

To the Northeast

The choral music of John Buckley



divine art

Mornington Singers | Orla Flanagan, conductor

1	Music, When Soft Voices Die	3:21
2	To Sleep	4:06
3	Jabberwocky	4:42
	Five Two-Part Songs for Children	10:17
4	I. Suantraí (Lullaby)	3:04
5	II. Tá Cat Agam sa Bhaile (I Have a Cat at Home)	0:58
6	III. An Gairdín Álainn (The Beautiful Garden)	3:06
7	IV. Ceol Earraigh (Spring Music)	1:35
8	V. Sí Éire Ár d'Tír-se (Ireland is Our Country)	2:24
9	He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven	4:54
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11	I. Down by the Salley Gardens	2:32
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	Total duration:	59:29

Introduction by the composer

Compositions for choir constitute a significant aspect of my musical output and now span a period of forty-five years. Composed in 1973, the earliest choral work in my catalogue is *Auburn Elegy*, (not included here) a setting of selected lines from *The Deserted Village* by Oliver Goldsmith. It was first performed in the National Gallery of Ireland in August 1974, by the RTÉ Singers, joined by Val Keogh and Deirdre Brady (flutes), and Jacqueline Nolan (clarinet), and conducted by Proinnsias Ó Duinn. The most recent work is *Lux Aeterna* (included on this album), completed in December 2017 and first performed by Mornington Singers, under its conductor, Orla Flanagan, in the Chapel of Trinity College Dublin in February 2018. In the intervening period I have been fortunate to have had the opportunity to compose a wide array of both a cappella and accompanied choral works.

The composition of vocal or choral music differs from that of purely instrumental music in a number of significant ways. All elements of an instrumental composition, including the overall structure, have to be conceived and executed in the abstract. On the other hand, in a choral composition, the poem not only sets the mood and atmosphere but, equally importantly, gives a structural and formal shape to the work. The initial impetus is usually some form of musical element, such as a melodic motif, a harmonic sequence, or even something as vague as a choral texture. Once the piece is started, however, a choral composition is primarily an engagement with and response to the poem – an attempt to capture the character and nuance of the text in musical terms. This is simultaneously the greatest delight and the greatest challenge of composing any form of vocal or choral music.

In composing choral music, I constantly try to imagine how the music will appear and sound to the individual singer, particularly in relation to voice-leading and harmonic progressions. In contrast to instrumental music, where virtually any sequence of pitches can be performed, singers have to hear in advance, and find each note relative to its surrounding pitches (voice-leading). Harmonies likewise have to progress in a logical, audible, and singable manner. None of this is meant to suggest that choral music can't be or shouldn't be technically demanding. In virtually all the music in this programme, for example, there are constantly shifting tonal centres, a widespread use of chromatic movement and clusters, and widely spaced intervals.

The choice of texts in my choral music presented here has always been mine. The starting point for each work involves a prolonged period of reading, studying, sifting, occasionally translating, and selecting before deciding on the text. Many of the compositions are settings of lyrical poetry. Shelley's *Music, When Soft Voices Die* and Keats's *To Sleep* immediately suggest a musical response to their beauty of text and elegance of rhythm. Yeats's rapt contemplation of love and celestial dreams in *He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven* and Brontë's equally mesmeric treatment of light and dreams in *There Is a Spot Mid Barren Hills* have a mystical quality that suggest a richness of harmony, texture, and sonority.

With its serene and luminous central image, *Lux Aeterna* is one of the simplest choral pieces I have ever composed. Chords change slowly as a backdrop to the motif presented by the solo alto and soprano, and the textures are uncomplicated. To a great extent, the piece relies on the beauty and balance of sonority that only an excellent choir can produce.

By way of contrast, I am also drawn to the whimsical and humorous character in other works in this selection. Carroll's *Jabberwocky*, and *Kitty of Coleraine* from *Three Irish Folksongs* are choral equivalents of the type of scherzo, that I have frequently composed for instrumental ensembles. Along with *Five Two-Part Songs for Children*, these pieces are intended to provide a contrasting lightness of mood to the more contemplative works.

The final work on this recording, *To the Northeast*, lends its title to the album. This three-movement work, which was commissioned by Mornington Singers, is based on my translations of ninth-century Irish lyrics. Early Irish sagas and poetry have been an enduring source of inspiration throughout my work as a composer, and *To the Northeast* is the most recent work to emerge from this fascination. The freshness and vividness of detail in the observation of and reflection on the natural world are unsurpassed, and I have attempted to capture something of this essence in the musical settings.

It has been a privilege to collaborate with Mornington Singers and their conductor Orla Flanagan on this recording project. Mornington Singers have made and continue to make a sustained and outstanding contribution to the landscape of new choral music in Ireland and abroad. Our collaboration over an extended period has

included numerous performances and a newly commissioned work, and now culminates in this recording. The singers and their conductor are deeply committed to all the music they perform. Their performance style is marked by technical assurance allied to vibrant and profound musical understanding and interpretation. Above all, they create an extraordinary balance and beauty of choral sonority.

I am deeply grateful to Tim Goulding for his kind permission to use his spectacularly beautiful image *Quintet 2* for the artwork on this booklet.

The Music

1 Music, When Soft Voices Die (1984)

This posthumously-published, brief, and exquisite poem by Percy Bysshe Shelley (1792–1822) is already imbued with extraordinary musical qualities in its lyrical flow of images, words, and sonorities. In this setting for five-part choir, I have attempted to capture something of the evocative and haunting beauty of the words. The style of composition owes a debt to the sixteenth- and seventeenth-century madrigalists, whose clarity and directness of expression have been a source of inspiration. While the harmonic language of the piece is broadly tonal in character, it also encompasses significant chromatic passages. The poetic images of resonance and memory are reflected in the music, which emphasises certain words — *music, memory, live, dead, gone* — and, in particular, provides a lingering meditation on the final words *slumber on*.

Music, When Soft Voices Die was written in 1984 for Cois Cladaigh Choir, and was first performed by this ensemble in Galway in February 1985. It is dedicated to the choir's conductor, Brendan O'Connor.

2 To Sleep (1983; revised 2017)

The contemplation on sleep by John Keats (1795–1821) is one of the greatest sonnets in the English language and it has held a spell over me since I first encountered it as a teenager in the 1960s. The soporific resonance of the individual words — *embalmer, shutting, gloom-pleased, embowered, enshaded, forgetfulness, lulling, deftly, hushed, soul* — combines to give what Poet Laureate Andrew Motion refers to as the 'delicious

drowsiness of the lines'. By contrast, the dramatic eruption of lines 9–12 offers almost operatic possibilities to the composer setting the text, and I have treated this section in a declamatory manner. The piece concludes calmly and with a sense of deep resignation on the line *And seal the hushed casket of my soul*.

To Sleep was first performed in November 1983 in Christ Church Cathedral, Dublin by the Eric Sweeney Singers, conductor Eric Sweeney, for whom the work was written.

3 Jabberwocky (1996; revised 2012)

The poem *Jabberwocky* first appeared in full in *Through the Looking-Glass, and What Alice Found There* (1871), the sequel to *Alice in Wonderland* by Lewis Carroll (1832–1898). *Jabberwocky* is noted in particular for its employment of invented words: the first stanza alone includes *brillig*, *slithy*, *toves*, *gyre*, *gimble*, *wabe*, *mimsy*, *borogoves*, *mome*, *raths* and *outgrabe*. This lexicon of ambiguous linguistic virtuosity makes little sense to Alice, although Humpty Dumpty makes a valiant if eccentric effort at interpretation for her in Chapter VI: *brillig* is contrived to mean *four o' clock in the afternoon* – the time when you begin *broiling things for dinner*. Despite the strange vocabulary, the poem otherwise seems to make perfect sense, as it adheres strictly to standard syntax and rhyming schemes.

In attempting to capture the shifting characterisation of the poem, the musical setting employs a wide range of choral textures including counterpoint, homophonic block chords, and a type of recitative for the dialogue. *Jabberwocky* was commissioned with financial assistance from the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon by Cantairí Avondale, conductor Mary O'Flynn. It was first performed by them in May 1996 at the Cork International Choral Festival.

4-8 Five Two-Part Songs for Children (1978)

- I Suantraí (Lullaby)
- II Tá Cat Agam Sa Bhaile (I Have a Cat at Home)
- III An Gairdín Álainn (The Beautiful Garden)
- IV Ceol Earraigh (Spring Music)
- V Sí Éire Ár d'Tír-se (Ireland is Our Country)

Five Two-Part Songs for Children was composed in 1978 for the choir of the Holy Spirit Girls Primary School in Ballymun, Dublin and is dedicated to its director, Mary O'Flynn.

The poems were written in Irish especially for these songs by Michael Hartnett (1941–1999), one of the foremost Irish poets of the twentieth century. To my knowledge they have not been published elsewhere. They display a combination of humour and lyricism in Hartnett's beautifully simple, evocative, and mellifluous use of the Irish language. The musical settings are all for two-part choir, and range in character from the reflective to the humorous and light-hearted. The songs are performed in Irish (as Gaeilge) in this recording.

9 He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven (1995; revised 2017)

He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven was published by William Butler Yeats (1865–1937) in his third volume of poetry, *The Wind Among the Reeds* (1899). This volume served as a culmination of his Celtic Twilight period and an opening to broader European influences, in particular the symbolist aesthetic of Verlaine, Mallarmé, and others. *He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven* is widely regarded as one of Yeats's most immediately accessible and lyrically appealing poems.

The musical setting attempts to capture something of the delicate and rarefied poetic imagery, with its mesmeric interweaving of light, colour, and dreams. The work, for five-part choir, was commissioned with the financial assistance of The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon for the 33rd Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music, at the Cork International Choral Festival. It was first performed there in May 1996 by Cantique, conducted by Blánaid Murphy.

10 There Is a Spot Mid Barren Hills (1998; revised 2012)

Emily Brontë, (1818–1848) the world-famous author of *Wuthering Heights* also created a body of outstanding verse, placing her amongst the most eminent figures of English poetry. Her poetical works are marked by a visionary, emotionally charged, and transcendent quality. Her powers of imagination are frequently expressed through her elegiac and sombre contemplations of the natural world, as in her poem *Stanzas* (1838).

In *There Is a Spot Mid Barren Hills*, I have taken and reordered four verses from this poem. The selection and reordering are entirely for musical purposes; verses one and three begin in a somewhat bleak tone before warming to the dreamy imagery of the second and fourth verses. Musically, this contrast is reflected by the descending imitation (soprano, alto, tenor, bass) in counterpoint of verses one and three, which yields to a warm rich harmonic approach in verses two and four.

There Is a Spot Mid Barren Hills was written for the People's College Choir, Dublin and its conductor Paul Walsh. It was composed in 1998 to mark the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the College and is dedicated to its then president, Sheila Conroy.

11-13 Three Irish Folksongs (arranged 1983, revised 2010, 2017)

- I Down by the Salley Gardens
- II Kitty of Coleraine
- III My Lagan Love

The English composer Arnold Bax once commented that 'of all the countries in the world, Ireland possesses the most varied and beautiful folk music'. From the many thousands of available melodies, I chose three for this set: *Down by the Salley Gardens* for the simplicity and perfection of the melody and the appeal of Yeats's words, *Kitty of Coleraine* for its rhythmic élan and humorous text, and *My Lagan Love* for the extraordinary beauty of its modal melody and the wistful melancholy of its lyrics. *Down by the Salley Gardens* is a poem by William Butler Yeats (1865–1939), published in his first collection *The Wanderings of Oisín and Other Poems* (1889). Yeats indicated in a note that it was 'an attempt to reconstruct an old song imperfectly remembered from three lines by an old peasant woman who often sings them to herself in the village of Ballisodare, County Sligo'. The poem was subsequently matched to a much older and very beautiful air known as *The Maids of Mourne Shore*. In the choral arrangement on this album, the melody is shared by sopranos and tenors, and a number of descant parts are added to enrich the musical texture.

The jaunty melody of *Kitty of Coleraine* first appeared in print towards the beginning of the nineteenth century. It subsequently featured in arrangements by Thomas Moore and Beethoven (amongst others), though with entirely different words.

My arrangement is a rhythmically impelled version, utilising the syllabic possibilities of combining 'Beau-ti-ful Kit-ty' in myriad forms as an accompaniment to the melody.

The lyrics of *My Lagan Love*, published in 1904, are by the Irish poet Joseph Campbell (1879–1944). The original title of the ballad was *The Belfast Maid*, the Lagan being the river on which Belfast is built. The hauntingly evocative melody has a muted, wistful and introspective character. My arrangement tries to capture something of the rapt contemplation of the words and melody. The incorporation of soprano and alto soloists in the final verse are intended as a reflective commentary on the theme of Campbell's poem.

These arrangements of *Three Irish Folksongs* were originally made for choir and piano in 1983 and first performed in 1984 by the choir of the Waterford Regional Technical College (now the Waterford Institute of Technology), with Eric Sweeney as pianist and conducted by Patrick Kennedy. These versions for unaccompanied choir were made in 2010 (*Down by the Salley Gardens*) and 2017 (*Kitty of Coleraine, My Lagan Love*).

14 Lux Aeterna (2017)

The concept of light has been an abiding concern and source of inspiration throughout my work as a composer. This has led to a series of instrumental works, including *In Lines of Dazzling Light* (1995) for ensemble, *A Mirror into the Light* (1999) for orchestra, and *In Winter Light* (2004) for alto flute and guitar. *Lux Aeterna* is, however, my first choral work to engage with this concept.

The text, with its glowing central image and mood of resignation and consolation, is taken from the communion antiphon of the Requiem Mass. I have sought to create a serene and luminous atmosphere throughout. It is written for four-part choir with soprano and alto solo parts. The four-note motif, first introduced by the alto soloist at the beginning, recurs throughout the piece against a gently moving harmonic web in the choral parts.

Lux Aeterna was first performed by Mornington Singers, under their conductor Orla Flanagan in the Chapel of Trinity College Dublin in February 2018.

15-17 To the Northeast (Sair fo Thúaid) (2016)

- I To the Northeast
- II On the Plain of Lir
- III Harbour Song

Ninth-century Irish lyrics are characterised by perfection of form, precision of language, and richness of imagery. They are frequently meditative in tone, reflecting on the marvels of nature: land, sea, wind, animals, birds, fish. With an extraordinary freshness of approach, they evoke striking images, which have lost none of their immediacy with the passage of time; the winds still awaken the spirit of the waves, cascades of fish can still remind us of flights of birds, and seals are still joyous and noble.

My translations used in *To the Northeast* do not attempt the impossible task of retaining the miraculous rhymes and rhythms of the original. I have, however, remained faithful to the literal meaning and have used the fewest number of words possible to convey this meaning. I have not tried to modernise such obscure and almost mystical terms as *elechdúain* – literally 'swan-haunted' poem or song, or *crann n-gréine* – the sun tree.

The musical settings constitute a meditation on the poems and the imagery which lies behind them. In the title movement, *To the Northeast (Sair fo Thúaid)*, the choir is requested to sing in a spacious and mysterious manner as if gazing out to sea. The Plain of Lir in the second movement refers to the ocean (Lir and his son Manannán Mac Lir are sea deities in Celtic mythology). The four-part symmetrical division of the lyric – east wind, north wind, west wind, south wind – is reflected in the music. For the final movement, *Harbour Song (Portach Laid)*, the choir is subdivided into eight parts. Each line of the lyric is sung in unison by different sections of the choir in turn and commented on by the full choir, which rotates through all twelve minor keys.

To the Northeast was commissioned by Mornington Singers with the financial assistance of The Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon. It was composed between the beginning of May and the end of August 2016, with approximately equal time devoted to the text and the music. The work is dedicated to Mornington Singers and their conductor Orla Flanagan and received its first performance in May 2017 in St Ann's Church, Dawson St, Dublin.

The Texts

1. Music, When Soft Voices Die

Music, when soft voices die,
Vibrates in the memory –
Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
Live within the sense they quicken.

Rose leaves, when the rose is dead,
Are heaped for the beloved's bed;
And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
Love itself shall slumber on.

Percy Bysshe Shelley (1824)

2. To Sleep

O soft embalmer of the still midnight,
Shutting, with careful fingers and benign,
Our gloom-pleased eyes, embowered from
the light,
Enshaded in forgetfulness divine;
O soothest Sleep! If so it please thee, close,
In midst of this thine hymn, my willing
eyes,

Or wait the amen, ere thy poppy throws
Around my bed its lulling charities;
Then save me, or the passed day will shine
Upon my pillow, breeding many woes;
Save me from curious conscience, that still
lords

Its strength for darkness, burrowing like a
mole;

Turn the key deftly in the oiled wards,
And seal the hushed casket of my soul.

John Keats (1819)

3. Jabberwocky

'Twas brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

"Beware the Jabberwock, my son!
The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!
Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun
The frumious Bandersnatch!"

He took his vorpal sword in hand:
Long time the manxome foe he sought –
So rested he by the Tumtum tree,
And stood awhile in thought.

And, as in uffish thought he stood,
The Jabberwock, with eyes of flame,
Came whiffing through the tulgey wood
And burbled as it came!

One, two! One, two!
And through and through
The vorpal blade went snicker-snack!
He left it dead, and with its head
He went galumphing back.

"And hast thou slain the Jabberwock?
Come to my arms, my beamish boy!
O frabjous day! Callooh! Callay!"
He chortled in his joy.

'Twas brillig and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:
All mimsy were the borogoves,
And the mome raths outgrabe.

Lewis Carroll (1871)

*(From Through the Looking-Glass and
What Alice Found There)*

4. Suantraí

Curfá

Seoithín seó, ui leó leó;
Seoithín seó mo leanbh,
Seoithín seó, ui leó leó;
Seoithín seó mo leanbh.

Codail go sámh

A ghrá gheal mo chroí.

Tá'n oíche ag teacht
's an ghrian 'na luí.

Codail go lá,

Mo stóirín geal féin.

Tá'n londubh gan cheol
's níl spideog san spéir.

Codail go ciúin

Mo mhuirín beag féin

Tá réaltóga bána

Go hárd san spear

Codail go sámh

A ghrá gheal mo chroí.

Tá'n oíche ag teacht
's an ghrian 'na luí.

5. Tá Cat Agam sa Bhaile

Tá cat agam sa bhaile,

Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,

Daidh del, daidh del dé.

Tá cat agam sa bhaile,

Is é 'na luí cois falla,

Is bíonn an luch á mhagadh,

Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,

Daidh del, daidh del dé.

4. Lullaby

Chorus

Seoithín seó, ui leó leó;
Seoithín seó my child,
Seoithín seó, ui leó leó;
Seoithín seó my child.

Sleep soundly

Bright love of my heart.

The night is coming
And the sun is at rest.

Sleep until dawn

My own bright treasure.

The blackbird is quiet
And no robin is in the sky.

Sleep quietly,

My own little dear.

White stars

Are high in the sky.

Sleep soundly

Bright love of my heart.

The night is coming
And the sun is at rest.

5. I Have a Cat at Home

I have a cat at home,

Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,

Daidh del, daidh del dé.

I have a cat at home,

He lies beside the wall,

And the mouse mocks him,

Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,

Daidh del, daidh del dé.

Tá madra ag an máistir,
Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,
Daidh del, daidh del dé.
Tá madra ag an máistir,
's bíonn sé ag ithe pratá,
Bíonn francach a'damhsa láimh leis,
Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,
Daidh del, daidh del dé.

Tá bata ag an máistir,
Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,
Daidh del, daidh del dé.

Tá bata ag an máistir,
's nuair thógann sé 'na láimh é
Ba mhaith linn bheith as láthair,
Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,
Daidh del, daidh del dé.

6. An Gairdín Álainn

Gairdín álainn, bláth ag fás ann
Séideann gaoth air, téann sé as,
Tagann an sneachta
'na bhán-braitlín,
Clúdach fuar ar gach rud glas,
Ar gach rud glas.

Gairdín álainn, sioc is bás ann,
Feadaíl éin ann níl le clos,
Tagann an toirneach, carsán 'na scórnaigh,
Scamall dubh ar thall 's abhus,
Ar thall 's abhus.

Gairdín álainn, báisteach chaoín air,
Bogtar cré ann, dúistear an préamh,
Tagann an dea-cheol,
Ó bheola na n-éanlaith,
's maidhmeanna blátha ar gach taobh ann,
Ar gach taobh ann.

The master has a dog,
Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,
Daidh del, daidh del dé.
The master has a dog,
And he eats potatoes,
A rat dances with him,
Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,
Daidh del, daidh del dé.

The master has a stick,
Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,
Daidh del, daidh del dé.

The master has a stick,
And when he takes it in his hand
We'd like to be absent.
Daidh del dé, daidh del dé,
Daidh del, daidh del dé.

6. The Beautiful Garden

A beautiful garden, flowers growing there,
A wind blows on it and goes,
The snow comes
In a white mantle,
A cold cover on every green thing,
On every green thing.

A beautiful garden, frost and death there,
The whistling of birds is not heard there,
The thunder comes with a hoarse throat,
A black cloud here and there,
Here and there.

A beautiful garden, gentle rain on it,
The clay softens, the root is awakened,
Sweet music comes,
From the mouths of the birds,
And bursts of flowers on all sides there,
On all sides there.

7. Ceol Earraigh

Cú-cú na cuaiche, cú, cú, cú,
Ag eitilt go hard chun nead a aimsiú.
Cú-cú na cuaiche, cú, cú, cú.

Píb-píb na néanlaith, píb, píb, píb,
Á cháineadh go dána ar ghéag an chrainn.
Píb-píb na n-éanlaith, píb, píb, píb.

Cá-cá na bpréachán, cá, cá, cá,
Ag alpadh siar na síolta san mháig.
Cá-cá na bpréachán, cá, cá, cá.

Búm-búm an ghunna, búm, búm, búm,
Scaiptear na héin go léir san spéir.
Búm-búm an ghun-na, búm, búm, búm.

8. Sí Éire Ár d'Tír-se

Sí Éire ár d'tír-se, Éire cheolmhar,
Nead ár mhuintire, luibh ár ndóchais.
Éire cnéasta, ársa, ghlórmhar,
Éire éigseach, laochmhar, ghleoite.

Éire, Éire, Malainn go Béara,
Tuaisceart, deisceart, cathair is tuath.
Éire, Éire, máthair na Gaeilge,
Muintir na hÉireann, aontaigh go dlúth.

Michael Hartnett (1978)

7. Spring Music

Koo-koo of the cuckoo, koo, koo, koo
Flying high to find a nest.
Koo-koo of the cuckoo, koo, koo, koo.

Pip-pip of the birds, pip, pip, pip,
Complaining boldly on the branch of a tree.
Pip-pip of the birds, pip, pip, pip.

Caw-caw of the crows, caw, caw, caw,
Devouring the seeds in the field.
Caw-caw of the crows, caw, caw, caw.

Boom-boom of the gun, boom, boom, boom,
All the birds are scattered in the sky.
Boom-boom of the gun, boom, boom, boom.

8. Ireland Is Our Country

Ireland is our country, musical Ireland,
Home of our family, source of our hope.
Lovely, ancient, glorious Ireland,
Poetic, heroic, delightful Ireland.

Ireland, Ireland, Malin to Beara,
North, south, city and country.
Ireland, Ireland, wellspring of Gaelic,
People of Ireland, unite as one.

Translation: John Buckley (2018)

9. He Wishes for the Cloths of Heaven

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.

William Butler Yeats, from The Wind Among the Reeds (1899)

10. There is a Spot Mid Barren Hills

There is a spot mid barren hills
Where winter howls and driving rain,
But if the dreary tempest chills
There is a light that warms again.

A little and a lone green lane,
That opened on a common wide;
A distant, dreamy, dim blue chain
Of mountains circling every side.

The house is old, the trees are bare
And moonless bends the misty dome
But what on earth is half so dear,
So longed for as the hearth of home?

A heaven so clear, an earth so calm,
So sweet, so soft, so hushed an air
And, deepening still the dream-like charm,
Wild moor-sheep feeding everywhere.

Emily Brontë (1838)
from *Stanzas*

11. Down by the Salley Gardens

Down by the salley gardens my love and I did
meet;

She passed the salley gardens with little snow-
white feet.

She bid me take love easy, as the leaves grow
on the tree;

But I, being young and foolish, with her would
not agree.

In a field by the river my love and I did stand,
And on my leaning shoulder she laid her snow-
white hand.

She bid me take life easy, as the grass grows on
the weirs;

But I was young and foolish, and now am full of
tears.

12. Kitty of Coleraine

As beautiful Kitty one morning was tripping,
With a pitcher of milk from the fair of
Coleraine,

When she saw me she stumbled, the pitcher
it tumbled,

And all the sweet buttermilk watered the
plain.

"Oh! what shall I do now? 'twas looking at
you now!

For sure such a pitcher I'll ne'er meet
again!"

'Twas the pride of my dairy, oh Barney
McCleary,

You're sent as a plague to the girls of
Coleraine.

I sat down beside her and gently did chide her,
That such a misfortune should give her such
pain;

A kiss then I gave her, and ere I did leave her,
She vowed for such pleasure, she'd break it
again.

'Twas haymaking season, I can't tell the reason,
Misfortune will never come single, 'tis plain;
For very soon after poor Kitty's disaster,
The devil a pitcher was whole in Coleraine.

13. My Lagan Love

Where Lagan stream sings lullaby,
There blows a lily fair.

The twilight gleam is in her eye,
The night is on her hair.

And like a love-sick lennan-shee,
She has my heart in thrall;
Nor life I own, nor liberty,
For love is lord of all.

And often when the beetle's horn,
Hath lulled the eve to sleep,
I steal unto her shieling lorn,
And through the dooring peep.

14. Lux Aeterna

Lux aeterna luceat eis, Domine,
Cum sanctis tuis in aeternum,
Quia pius es.

Requiem aeternam
Dona eis, Domine,
Et lux perpetua luceat eis.

15. Sair fo Thúaid

Fégaíd úaib
Sair fo thúaid,
In muir múaid,
Mílach.

Adba rón,
Rebach, rán,
Ro-gab lán
Línad.
Fégaíd úaib
Sair fo thúaid.

There on the cricket's singing stone,
She spares the bogwood fire;
And hums in sad, sweet undertone,
The song of heart's desire.

Her welcome like her love for me,
Is from her heart within.
Her warm kiss is felicity,
That knows no taint of sin.
And, when I stir my foot to go,
'Tis leaving love and light;
To feel the wind of longing blow,
From out the dark of night.

14. Lux Aeterna

Eternal light shine upon them, O Lord,
With thy saints forever,
For you are gracious.

Eternal rest
Give them, O Lord
And let perpetual light shine upon them.

15. To the Northeast

Look
To the northeast,
Look to the mighty sea,
Abounding with life.

Abode of the seal,
Joyous, noble,
The flowing tide
Is full,
Look
To the northeast.

16. Ar Muig Lir

Ó do-chuir in gaith anair,
Menma tuinne tarcabair
Cu dúthracair dul torainn siar
Cosin fót fris funenn grían,
Cosin glais-muir n-garg-lethain.

Ó do-chuir an gaith atúaid,
Co dúthracair tuinn temen-crúaid
Co m-bad fri domun an-des,
Fri fithnem ro ferað tres,
Ró ésted fri elechdúain.

Ó do-chuir an gaith aníar,
Dar in sáile srebach-dían,
Co dúthracair dul torainn sair,
Co crann n-gréine coros gaib,
I muir lethan lebur-chían.

Ó do-chuir an gaith andes,
Dar tír Saxan sgiathbras,
Co m-benann tond Insi Scít,
Dorair do charr Calathnít.
Is lán Ler is lomnán muir.

17. Portach Laid

Íascach muir,
Mothach tír,
Tomaídm n-éisc,
Íasc fo tuind,
I reathaib én,
Fairrge cruaid.

Casar find
Cétaibh iach
Lethan míl,
Portach laid,
Tomaídm n-éisc,
Íascach muir.
Portach laid.

9th century Irish

16. On the Plain of Lir

When the wind is from the east,
The spirit of the wave awakens.
It rushes westwards past us
To where the sun sets,
To the broad green sea.

When the wind is from the north,
It drives the mighty wave
Towards the southern lands,
To the heavenly expanse,
To the swan-haunted song.

When the wind is from the west,
Across the surging sea,
It rushes eastwards past us,
Towards the sun tree,
Into the broad and distant sea.

When the wind is from the south,
Across the land of mighty Saxon shields,
The waves strike Skiddy Island,
Surging to the peak of Caladnet.
The plain of Lir is in full flood.

17. Harbour Song

Sea abounding in fish,
Bountiful land,
Cascades of fish,
Fish under wave,
Like a flight of birds,
In the hard ocean.

A bright flash,
Hundreds of salmon,
Broad as whales,
Harbour song,
Cascades of fish.
Sea abounding in fish.
Harbour song.

Translation: John Buckley

The Composer

Born in Templeglantine, Co. Limerick, in 1951, **John Buckley** studied flute with Doris Keogh and composition with James Wilson at the Royal Irish Academy of Music in Dublin. His subsequent composition studies were in Cardiff with the Welsh composer Alun Hoddinott, and with John Cage.

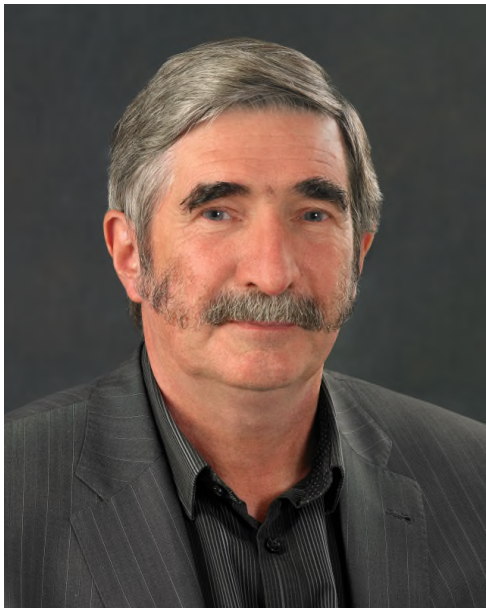
He has written a diverse range of work, from solo instruments to full orchestra. The list includes numerous commissions, amongst them *Concerto for Organ and Orchestra* and *Campane in Aria* for the National Concert Hall, *Rivers of Paradise* for the official opening of the Concert Hall at the University of Limerick, *Maynooth Te Deum* for the bicentenary of St. Patrick's College, Maynooth, and *A Mirror into the Light* for Camerata Ireland's inaugural concert, as well as many works for RTÉ.

John Buckley's catalogue now extends to over 110 works, which have been performed and broadcast in more than fifty countries worldwide. His compositions have represented Ireland on five occasions at the International Rostrum of Composers and at five ISCM festivals. Amongst his awards are the Varming Prize (1977), the Macaulay Fellowship (1978), the Arts Council's Composers' Bursary (1982), and the Toonder Award (1991). In 1984 he was elected a member of Aosdána, Ireland's state-sponsored academy of creative artists. His music has been recorded on the Anew, Altarus, Black Box, Marco Polo, Lyric FM, Atoll, Celestial Harmonies, and Métier labels. He has made numerous broadcasts on music and music education for RTÉ and Lyric FM, and his compositions are available on over twenty commercial recordings.

He has been awarded both a PhD and a DMus by the National University of Ireland and was senior lecturer in music at St Patrick's College, Dublin City University, between 2001 and 2017. A monograph on his life and work, *Constellations: The Life and Music of John Buckley* by Benjamin Dwyer, was published in May 2011 by Carysfort Press.

Further information can be found at johnbuckleycomposer.com

**John
Buckley**





Mornington Singers in Arezzo

The Performers

Mornington Singers is an award-winning mixed-voice choir based in Dublin, Ireland and conducted by Orla Flanagan. Founded in 1997, the choir performs a broad range of choral music and specialises in a cappella repertoire, with a particular focus on music of the 20th and 21st centuries. Mornington Singers is committed to the promotion of choral music, including the commissioning of new pieces, public choral workshops, and outreach events. In addition to these activities and its regular concert schedule, the choir has sung in live performances of video game music, at Electric Picnic, on film soundtracks and television, and in concert with Andrea Bocelli, Lesley Garrett and David Puttnam. Competition performances have included Arezzo International Choral Competition, the Florilège Vocal de Tours, Maribor International Choral Competition and, closer to home, the international choral festivals of Cork, Derry and Sligo.

Soprano

Meike Beumers
Sharae Deckard
Áine Dunne
Katie Flanagan
Melissa Hardiman
Sherry Hazlett-Gallen
Gráinne Logue
Katie Maher
Clíodhna Ní Fhátharta
Kerri O'Connell
Aideen Rickard
Claudia Schacke
Emma-Jane Stoker-Phelan
Elaine Whitehouse
Raegnha Zutshi

Soloists

Lux Aeterna: Gráinne Logue (sop), Elaine Whitehouse (alto)
My Lagan Love: Katie Maher (sop), Léan Ní Chuilleanáin (alto)

Alto

Róisín Blunnie
Fiona Cullen
Fionnuala Dillane
Sinéad Fay
Clodagh Merry
Daniela Migrová
Léan Ní Chuilleanáin
Nicola O'Donoghue
Anna O'Herlihy

Tenor

Stephen Bond
Jonathan Bull
Ciarán Fennelly
Alexander Jolk
Doug Lane
Bob Linehan
John White

Bass

Adam Behan
Andrew Burrows
Lorcan Cosgrave
David Halpin
Eoin Howley
Robert Laird
Rupert Levene
Paul Mathison
Michael McCartan
Philip Shields

The Conductor

Orla Flanagan is Assistant Professor of Music at Trinity College, Dublin and has conducted Mornington Singers since 2002. She holds a B.A. in Music from Trinity College, Dublin, an Advanced Diploma from the Kodály Institute, Hungary, and a Doctorate of Music in Performance from the Royal Irish Academy of Music.

Winner of the McCurtain & McSwiney Award at the Cork Choral Festival's Fleischmann International Trophy Competition on multiple occasions, Orla was also awarded a special prize for interpretation at the 10th International Choral Competition, Maribor, Slovenia.

In addition to her work with Mornington Singers, Orla gives choral workshops, adjudicates at festivals in Ireland and internationally, and has conducted professional ensembles including Milltown Chamber Choir, EnsemBéal, and the National Chamber Choir of Ireland.



Orla Flanagan

Recorded at St John the Baptist Church of Ireland, Seafield Road, Clontarf, Dublin,
on April 13–15 and June 8–9, 2018

Sound Engineer: Chris Corrigan

Producers: Orla Flanagan, Chris Corrigan

Additional production: Mark Duley

Executive producer: John Buckley

Programme notes: John Buckley

Booklet and packaging design: Stephen Sutton (Divine Art)

Cover image: Tim Goulding *Quintet 2* (acrylic on canvas)

Photographic credits:

John Buckley: Edmund Ross Studios

Mornington Singers: Doug Lane

Orla Flanagan: Simon Trezise

Five Two-Part Songs for Children published by Cumann Náisiúnta na gCór

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Special thanks to Bob Linehan, Paul Mathison, Harry White, Pádraig Ó Liatháin,

Léan Ní Chuilleanáin, Rev. Lesley Robinson, Mark Duley, Tim Goulding

The producers gratefully acknowledge the generous support of Dublin City University
in the making of this recording.



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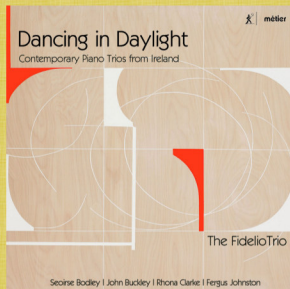
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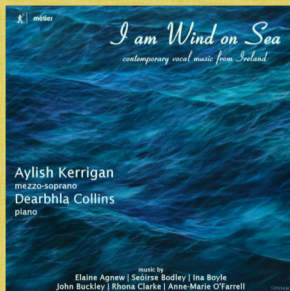


Piano Trio

With trios by 4 other Irish composers

The Fidelio Trio

'Dancing in Daylight' | Métier MSV 28556



I am Wind on Sea

With music by 5 other Irish composers

Aylish Kerrigan (mezzo-soprano)

Dearbhla Collins (piano)

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