (*The Irish Reel*); sentimentality (*The Irish Lover* -better known as *Danny Boy*- (and *Jenny*); humour with a touch of cheekiness (*Trottin' to the Fair*); tenderness and a love of children (*Lullaby* and the brief *Thief of the World*). A deep love for children is combined with anger and frustration in *The Bold Unbiddable Child*, where the mother is by turns understanding of her boy's unruly behaviour but certain that he will rue the day when she gets hold of him! As with *The Irish Lover*, Irish songwriters are apt to treat love and romance with unashamed sentimentality and when the romance turns sour the tears flow freely as in *The Willow Tree*. Perhaps more than in any other country there features a belief in magic and superstition, most of it is mischievous like the Fairies who abduct a child to take it back to their own land (*More of Cloyne*) or those described in *Fairy Lures*. Famine, war (the effects of which are movingly described in *A Lament*) and brutal suppression, led many Irish to leave their homeland although their passion and nostalgia for the Emerald Isle remains undiminished. The poet's descriptions of the lush green meadows dotted with flowing rivers and shady woods (*My Love's an Arbutus* and *The Ploughman's Whistle*) will make any Irish ex-pat homesick as will, more surprisingly perhaps, the inevitable drizzle (*A Soft Day*).

This collection begins with one of the best-known Irish song texts. Early in the 19th century Thomas Moore (1779-1852) compiled a number of poems under the heading *Irish Melodies* and one, *The Last Rose of Summer*, was set to music by Sir John Stevenson. So popular was Stevenson's melody that Beethoven and Mendelssohn both adapted it for their own use, as did Friedrich von Flotow in his opera *Martha*.

In 1912 the Irish-American tenor Chauncey Olcott presented a show *Macushla* which was one in a long line of nostalgic, heavily sentimental evocations of Ireland so beloved of Americans. The song *Macushla* actually predates the show by a couple of years but expresses the same sentiments. Olcott was also responsible for *Mother Machree* (words by Rida Johnson Young), including the song in the 1908 show *Barry of Ballymore*. It later became McCormack's 'theme song' and was also in the repertoire of Beniamino Gigli.

Several other songs in this collection inevitably became closely associated with the great Irish tenor Count John McCormack (1884-1945). These include *I hear you calling me* which first appeared c1908 and was also frequently sung by the English tenor John Coates, a famous early Gerontius. It is one of several songs in this collection that have proved popular outside these Isles, one of the most popular recordings having been made by Spanish soprano Lucrezia Bori. *The Rose of Tralee*, another favourite of McCormack's, was composed c1850. It is not known for certain who penned this song as different versions of the sheet music give the credit to different writers. *Oft in the Stilly Night* first appeared in print c1815 being a traditional air arranged by Thomas Moore. It was much used in Victorian minstrel shows and was popular with many 20th century singers as well as McCormack, as was the poignant *She Mov'd Thro' the Fair*.

The traditional love-ballad *The Snowy Breasted Pearl* was translated into English in 1855 by George Petrie (1790-1866). Petrie was a painter, musician, archaeologist and a leading expert on Irish antiquity.

Inspired by the countryside around Sligo, William Butler Yeats wrote the words to *The Salley Gardens* in 1889 and it was included in a collection of poems published in 1895. The melody has become so associated with arrangements by Benjamin Britten, Ivor Gurney or Rebecca Clarke that it is sometimes forgotten that it was Herbert Hughes (1882-1937), one time music critic of the *Daily Telegraph*, who originally set Yeats' poem to music.

Charles Dibdin (1745- 1814) wrote *Tom Bowling* after the tragic death of his brother Thomas at sea. The tune became familiar to millions through its use in the Sea Songs medley traditionally heard during the Last Night of the Proms when the tune became the cue for mock sentimentality. One could accuse the Promenaders of bad taste but perhaps they were unfamiliar with the lyrics!

Whilst still a treble Hertfordshire-born, Yorkshire-based tenor **James Griffett**, sang songs by composers such as Vaughan Williams, Quilter, Warlock, Head and Finzi, having been introduced at a very early age by his school's music teacher, Charles Vale, a composer who studied under Roger Quilter. Following a short period as a lay clerk in the choir of Peterborough Cathedral, he went on to study at the Royal College of Music and, during his final year at college, was appointed to the choir of Westminster Cathedral.

James was later founder member and manager of Pro Cantione Antiqua with whom he has made many recordings (including many on alto). The group formed whilst he was studying at the Royal College and in the choir at Westminster. At that time he also received coaching from Peter Pears. His international singing and teaching career has taken him throughout Europe, the Far East and America. As a singer with Pro Cantione Antiqua, Griffett was renowned as a leading interpreter of Gregorian chant, early music, and baroque.

As an internationally renowned soloist, he is also one of the most highly respected exponents on the concert stage of traditional and 20th century songs and ballads from the British Isles. He has made numerous recordings for leading labels. He has premiered works by a number of composers including John Tavener, Geoffrey Burgon and Flor Peeters and he is particularly associated with the music of Britten. He is also today a respected teacher and choral trainer.

Clifford Benson (1946-2007) was a distinguished accompanist and chamber musician who studied at the Royal College of Music. Early in his career Benson taught at summer schools in South East England and gradually built up a formidable reputation playing with the Nash Ensemble, William Bennett and selected singers whilst playing occasionally as a soloist. He later taught accompaniment at the Royal Academy of Music.

Simon Lindley (b 1948) is the long-serving organist at Leeds Parish Church and also Leeds Town Hall. He studied at the Royal College of Music and has held several posts as a choral conductor as