

# WIGMORE HALL

Saturday 22 October 2022  
4.30pm

## Ludlow English Song Day 'Hiraeth': Celtic perspectives

Harriet Burns soprano  
Ailish Tynan soprano  
Elgan Llŷr Thomas tenor  
Robin Tritschler tenor

Adam Walker flute  
Rosalind Ventriss viola  
Ian Tindale piano

Charles Villiers Stanford (1852-1924) Back to Ireland from *An Irish Idyll in 6 Miniatures* Op. 77 (1901)  
Dorothy Parke (1904-1990) Song in Exile (pub. 1939)  
Hamilton Harty (1879-1941) Lookin' Back from *6 Songs of Ireland* Op. 18 (1908)

Philip Hammond (b.1951) The Blackbird's Poet (2018)

Dilys Elwyn-Edwards (1918-2012) Y Gylfinir (The Curlew) from *Caneuon y Tri Aderyn (Songs of the Three Birds)* (1962)

Joan Trimble (1915-2000) Green Rain (1938)  
Rhian Samuel (b.1944) Summer's Leave (2022) *world première*

Francis George Scott (1880-1958) Hungry Waters (1925)  
Judith Weir (b.1954) From *Scotch Minstrelsy* (1982)  
Bessie Bell and Mary Gray •  
Lady Isobel and the Elf-Knight

Francis George Scott Ay waukin, O (1922)  
Jonathan Nangle (b.1981) Snáth (Yarn) from *Snáth (Yarn)* (2019)  
Dilys Elwyn-Edwards The Cloths of Heaven (1991)

Joan Trimble Girl's Song (1937)  
Francis George Scott The Wee Man (1931)  
Charles Wood (1866-1926) Denny's Daughter (1927)  
Echo (1927)

Trad/Welsh Ar Hyd y Nos (All Through the Night) *arranged by Huw Watkins*



This concert is part of the CAVATINA Chamber Music Trust ticket scheme, offering free tickets to those aged 8-25

Wigmore Hall is a no smoking venue. No recording or photographic equipment may be taken into the auditorium nor used in any other part of the Hall without the prior written permission of the management.

In accordance with the requirements of City of Westminster persons shall not be permitted to stand or sit in any of the gangways intersecting the seating, or to sit in any other gangways. If standing is permitted in the gangways at the sides and rear of the seating, it shall be limited to the number indicated in the notices exhibited in those positions.

Disabled Access and Facilities - full details from 020 7935 2141.

Wigmore Hall is equipped with a 'Loop' to help hearing aid users receive clear sound without background noise. Patrons can use this facility by switching hearing aids to 'T'.



Please ensure that watch alarms, mobile phones and any other electrical devices which can become audible are switched off. Phones on a vibrate setting can still be heard, please switch off.

The Wigmore Hall Trust Registered Charity No. 1024838  
36 Wigmore Street, London W1U 2BP • Wigmore-hall.org.uk • John Gilhooly Director

Wigmore Hall Royal Patron HRH The Duke of Kent, KG  
Honorary Patrons Aubrey Adams OBE; André and Rosalie Hoffmann; Louise Kaye; Kohn Foundation; Mr and Mrs Paul Morgan



The Welsh '*hiraeth*' does not translate easily into English. It is a word that speaks of homesickness; but deeper than that, it is a longing for home that is imbued with a sense of loss; of grief for something that cannot be re-found or returned. Christopher Palmer suggests that this sense of a great loss 'lies at the root of all Celtic mysticism and wonder'. In the Celtic lands of Ireland, Wales and Scotland, this is perhaps born of the oppressions that have been put upon these places and people, notably in Ireland where, amongst other things, British rule suppressed the Gaelic tongue, leading to the loss of the words of many Gaelic songs, words that the surviving tunes can only hint at.

Within these British Isles, many left their Celtic homelands in order to move to England for the sake of their careers, whether to study or to work; some temporarily, some permanently. In their way, they became exiles. But in those careers, the influence of some of these figures on British music cannot be underestimated, both in their own times and after. There are few composers of the early 20th Century that did not study composition with Charles Stanford and harmony and counterpoint with Charles Wood at the Royal College of Music (RCM). These two Irishmen nurtured the greater part of a generation of British composers, including many of the most notable names in 20th-century British music.

Originally from Dublin, **Stanford** studied at Cambridge and in Germany, before returning to Cambridge as organist of Trinity College. In 1882, he became one of the founding professors of the RCM, where he would teach for the rest of his life. In this exile, Ireland remained a strong source of inspiration, Stanford producing several *Irish Rhapsodies* for orchestra, an 'Irish' symphony, and many songs to Irish poets and that speak of his home. 'Back to Ireland' sets words by Moira O'Neill, the pseudonym of Agnes Skrine, who started writing poems inspired by her native County Antrim when she herself was exiled in Canada. Two further settings of O'Neill appear elsewhere in this recital: 'Lookin' Back' by **Hamilton Harty**, who left Ireland to pursue a career as a conductor, notably of the Hallé orchestra; and **Charles Wood**'s 'Denny's Daughter'. We remain in Ireland for **Dorothy Parke**'s 'Song in Exile', in which we visit the Antrim hills, and for **Philip Hammond**'s 'The Blackbird's Poet'. Commissioned for the 2018 Ludlow Weekend, Hammond sets words by Francis Ledwidge, who was killed at Passchendaele in 1917. Hammond sought to pay tribute to Ledwidge, to 'the innocently naïve beauty of his poetry, his soft blend of Irish nationalism and his fascination with the song of the blackbird, all set against the backdrop of the political upheaval of Ireland and Europe a hundred years ago.'

The cry of the curlew has, in poetry - notably in the work of WB Yeats - become emblematic of the sense of loss that is bound up with *hiraeth*. Welsh composer

**Dilys Elwyn-Edwards**'s song about the curlew, 'Y Gylfinir', composed in 1962 in answer to a BBC commission, perhaps makes some allusion to the curlew's song.

Like Elwyn-Edwards, Ulster composer **Joan Trimble** studied at the RCM with Herbert Howells - Stanford's declared 'son in music'. Trimble is notable for having been the first composer to be commissioned to write an opera for BBC television, in 1957. The two songs in this programme were composed in 1937, during her studies at the RCM, where she would later teach piano.

Commissioned for the Ludlow English Song Weekend, **Rhian Samuel**'s new 'Summer's Leave' sets a poem by Emily Dickinson, which Samuel describes as 'both intense and nostalgic'. She writes, 'My setting employs two related melodies: the first is the viola's and begins the work; it recurs throughout. The second is the singer's and is heard at the words, 'The dusk drew earlier in', though the viola echoes it later. At the close, the poem's climax, 'into the Beautiful', is extended as if it may never be let go.

In the 1920s, there arose something of a Scottish renaissance. The major poet of the movement was Hugh MacDiarmid, who sought to revive the Scots language and reinvigorate the native poetry. At school, his English teacher was **Francis George Scott**, a composer who would go on to work with his pupil, as an ally in the Scots revival and in setting poems by MacDiarmid. In the atmospheric disquietude of Scott and MacDiarmid's 'Hungry Waters' we meet the auld men of the sea, who are constantly eating away at the land's edges. Scott's 'Ay waukin', O', setting Robert Burns, is a more traditional ballad-like song, while the playful 'The Wee Man' declares that a small man would just never do!

**Judith Weir**'s 1982 cycle of adaptations of Scottish folk ballads, *Scotch Minstrelsy*, recounts tales that portray 'violent happenings which take place against a background of the Scottish countryside'. Here, 'Bessie Bell and Mary Gray' build themselves a tower to avoid an outbreak of plague, but they eventually succumb regardless; and in the second, an Elf-knight comes to claim the life of a princess, only for her to turn his own blade against him.

In **Jonathan Nangle**'s setting of poet Nuala Ní Chonchúir's 'Snáth' ('Yarn'), part of a 2019 commission for the Irish Language Art Song project, a thread is used to guide one who is lost through their 'dark places' and towards the singer, into the light. The threads are woven in Yeats's 'The Cloths of Heaven', set by Dilys Elwyn-Edwards. We end with one of those two Irish exiles who gave so much to British music, Charles Wood, before closing with the Welsh folksong, 'Ar Hyd y Nos'.

© Philip Lancaster 2022

*Reproduction and distribution is strictly prohibited.*

**Charles Villiers Stanford** (1852-1924)

**Back to Ireland from *An Irish Idyll in 6***

**Miniatures Op. 77** (1901)

*Moira O'Neill*

Oh tell me, will I ever win to Ireland again,  
Astore! from the far North-West?  
Have we given all the rainbows, an' the green woods an'  
rain,  
For the suns and the snows o' the West?  
'Them that goes to Ireland must thtravel night an' day,  
An' them that goes to Ireland must sail across the say,  
For the len'th of here to Ireland is half the world away –  
An' you'll leave your heart behind you in the West.  
Set your face for Ireland,  
Kiss your friends in Ireland,  
But lave your heart behind you in the West.'

On a dim an' shiny mornin' the ship she comes to land,  
Early, oh, early in the mornin',  
The silver wathers o' the Foyle go slidin' to the strand,  
Whisperin' 'Ye're welcome in the mornin'.  
There's darkness on the holy hills I know are close aroun',  
But the stars are shinin' up the sky, the stars are shinin'  
down,  
They make a golden cross above, they make a golden  
crown,  
An' meself could tell you why, - in the mornin',  
Sure an' this is Ireland,  
Thank God for Ireland!  
I'm coming back to Ireland the morning'.

**Dorothy Parke** (1904-1990)

**Song in Exile** (pub. 1939)

*John Irvine*

There are golden whins on Trostan,  
There are hawthorns in Glendun,  
And sward thro' the lonely glens  
The wild Spring waters run.

A thousand thrushes sing there  
As they have ever sung,  
And kindly men who work the fields  
Were lads when I was young.

But I am far from Trostan  
In sunlight and in rain,  
Ah! the winds of Spring will come and go  
Ere I be there again.

**Hamilton Harty** (1879-1941)

**Lookin' Back from *6 Songs of Ireland Op. 18***

(1908)

*Moira O'Neill*

Wathers o' Moyle an' the white gulls flyin',  
Since I was near ye what have I seen?  
Deep great seas, an' a sthrong wind sighin'  
Night an' day where the waves are green.  
Struth na Moile the wind goes sighin'  
Over a waste o' wathers green.

Slemish an' Trostan, dark wi' heather,  
High are the Rockies, airy-blue;  
Sure ye have snows in the winter weather,  
Here they're lyin' the long year through.  
Snows are fair in the summer weather,  
Och, an' the shadows between are blue!

Lone Glen Dun an' the wild glen flow'rs,  
Little ye know if the prairie is sweet.  
Roses for miles, an' redder than ours  
Spring here undher the horses' feet,  
Ay, an' the black-eyed gold sunflowers —  
Not as the glen flow'rs small an' sweet.

Wathers o' Moyle, I hear ye callin'  
Clearer for half o' the world between,  
Antrim hills an' the wet rain fallin'  
Whiles ye are nearer than snow-tops keen:  
Dreams o' the night an' a night wind callin' —  
What is the half o' the world between?

---

*Texts continue overleaf*

## Philip Hammond (b.1951)

### The Blackbird's Poet (2018)

*Francis Ledwidge*

Three syllables of melody dropped from a blackbird's flute,  
And died apart far in the dewy dark.

No more but three yet sweeter music never touched a  
heart.

The golden bees go buzzing, buzzing, buzzing down to  
stain the lilies frills,  
And the blue harebell rings and rings and rings,  
And the sweet blackbird in the rainbow sings and sings  
and sings...

Wondrous, impudently sweet,  
Half of him passion, half conceit.

I hear him,  
And I feel the lure drawing me back, back to the homely  
moor.

The blackbird blows his yellow flute so strong  
And rolls away the notes in careless glee,  
It breaks the rhythm of the thrushes' song  
And puts red shame upon his rivalry...

When the clouds shake their hyssops  
And the rain like holy water falls upon the plain,  
'Tis sweet to gaze upon the springing grain and see your  
harvest born.

And sweet the little breeze of melody  
The blackbird puffs upon the budding tree,  
While the wild poppy lights upon the lea  
And blazes 'mid the corn.

Slowly, slowly fall, O golden sands,  
And let me sing, and sing, and sing,  
Wrapt in the extrasy of youth,  
The wild delights of Spring.

When blackbirds hide their flutes and cower and die,  
When swollen rivers lose themselves and stray beneath a  
murky sky;

Then doth the poet's voice like cuckoo's break,  
And round his verse the hungry lapwing grieves,  
And melancholy in his dreary wake the funeral of the  
leaves.

I'll wander thro' the moonpale solitude that calls across the  
intervening night

With river voices at their utmost height,  
Sweet as rainwater in the blackbird's flute  
That strikes the world in admiration mute.

---

## Dilys Elwyn-Edwards (1918-2012)

### Y Gylfinir from Caneuon y Tri Aderyn (1962)

*Robert Williams Parry*

Dy alwad glywir hanner dydd  
Fel ffiwt hyfrydlais uwch y  
rhos  
Fel chwiban bugail a fo  
gudd  
Dy alwad glywir hanner  
nos;  
Nes clywir, pan ddwysa dy  
sun  
Cyfarth dy anweledig  
gun  
Dy braidd yw'r moel gymylau  
maith  
A'th barod gun yw'r pedwar  
gwynt  
Gorlanna'th ddiadelloedd  
llaith  
I'w gwasgar eilwaith ar eu hynt  
Yn yrr ddiorffwys, laes, ddifref  
Hyd lyfnion hafodlasau'r  
nef

### The Curlew from Songs of the Three Birds

Your call is heard at mid-day  
As a sweet-voiced flute  
above the moor  
As the whistle of an  
invisible shepherd  
Your call is heard at  
midnight  
Until one hears, as your  
sound intensifies  
The barking of your  
unseen dogs  
Your sheep are the  
boundless clouds  
Your ready dogs the four  
winds  
Penning your damp  
flocks  
To scatter them again  
A silent and restless herd  
Across the heavens'  
flowing meadows

## Joan Trimble (1915-2000)

### Green Rain (1938)

*Mary Webb*

Into the scented woods we'll go  
And see the blackthorn swim in snow.  
High above, in the budding leaves,  
A brooding dove awakes and grieves;

The glades with mingled music stir,  
And wildly laughs the woodpecker.  
When blackthorn petals pearl the breeze,  
There are the twisted hawthorn trees  
Thickset with buds, as clear and pale  
As golden water or green hail —

As if a storm of rain had stood  
Enchanted in the thorny wood,  
And, hearing fairy voices call,  
Hung poised, forgetting how to fall.

**Rhian Samuel** (b.1944)

**Summer's Leave** (2022) *world première*

*Emily Dickinson*

As imperceptibly as Grief  
The Summer lapsed away,  
Too imperceptibly at last  
To seem like Perfidy.  
A Quietness distilled  
As Twilight long begun,  
Or Nature spending with herself  
Sequestered Afternoon.  
The Dusk drew earlier in,  
The Morning foreign shone,  
A courteous, yet harrowing Grace,  
As Guest, that would be gone.  
And thus, without a Wing  
Or service of a Keel  
Our Summer made her light escape  
Into the Beautiful.

---

**Francis George Scott** (1880-1958)

**Hungry Waters** (1925)

*Hugh MacDiarmid*

The auld men o' the sea  
Wi' their daberlack hair  
Ha'e dacker'd the coasts  
O' the country fell sair.  
They gobble owre cas'les  
Chow mountains to san';  
Or lang they'll eat up  
The haill o' the lan'  
Lickin' their white lips  
An' yowlin' for mair,  
The auld men o' the sea  
We' their daberlack hair.

**Judith Weir** (b.1954)

**From *Scotch Minstrelsy*** (1982)

**Bessie Bell and Mary Gray**

*Traditional*

(To avoid an outbreak of the plague in Perth in 1645, these two ladies built themselves a bower by the banks of the River Almond; but the plague eventually spread even to this remote region, and they succumbed to it.)

Bessie Bell and Mary Gray  
They were two bonny lasses,  
They biggit a bow'r on the banks of the river,  
And theekit it over with rashes, O!

They theekit it over with rashes green,  
They theekit it over with heather;  
The plague came into the river bank,  
And slew them both together.

**Lady Isobel and the Elf-Knight**

*Traditional*

Fair Lady Isobel sits in her bower sewing,  
There she heard the Elf-Knight blowing his horn.

'If I had yon horn that I hear blowing,  
And yon Elf-Knight to sleep in my bosom.'

The maiden had scarcely these words spoken,  
When in at her window the Elf-Knight has luppen.

'It's a very strange matter, fair maiden' said he,  
'I canna blow my horn but ye call on me.

But will ye go to yon Greenwood side?  
If ye canna gaing, I will cause you to ride'.

He leapt on a horse and she on another,  
And they rode on to the greenwood together.

'Light down, light down, fair lady Isobel', said he,  
'We are come to the place where you are to die'.

'Have mercy, have mercy kind sir on me,  
Till once my dear father and mother I see'.

'Seven king's daughters here have I slain,  
And you shall be the eighth of them'.

'O sit down a while, rest your head upon my knee,  
That we may have some rest before I die'.

She stroked him so softly the nearer he did creep;  
With a small secret charm she lulled him fast asleep.

With his own sword belt so softly she bound him;  
With his own dagger so softly she killed him.

---

*Texts continue overleaf*

## Francis George Scott (1880-1958)

### Ay waukin, O (1922)

Robert Burns

Simmer's a pleasant time,  
Flow'rs of ev'ry colour;  
The water rins o'er the heugh,  
And I long for my true lover!

Ay waukin, O  
Waukin still and weary:  
sleep I can get nane,  
For thinking on my Dearie.

When I sleep I dream,  
When I walk I'm irie;  
Sleep I can get nane  
for thinking on my Dearie.

Lanely night comes on,  
A' the lave are sleepin:  
I think on my bony lad  
And I bleer my een wi' greetin.

## Jonathan Nangle (b.1981)

### Snáth from Snáth (2019) Yarn from Yarn

Nuala Ní Chonchúir

Is mise	Let me be
D'Ariadne,	your Ariadne,
Lig dom,	my fingers fixed
Le mo mhéara,	to one end
An snáth	of an untwining
I do lámh	ball of yarn
A scaoileadh.	that your hands hold.
Treoirfidh mé	I will guide you
Thú, trí do	through the labyrinth,
Chathair ghríobháin,	tunnels, all of your
Trí na tolláin,	dark places,
Gach áit dhorcha,	pulling you safe
Is beidh tú slán liomsa	towards me
Faoin tsolas.	and the light.

## Dilys Elwyn-Edwards (1918-2012)

### The Cloths of Heaven (1991)

WB Yeats

Had I the heavens' embroidered cloths  
Enwrought with golden and silver light  
The blue and the dim and the dark cloths  
Of night and light and the half-light,

I would spread the cloths under your feet:  
But I, being poor, have only my dreams;

I have spread my dreams under your feet;  
Tread softly because you tread on my dreams.

## Joan Trimble (1915-2000)

### Girl's Song (1937)

Wilfrid Gibson

I saw three black pigs riding  
In a blue and yellow cart;  
Three black pigs riding to the fair  
Behind the old grey dappled mare,  
But it wasn't black pigs riding  
In a gay and gaudy cart  
That sent me into hiding  
With a flutter in my heart.

I heard the cart returning,  
The jolting jingling cart;  
Returning empty from from the fair  
Behind the old jogtrotting mare  
But it wasn't the returning  
Of a clatt'ring empty cart,  
That sent the hot blood burning  
And throbbing thro' my heart.

## Francis George Scott (1880-1958)

### The Wee Man (1931)

Translated from Auvergnat by Willa Muir

I dinna want a wee man,  
I winn ha'e a wee man, he wadna dae ava!  
If I set him at the table,  
The cock would come and peck at him, and peck him clean  
awa'!  
If I set him in the garden,  
The pig wad come and grumph him, and grumph him cean  
awa'!  
If I set him on a hillside,  
The stanes wad fa' upon him, and knock him clean awa'.  
If I set him at the waterside,  
The tide wad rise, and catch at him, and wash him clean  
awa'!  
O, I dinna want a wee man,  
I winna ha'e a wee man, he wadna dae ava'!

## Charles Wood (1866-1926)

### Denny's Daughter (1927)

Moira O'Neill

Denny's daughter stood a minute in the field I be to pass,  
All as quiet as her shadow lyin' by her on the grass;  
In her hand a switch o' hazel from the nut tree's crooked  
root,

Well I mind the crown o' clover crumpled undher one bare foot.

For the look of her,  
The look of her  
Comes back on me today, —  
Wi' the eyes of her,  
The eyes of her  
That took me on the way.

Though I seen poor Denny's daughter white an' stiff upon her bed,

Yet I be to think there's sunlight fallin' somewhere on her head:

She'll be singin' Ave Mary where the flowers never wilt,  
She, the girl my own hands covered wi' the narrow daisy-quilt.

For the love of her,  
The love of her  
That would not be my wife:  
An' the loss of her,  
The loss of her  
Has left me lone for life.

## Echo (1927)

*Christina Rossetti*

Come to me in the silence of the night;  
Come in the speaking silence of a dream;  
Come with soft rounded cheeks and eyes as bright  
As sunlight on a stream;  
Come back in tears,  
O memory, hope, love of finished years.

Oh dream how sweet, too sweet, too bitter sweet,  
Whose wakening should have been in Paradise,  
Where souls brimfull of love abide and meet;  
Where thirsting longing eyes  
Watch the slow door  
That opening, letting in, lets out no more.

Yet come to me in dreams, that I may live  
My very life again though cold in death:  
Come back to me in dreams, that I may give  
Pulse for pulse, breath for breath:  
Speak low, lean low,  
As long ago, my love, how long ago!

## Trad/Welsh

### Ar Hyd y Nos

arranged by Huw Watkins  
*Traditional*

Holl amrantau'r sêr ddywedant  
Ar hyd y nos  
'Dyma'r ffordd i fro  
gogoniant,'  
Ar hyd y nos.

### All Through the Night

All the stars' twinkles say  
all through the night,  
'This is the way to the  
realm of glory,'  
all through the night.

Golau arall yw tywyllwch  
I arddangos gwir brydferthwch  
Teulu'r nefoedd mewn  
tawelwch  
Ar hyd y nos.

O mor siriol, gwena'r  
seren  
Ar hyd y nos  
I oleuo'i chwaer ddaearen  
Ar hyd y nos.  
Nos yw henaint pan ddaw  
cystudd  
Ond i harddu dyn a'i  
hwyrddydd  
Rhow'n ein golau gwan i'n  
gilydd  
Ar hyd y nos.

Other light is darkness  
to show true beauty  
the Heavenly family in  
peace  
all through the night.

O, how cheerful smiles  
the star,  
all through the night,  
to light its earthly sister  
all through the night.  
Old age is night when  
affliction comes  
but to beautify man in his  
late days  
we'll put our weak light  
together  
all through the night.

*Stanford, Harty and 'Denny's Daughter' printed with permission from the owner of Moira O'Neill's estate. Nangle printed with permission from the author. 'Girl's Song' printed with permission from the Wilfrid Gibson Literary Estate.*