

CONCERT PROGRAMME
MUSICAL CONNECTIONS - FROM BARTÓK TO MOERAN,
AND OSBORNE TO CHOPIN
TUESDAY 26 JULY 2011

60TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE



DUBLIN 2011

CONCERT PROGRAMME

18.30 Examination Hall, Trinity College, Dublin

Ferenc Szűcs cello
Una Hunt piano

Musical connections - from Bartók to Moeran, and Osborne to Chopin

This programme celebrates musical relationships between Ireland and the composers Béla Bartók and Fryderyk Chopin

Béla Bartók (1881-1945) Rhapsody No. 1 (1928)
Moderato - Allegretto moderato

Ernest J. Moeran (1894-1950) Sonata for cello and piano (1947)
Tempo moderato - Adagio - Allegro

Interval

George A. Osborne (1806-1893) Sonata for cello and piano (c1852)
Allegro moderato - Andante - Allegro

Fryderyk Chopin (1810-1849) Sonata for piano and cello op. 65 (1846)
Allegro moderato - Scherzo - Largo - Finale: Allegro

PROGRAMME NOTES

Bartók: Rhapsody No. 1

The music of Hungarian composer and pianist Béla Bartók (1881-1945) reflects two streams of modernism that had dramatically changed the sound of music in the early part of the twentieth century. Bartók was a central force in the breakdown of the diatonic system of harmony and the revival of nationalism as a source for musical inspiration. In his search for new forms of tonality Bartók turned to Hungarian folk music, as well as to other folk music of the Carpathian Basin and incorporated folk modes and irregular rhythmic patterns into his highly original scores. Through the collection and analytical study of folk music, he is regarded, along with Kodály, as one of the founders of ethnomusicology.

Bartók composed two Rhapsodies for violin and piano (there are also versions for violin and orchestra) in which he incorporated melodies, from Rumania, Hungary and the eastern Czech region. Written in 1928, Rhapsody No. 1 was dedicated to the Hungarian virtuoso violinist, Joseph Szigeti, who was a close friend of Bartók's. The cello and piano version to be heard this evening was completed in 1929. The piece consists of a pair of movements. The style and character derive from the Hungarian national dance, the Czardas, which alternates a slow section 'Lassú' and a fast one 'Friss'. The title, 'Rhapsody', which had been used earlier by Liszt, is a reference to the free structure and dramatic contrasts between the movements. The main theme of the first movement (Lassú) exhibits a certain Gypsy influence in its sharply dotted rhythms and exotic melodic lines and the second movement (Friss) is a brilliant procession of vibrant folk dance melodies demanding considerable feats of virtuosity from the performer.

Ferenc Szűcs, May 2011

E.J. Moeran: Sonata for cello and piano

Ernest John Moeran was born in Isleworth, Middlesex, the son of an Irish protestant clergyman, but he spent a sizeable portion of his youth on the Norfolk coast, where his father became Rector of the remote village of Bacton. Later in life, Norfolk and Ireland exerted their influence on Moeran and his music. He attended school at Uppingham where William Sterndale Bennett's grandson Robert was music master. It was here that Moeran began to compose followed by studies at the Royal College of Music with the Irish composer, Charles Villiers Stanford. On the outbreak of war, he became a despatch rider. The effects of a head wound suffered in 1917 remained with him to the end of his life and were almost certainly contributory to his early death.

The folk-song flavour permeating much of Moeran's music resulted from his interest in folk music collecting; this flourished when he was posted to Norfolk in his early years in the army. Subsequently, Moeran was drawn to Ireland which in later years became his permanent home. He often described the 'wild seaboards of Co Kerry' as the principal inspiration for his music. The composer died at Kenmare on 1 December 1950, falling from the pier into the estuary during a storm. The cause of death was given at the coroner's inquest as a cerebral haemorrhage suffered before falling into the water. He is buried in Kenmare, near the wild seascapes and the 'mountain country' he loved so well. Moeran married the cellist Peers Coetmore just a few years before his death, and she became the inspiration for his Cello Sonata, which remains his last large-scale work. The sonata has been described as a 'finely-wrought' work and is of unique character, full of brooding drama and pervasive movement and quite unlike anything else written by a British composer of the period.

G. A. Osborne: Sonata for cello and piano

George Alexander Osborne is a rather unfamiliar name. Despite the popularity of this pianist-composer's music during his lifetime, it is now quite forgotten. He was born in 1806 in Limerick where his father was cathedral organist at

St Mary's. Osborne left for Europe at the age of 18, travelling first to Brussels before settling in Paris. Here he studied with the renowned virtuoso, Kalkbrenner, and later became one of the finest exponents of Kalkbrenner's playing style in France. He met Fryderyk Chopin soon after the Pole's arrival in the city and they became close friends. Osborne was one of six pianists who performed at Chopin's Salle Pleyel debut recital in Paris in 1832. It is unlikely that their friendship remained as close after Osborne's move to London, in the late 1840s. However, Osborne recalled in detail a meeting with Chopin in Manchester on the latter's visit to England and Scotland in the year before his death.

The sonata for cello and piano in B flat major was the only work of its kind written by Osborne and in this respect parallels Chopin's cello sonata completed in 1846. While written c1852, Osborne's work was not published until 1876 and was further transcribed as a clarinet sonata in 1892. The most striking influence in the cello sonata is that of Schumann, whose music enjoyed universal popularity in England in the latter half of the nineteenth century. The opening movement is characterised by a refined, lyrical mood. The G minor second movement features exotic swaying phrases while the final rondo has a catchy, familiar-sounding air in gentle syncopation.

Chopin: Sonata for piano and cello op. 65

Chopin's cello sonata was written in the years 1845-1846, four years before his death. Its first complete performance in 1847, was given by the composer and his friend the cellist, Auguste Franchomme, to whom the work is dedicated. It was Liszt who had introduced Chopin to Franchomme many years earlier. Franchomme was a quiet, unassuming young man; they immediately liked one another and struck up a firm friendship which lasted for the remainder of Chopin's life.

Despite being written at a time when Chopin's powers were beginning to fail, the cello sonata represents a new departure, both in form and content. Chopin had not written anything for cello in well over 10 years. The previous work took the form

of a collaboration with Franchomme - a 'Grand Duo Concertante' with themes from Meyerbeer's *Robert le Diable*. But on that occasion, Franchomme had written most of the cello part. By the time he was working on the cello sonata, Chopin had developed a familiarity with the instrument through regular performances with Franchomme but still, his inspiration was drying up and he found it hard to finish the work. He wrote to his sister Ludwika: 'I write a little and cross out a lot... I throw it into a corner and then take it up again.'

Despite these worries, the finished work shows complete mastery of form. The first movement is mercurial, ranging from agitated to noble, and from the dramatic to the gentle. The structure is also unusual, for Chopin shortens the recapitulation of the opening movement, driving it onwards to the concluding chords. The lighter texture of the following Scherzo provides contrast despite using previous material. But, it is the *Largo* that provides the epicentre of the work, representing Chopin at his most memorable. The cello's wistful main idea, marked *cantabile* and *dolce*, sings gracefully above the piano's accompaniment, and grows to a climax before falling away to the quiet close. The vigorous *Finale* derives much of its energy from Chopin's contrast of triplet and dotted rhythms. A solemn march-like passage provides a measure of contrast before it draws to a close with the animated coda.

Una Hunt, June 2011



Ferenc Szűcs

Ferenc Szűcs is Senior Lecturer and Director of the MA programme in Classical String Performance at the Irish World Academy of Music and Dance at the University of Limerick.

Born in Hungary, he studied at the Béla Bartók Conservatoire and at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music in Budapest and won the prestigious Hungarian State Award for musical excellence, particularly for the interpretation of Bach.

He has performed in over 50 countries and has associations with numerous orchestras, ensembles and institutes worldwide. Ferenc has appeared as soloist in major concert halls and given master classes in Hungary, England, Ireland, Italy, China and the United States and has coached youth orchestras including the World Youth Orchestra, *Musica Europa*.

He was invited to join the Hungarian State Orchestra while still studying at the Liszt Academy. This was followed by his appointment as Principal Cellist with the BBC Symphony Orchestra in London. He played with many of the great conductors of our time including Solti, Doráti, Maazel, Wand, Haitink, Ozawa, Rozhdestvensky, Davis and Pritchard. He also performed a wide range of contemporary music working with composers such as Lutoslawski, Boulez, Messiaen, Tippett, Stockhausen, Xenakis, Birtwistle and Schnittke.

Ferenc Szűcs has been principal cellist with the London Festival Orchestra, the New Queens Hall Orchestra and the Oxford Orchestra of Camera. He also played as guest principal with the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, Philharmonia Orchestra, Royal Opera House Covent Garden, English National Opera, Mozart Festival Orchestra, National Symphony Orchestra, English Symphonia, Orchestra of St John's, London Mozart Players, Irish Chamber

Orchestra, National Arts Centre Orchestra in Canada and the Radio Symphony Orchestra in Holland.

He has been a member of various chamber groups and collaborations, currently Triantán Piano Trio. With the Fibonacci Sequence, the London Festival Ensemble and the New Queens Hall Quartet and the Bach Ensemble in Hungary he made radio broadcasts and recordings by Bach, Handel, Mendelssohn, Saint-Saëns, Elgar, Schubert and Damase for CD labels ASV, BMG, Hyperion, Arte Nova, Future Classics and RTE Lyric FM.

Ferenc Szűcs has appeared as soloist and chamber musician at major international festivals and contributed to seminars and symposiums in Ireland, UK and USA; he was involved in collaborative research projects-performances with choreographers Mary Nunan and Yoshiko Chuma and is currently working towards his doctorate with Prof. Susan Melrose at Middlesex University in London.



Una Hunt

Una Hunt is one of Ireland's leading pianists and has performed often with the National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, the RTÉ Concert Orchestra and the Ulster

Orchestra. She has played recital programmes in Britain, Ireland and the USA and has toured throughout Europe and the USA with her violinist sister Fionnuala. She has also appeared in concert and on television with notable soloists including flautists James Galway and William Bennett and violist Bruno Giuranna, and is currently a member of Triantán Piano Trio. Una holds a Konzertfach Diploma from the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna, Austria and a PhD in Performance from NUI Maynooth. In 2007, Una received an honorary doctorate of music from Queens University Belfast for services to the Performing Arts. She was created 'Adjunct Professor' of music at UCD, two years ago.

Taking an active interest in the music of Irish composers has led to a number of ground-breaking world-premiere recordings. These include Irish Fantasy (Continuum, 1992), The Music of Joan Trimble (Naxos/Marco Polo, 1999), Complete Piano Music of E. J. Moeran (ASV/Sanctuary, 2003), Shower of Pearls, the Music of George Alexander Osborne (RTÉ lyric fm, 2004), Fallen Leaves from an Irish Album (RTÉ lyric fm, 2006) and My Gentle Harp, the complete collection of Moore's Irish Melodies and the Square Piano Recordings of selected Irish Melodies produced for DIT (Thomas Moore Festival, 2008 and 2009).

As music consultant to the National Library of Ireland, Una has spearheaded developments with the Music Library Project. She project-managed the setting up of the new National Archive of Irish Composers, a digital archive of music from the National Library of Ireland which went online last Christmas. As Artistic Director of the Musical Reflections concert series, she showcased historic

Irish musical figures and composers at the Library in 2007, and in 2008 presented Gems of Irish Opera showcasing an unknown operetta by Michael William Balfe in the year of the bicentenary of the composer's birth. This presentation was particularly historic as Balfe's operetta may have received its Irish premiere at this concert but has certainly not been performed in Ireland for 150 years. Una was also Artistic Director of the Thomas Moore Festival which has presented many events since 2008 in celebration of two hundred years of Moore's Irish Melodies. Her experience as a producer and broadcaster has led to many radio and documentary programmes on Irish composers and their music including the recent six-programme series on Moore's Irish Melodies for RTÉ lyric fm where her critically-acclaimed series Chopin Uncovered has also been re-broadcast recently. Next year, Una will present a feature on the nineteenth-century pianist-composer Fanny Robinson and record her music for RTE Lyric fm.

For more information or to listen to sample tracks, visit: www.unahunt.com

May 2011

CONCERT PROGRAMME
A COLLECTION OF THE MOST CELEBRATED IRISH TUNES
THURSDAY 28 JULY 2011

60TH ANNIVERSARY CONFERENCE



DUBLIN 2011

CONCERT PROGRAMME

18.30 Examination Hall, Trinity College, Dublin

A collection of the most celebrated Irish tunes

Presenter **Nicholas Carolan**
Harp **Siobhán Armstrong**
Song **Áine Uí Cheallaigh**
Fiddle **Paul O'Shaughnessy**
Flute **Paul McGrattan**



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BACKGROUND

The earliest collection of Irish music **A Collection of the Most Celebrated Irish Tunes Proper for the Violin, German Flute or Hautboy** was published in Dublin in 1724 by the musical-instrument makers John and William Neal, a father and son who dominated the Dublin music trade in the early eighteenth century. On examination, the forty-nine melodies of the collection prove to be Irish traditional harp tunes and the melodies of Irish-language songs. This presentation consists of representative pieces from the collection, sung in Irish and played on traditional harp, fiddle and flute, and placed in their social and political contexts.

THE PERFORMERS

Nicholas Carolan Presenter

From Drogheda, Co Louth, Nicholas is director of the Irish Traditional Music Archive in Dublin. Best known as a broadcaster on the English- and Irish-language Irish national television channels RTÉ and TG4, he is the editor of *A Collection of the Most Celebrated Irish Tunes* (1724).

Siobhán Armstrong Harp

Born in Dublin, Siobhán teaches and works as a freelance performer, mainly in Europe. She founded the Historical Harp Society of Ireland and is the director of Scoil na gCláirseach: Summer School of Early Irish Harp. She plays a copy of the medieval Trinity College harp – the national emblem of Ireland – strung in brass and 18-carat gold, which is to be heard on her solo album *Cláirseach na hÉireann: The Harp of Ireland*.

Áine Uí Cheallaigh Song

Living and teaching in the gaeltacht (Irish-speaking district) of An Rinn, Co Waterford, Áine is a prize-winning singer of traditional songs in Irish, solo and unaccompanied. She is well known at festivals and workshops throughout the country, and has recorded several albums, including *Idir Dhá Chomhairle: In Two Minds*.

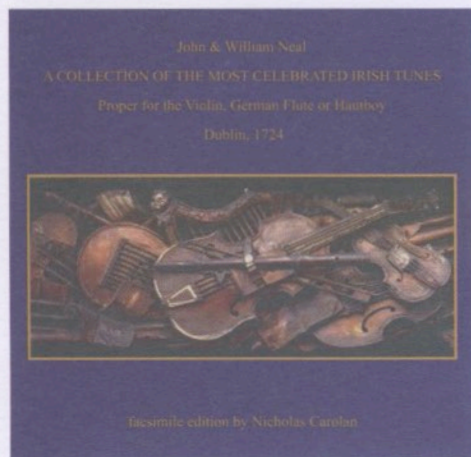
Paul O'Shaughnessy Fiddle

Paul learned traditional fiddle and other instruments in his native Dublin, from his mother among others. He has a particular interest in the fiddle playing of her county of Donegal and has been a member of the internationally known Donegal group Altan and the Dublin group Beginish. His solo album *Stay Another While* is one of the many albums on which he is to be heard. He is current completing a PhD in Irish-language studies.

Paul McGrattan Flute

Also from Dublin, Paul began to learn traditional flute in the city, from an uncle, but has since lived and played in other parts of Ireland and has been a flute-maker. A member of the group Beginish, he is to be heard on many recordings, including his solo album *The Frost is All Over*. He teaches the flute and is director of the Dublin traditional-music course Ceoltóir at the Ballyfermot College of Further Education.

FACSIMILE EDITION



Music has been performed in oral tradition in Ireland now for some ten thousand years, but it was 1724 before the first notated collection of Irish music appeared. Consisting of forty-nine tunes and far older than any surviving manuscript collection, *A Collection of the Most Celebrated Irish Tunes Proper for the Violin, German Flute or Hautboy* was published that year in the yard of Christ Church Cathedral in central Dublin by the musical-instrument makers John and William Neal, a father and son of obscure origins who dominated the Dublin music trade in the first half of the eighteenth century.

Sold for the new and fashionable instruments of the violin, German flute and oboe, the collection proves on examination to consist almost entirely of traditional Irish harp music and the melodies of traditional Irish-language songs, many with titles in Irish. The famous blind harper Turlough Carolan, who composed several of the tunes, was alive at the time of their publication here, aged fifty-four. Many of the tunes reveal a sympathy with the defeated but still powerful Jacobite cause, surprising in a publication produced in the heart of ascendancy Dublin.

A new facsimile reprint of the *Celebrated Irish Tunes* has now been published by the Irish Traditional Music Archive. It has been made from the single surviving copy of the original publication, and it makes generally

available again a collection of Irish traditional music that was current three hundred and more years ago, music that differs greatly from the Irish traditional music of today. A document of social and political significance, the collection is chiefly important as a foundation source of Irish music, offering insights into its distant past and providing melodies for modern re-creation and study.

The illustrated introduction and notes on the tunes by Nicholas Carolan, Director of the Irish Traditional Music Archive, contain new information on John and William Neal, the earliest important publishers of music in Ireland, and on the state of music in the capital and the country in the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries. As an aid towards the re-creation and understanding of the tunes in the collection, early Irish-language song texts have also been provided, with translations, for the some half of the tunes which are song airs rather than instrumental melodies.

ORDER DETAILS

TITLE A Collection of the Most Celebrated Irish Tunes

Proper for the Violin, German Flute or Hautboy,
published by John & William Neal, Dublin, 1724

EDITION Second facsimile ed.

EDITOR Nicholas Carolan

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