



THE COMPLETE

John Ireland

volume 2

SONGBOOK

MARK STONE
SHOLTO KYNOCH



THE COMPLETE

John Ireland

volume 2

SONGBOOK

MARK STONE
SHOLTO KYNOCH

THE COMPLETE *John Ireland* SONGBOOK volume 2

JOHN IRELAND (1879-1962)

SONGS OF A WAYFARER

- | | | | |
|----|-----|---|------|
| 1 | i | Memory (<i>William Blake</i>) | 2'00 |
| 2 | ii | When daffodils begin to peer (<i>William Shakespeare</i>) | 1'55 |
| 3 | iii | English May (<i>Dante Gabriel Rossetti</i>) | 2'55 |
| 4 | iv | I was not sorrowful (<i>Ernest Dowson</i>) | 2'58 |
| 5 | v | I will walk on the earth (<i>James Vila Blake</i>) | 1'24 |
| 6 | | A SONG OF MARCH (<i>James Vila Blake</i>) | 1'08 |
| 7 | | SPRING (<i>James Vila Blake</i>) | 1'39 |
| | | MARIGOLD: IMPRESSION FOR VOICE AND PIANOFORTE | |
| 8 | i | Youth's spring-tribute (<i>Dante Gabriel Rossetti</i>) | 3'56 |
| 9 | ii | Penumbra (<i>Dante Gabriel Rossetti</i>) | 4'05 |
| 10 | iii | Spleen (<i>Ernest Dowson after Paul Verlaine</i>) | 3'17 |
| 11 | | IF WE MUST PART (<i>Ernest Dowson</i>) | 2'01 |
| 12 | | WHEN I AM OLD (<i>Ernest Dowson</i>) | 2'35 |
| 13 | | WHEN LIGHTS GO ROLLING ROUND THE SKY (<i>James Vila Blake</i>) | 2'35 |

14 **ALPINE SONG** (*James Vila Blake*) 1'34

THREE SONGS TO POEMS BY VARIOUS POETS

15 i Love and friendship (*Emily Brontë*) 1'52

16 ii Friendship in misfortune (*Anonymous*) 1'50

17 iii The one hope (*Dante Gabriel Rossetti*) 4'05

18 **SUNSET PLAY** (*William Blake*) 1'18

19 **SLUMBER SONG** (*James Vila Blake*) 1'51

TWO SONGS TO POEMS BY ARTHUR SYMONS AND DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

20 i Tryst (*Arthur Symons*) 3'43

21 ii During music (*Dante Gabriel Rossetti*) 2'43

THREE SONGS TO POEMS BY ARTHUR SYMONS (*Arthur Symons*)

22 i The adoration 2'38

23 ii The rat 2'09

24 iii Rest 2'56

25 **SANTA CHIARA** (*Arthur Symons*) 2'47

61'52

MARK STONE *baritone*
SHOLTO KYNOCH *piano*

JOHN IRELAND

The romantic, confident voice of a self-critical bachelor

Part two: Working as an organist

At the age of fourteen, John Nicholson Ireland moved from Manchester to London to study at the Royal College of Music. His school days had not been happy, and life at music college did not start well, with his mother dying a few weeks after his arrival and his father's death following a year later. He studied for eight years in total, and whilst a student he was appointed assistant organist at Holy Trinity, Sloane Street, so it was natural that his professional life after leaving college should be as a church musician.

In 1904, he took up the post of organist and choirmaster at St Luke's Church, Chelsea. College life, and now St Luke's, had established Chelsea as Ireland's base, and even when he lived elsewhere later in life, he always kept a residence in this part of West London. The next ten years saw him start to make a name for himself as a composer of songs and chamber music. His *Violin sonata no. 1*, written in 1909, won first prize in a competition organized by W.W. Cobbett, a well-known promoter of chamber music, but it was his *Violin sonata no. 2* that was to have the biggest effect. Ireland described how after the performance of this piece at the Wigmore Hall in 1917, he 'awoke one morning to find himself famous', with a publisher waiting on his doorstep before breakfast.

St Luke's was the centre of his life at this time, introducing him to people who were to become life-long friends like the curate Paul Walde and the cleric A.R. Lee Gardner. In addition to these adult friends, the choirboys also played a large part in his life, the most important three being Charles Markes (1900-85), Bobby Glassby (1900-34) and Arthur George Miller (1905-86).

Markes joined the choir in 1908 and continued as deputy organist when his voice broke in 1915. He came from a poor family, and Ireland and St Luke's contributed to his school fees. Ireland taught him the piano, and the two were close friends, with the boy spending a great deal of time in Ireland's company. A misunderstanding in 1920 led to a falling out, which was not resolved until 1948, at which point Markes once more worked closely with the composer, correcting proofs and preparing editions of his music.

Glassby was a friend of Markes, the latter having brought him to the choir in 1911. Ireland's piece *The holy boy* was apparently inspired by Glassby, and a sculpted head of Glassby was one of the composer's most treasured possessions. He died in tragic circumstances, his body being washed up in the River Ouse in 1934, six months after he had last been seen alive.

Probably most important of all was Miller, who was the dedicatee of several Ireland songs in the '20s, often timed to coincide with the boy's birthday. He joined the choir as Markes was leaving and soon became a central figure in Ireland's life; they even holidayed together for several years. This friendship was intense and important to Ireland, as is demonstrated not only by the number of dedications, but also by the nature of the music he wrote for him.

Ireland's life and his relationship with Miller were to change drastically from 1926, the year when he left his job at St Luke's. In December, Ireland married a seventeen-year-old pianist called Dorothy Philips, a student at the Royal Academy of Music. His reasons for this are unclear. He was possibly lonely and envious of the family lives his colleagues enjoyed, and perhaps he saw marriage as an appropriate way to behave, presenting an acceptable veneer of heterosexuality. It is generally thought that Ireland was gay, although there is no evidence of him ever having had a sexual relationship with a man; given the law at this time and his position within the church this is by no means inconsistent. So, with Miller as their witness, they were married in St Luke's. In June 1927, the roles were reversed and Ireland was a witness at Miller's wedding, also at St Luke's. These new pairings effectively brought an end to the closeness the two men had enjoyed, and signalled the end of Ireland's dedicating songs to Miller. Unfortunately, but perhaps not surprisingly, Ireland's marriage was disastrous, and in March 1928 he and Philips separated, divorcing later that year.

By the end of 1928, Ireland was a bachelor once more, and had left the church job that had provided him with so many of his friends and companions of the previous twenty years. In its place, he had, since 1922, been teaching at the Royal College of Music, and, together with his own composing, this became the new focus of his life.



THE COMPLETE *John Ireland* SONGBOOK volume 2

SONGS OF A WAYFARER

This was Ireland's first cycle of songs, and it was dedicated to the baritone Robert Radford, who gave the première performance at London's Steinway Hall in 1913, with the composer accompanying. The first four songs were already composed by 1905, with the last one added in 1911 at the recommendation of the publisher, Boosey & Co., who thought the set needed an up-beat finale. Ireland reluctantly acquiesced and the songs were published in 1912. The period of the poems, spanning from Shakespearean times to the composer's own day, are quite different in style, but the common themes and Ireland's music convincingly bind them together.

1 i **Memory**

William Blake (1757-1827)

Ireland set William Blake a number of times, although generally as choral pieces. This poem is from his 1783 book of poetry and prose *Poetical sketches*. The book was Blake's first collection, and only forty copies were printed and distributed amongst his friends. The song describes the poet beckoning his memories to come back to him as he wanders by a river. Ireland's flowing accompaniment conjures up the stream's movement, and a trill illustrates a bird's song. The woe and melancholy at the end has a certain sweetness in this setting, indicating that the only sadness is due to the remoteness of the remembered events.

Memory, hither come,
And tune your merry notes;
And, while upon the wind
Your music floats,
I'll pore upon the stream,
Where sighing lovers dream,
And fish for fancies as they pass
Within the watery glass.

I'll drink of the clear stream,
And hear the linnet's song,
And there I'll lie and dream
The day along;
And, when night comes, I'll go
To places fit for woe,
Walking along the darkened valley,
With silent melancholy.

2 ii **When daffodils begin to peer**

William Shakespeare (1564-1616)

Taken from act 4 scene 3 of *The winter's tale*, this poem describes the coming of spring, and the inevitable rising sap and frolicsome behaviour. It is sung by Autolycus, a thieving rogue, when he first enters, setting up his character before he robs the shepherd's son – his character is later redeemed when he helps the heroine Perdita and her beloved escape back to her home land of Sicilia. The song's fanfaric introduction produces a suitably ribald atmosphere for the various mentions of doxy (mistress), aunts (prostitutes), tumbling (having sexual intercourse), pugging (thieving) and ale that are to follow.

When daffodils begin to peer,
With hey, the doxy over the dale,
Why then comes the sweet o' the year,
For the red blood reigns in the winter's pale.

The white sheet bleaching on the hedge,
With hey, the sweet birds, O, how they sing!
Doth set my pugging tooth on edge,
For a quart of ale is a dish for a king.

The lark, that tirra-lirra chants,
With hey, the thrush and the jay,
Are summer songs for me and my aunts,
While we lie tumbling in the hay.

But shall I go mourn for that, my dear?
The pale moon shines by night,
And when I wander here and there,
I then do most go right.

Jog on, jog on, the footpath way,
And merrily hent the stile-a:
A merry heart goes all the day,
Your sad tires in a mile-a.

3 iii **English May**

Dante Gabriel Rossetti (1828-1882)

This poem was written in 1869, when Rossetti was writing the sonnets of *The house of life*, but it was not published until the *Collected works* of 1886. It was written out of concern for the health of Jane Morris, the wife of the artist William Morris, but also Rossetti's muse and lover. He compares her to the dull English May, wishing that she would instead resemble that of warmer, foreign climes, going on to say that he would give his own life if it would improve her condition. Ireland produces a love song of great tenderness – a stark contrast to the spring described in the previous song.

Would God your health were as this month of May
Should be, were this not England, – and your face
Abroad, to give the gracious sunshine grace
And laugh beneath the budding hawthorn-spray.
But here the hedgerows pine from green to grey
While yet May's lyre is tuning, and her song
Is weak in shade that should in sun be strong;
And your pulse springs not to so faint a lay.

If in my life be breath of Italy,
Would God that I might yield it all to you!
So, when such grafted warmth had burgeoned through
The languor of your Maytime's hawthorn-tree,
My spirit at rest should walk unseen and see
The garland of your beauty bloom anew.

4 iv **I was not sorrowful**
Ernest Dowson (1867-1900)

This poem, entitled *Spleen*, was included in Dowson's 1896 publication *Verses*, and was dedicated to his friend, the poet Arthur Symons, who wrote the memoir introduction for the posthumous *Poems of Ernest Dowson* in 1900. In this preface, he described the girl to whom most of Dowson's poetry was written. She worked in a family restaurant, and after two years of politely listening to Dowson's poetry decided to marry a waiter instead. Ireland's song, with its plangent, falling phrases in the piano accompaniment, poignant dissonances and complex harmonic movement, perfectly captures Dowson's despair for the girl whom Symons describes as having both made and killed a poet.

I was not sorrowful, I could not weep,
And all my memories were put to sleep.

I watched the river grow more white and strange,
All day till evening I watched it change.

All day till evening I watched the rain
Beat wearily upon the window pane

I was not sorrowful, but only tired
Of everything that ever I desired.

Her lips, her eyes, all day became to me
The shadow of a shadow utterly.

All day mine hunger for her heart became
Oblivion, until the evening came,

And left me sorrowful, inclined to weep,
With all my memories that could not sleep.

5 v **I will walk on the earth**

James Vila Blake (1842-1925)

Ireland set the words of the American Unitarian minister James Vila Blake several times. Here, he produced a flamboyant song to end his cycle, as requested by his publisher. There are signs of it being an afterthought, with the 'memories' of the first and fourth songs no longer framing the group – instead the set is book-ended by the poetry of the two different Blakes. The wayfarer of the group's title was presumably originally conceived more in the vein of the protagonist in Schubert's *Winterreise*, with the singer dissolving into despair at the end. This song rescues Ireland's traveller from a similar fate, swaggering back to life with a rousing finale.

Up to the top o' the trees,
Where sway the bird and the breeze,
And Song's wild eyes
Look to the skies:
Up to the top o' the trees!

Up to the peaks o' the cloud,
Where Echo's suburbs crowd
The lightning's flash
And thund'rous crash:
Up to the peaks o' the cloud!

Nay, I will walk on the earth;
My love them all is worth:
In Love I see
All of them be,
And more – I will walk on the earth!

6 **A song of March**

James Vila Blake

Blake's 1907 book *The months* consisted of twelve chapters, each one devoted to a month of the calendar. As well as poetry, each section contained prose, and March, the last chapter, opens with this thought: "Let March come in, the blustering youngster, last of winter's sturdy four – 'tis better to welcome him, for he'll not stay out". Ireland's song sets the first two of four verses; the second half of the original poem addresses the brown buds as they shoot up and the stout heart that braves the weather. It was published in 1918 as part of the Edward Arnold series of singing class music.

I say, bluff March,
You're not so rough a fellow
As you look.
Here's a brook
Will show the sunny yellow
Of heaven's bright arch,
And the leaping little billows
Laugh at pussies on the willows,
Very soon, very soon, –
I say, bluff March!

I say, bright birds,
Ye prophesy a singing
Wide a-field,
And a yield
Of verdure that is springing
To feed blithe herds
When your wavy shadow passes
Over wavy-wavy grasses,
Very soon, very soon, –
I say, bright birds!

7

Spring

James Vila Blake

This verse, taken from Blake's 1887 collection *Poems* is described as a translation from German; the original poet is not credited, as it is for some of his other translations, suggesting that the author was anonymous. Certainly, it is a very simple folk-song text, calling on spring to return to the poet's world. Ireland's song, published in 1911, was, like *A song of March*, designed as a unison song. The first two verses have identical accompaniments, but it changes to a lighter version for the third verse, as thoughts move to the distant shepherd's piping and birds' singing.

Lovely spring, O come thou hither,
Spring beloved, O come again;
Bring us blossoms, leaves and singing,
Deck again the field and plain.

To the mountain I would wander,
Revel in the valleys green,
On the sweet grass and the blossoms
Lie, and drink the sunlit scene.

I would hear the shepherd piping,
I would hear the sheep-bell ring,
And rejoicing on the meadow,
I would hear the birdies sing.

MARIGOLD: IMPRESSION FOR VOICE AND PIANOFORTE

There is no indication as to the identity of eponymous Marigold of this group of songs, if indeed she existed. Perhaps it was the fact that the girl's name is also that of an annual flower – which blooms, withers and dies each year, to return again the next spring – that appealed to Ireland. The three songs show three stages of a love affair, almost like seasons, and there are further floral references in the poems. Ireland composed the group in 1913, and the set probably received its first complete performance at the Aeolian Hall in 1920, sung by the baritone George Parker.

8 i Youth's spring-tribute

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

The first poem of the group is *Sonnet XIV* from Rossetti's book *The house of life*, a collection described in its entirety by the poet Wilfred S. Blunt, in 1909, as 'the greatest of all Victorian poems'. Rossetti himself referred to the sonnet form as 'a moment's monument', capturing in its 140 syllables the essence of an instant. Ireland's sensual setting paints the indolent scene, as two lovers lay by the riverside on a spring day. He produces a bold musical gesture at the start of the second stanza as the sun crashes through invading their privacy, before becoming intimate once more, at the end, to describe their kiss.

On this sweet bank your head thrice sweet and dear
I lay, and spread your hair on either side,
And see the newborn wood flowers bashful-eyed
Look through the golden tresses here and there.
On these debateable borders of the year
Spring's foot half falters; scarce she yet may know
The leafless blackthorn-blossom from the snow;
And through her bowers the wind's way still is clear.

But April's sun strikes down the glades to-day;
So shut your eyes upturned and feel my kiss
Creep, as the spring now thrills through every spray,
Up your warm throat to your warm lips: for this
Is even the hour of Love's sworn suitservice,
With whom cold hearts are counted castaway.

9 ii **Penumbra**

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

This poem, the title of which means half-shadow, is taken from Rossetti's 1870 book *Poems*. The poet is unable to reveal his feelings to his beloved, by looking, touching, hearing or deed, until finally it is too late. Ireland's song begins with *parlante* phrases that become steadily more impassioned until his rolling accompaniment heralds the final verse's desolation. Interestingly, Ireland omits the fourth verse, which refers not only to the shadow of the title, but also to the month of June, which would perhaps have continued the reference to the passing seasons begun in the first song.

I did not look upon her eyes,
(Though scarcely seen, with no surprise,
'Mid many eyes a single look.)
Because they should not gaze rebuke,
At night, from stars in sky and brook.

I did not take her by the hand,
(Though little was to understand
From touch of hands all friends might take.)
Because it should not prove a flake
Burnt in my palm to boil and ache.

I did not listen to her voice,
(Though none had noted, where at choice
All might rejoice in listening.)
Because no such a thing should cling
In the wood's moan at evening.

They told me she was sad that day,
(Though wherefore tell what love's soothsay,
Sooner than they, did register?)
And my heart leapt and wept to her,
And yet I did not speak nor stir.

So shall the tongues of the sea's foam
(Though many voices therewith come
From drowned hope's home to cry to me,
Bewail one hour the more, when sea
And wind are one with memory.

10 iii **Spleen**

Ernest Dowson after Paul Verlaine (1844-1896)

Ireland had already set Dowson's poem *Spleen*, calling it *I was not sorrowful*. He now chose to use the text of his translation of Verlaine's poem of the same name, the third of four Dowson Verlaine translations, taken from his posthumous publication *Decorations*. From the opening, with its allusions to dead flowers, Ireland's song is full of spent anguish, which deepens with each verse, as the chromaticism of the music increases. Only at the end when it appears all is lost, does he reveal his love, with which Ireland repeats the musical opening of the first song of the group, and like a marigold preparing to flower again, the cycle of love begins to repeat.

Around were all the roses red
The ivy all around was black.

Dear, so thou only move thine head,
Shall all mine old despairs awake!

Too blue, too tender was the sky,
The air too soft, too green the sea.

Always I fear, I know not why,
Some lamentable flight from thee.

I am so tired of holly-sprays
And weary of the bright box-tree,

Of all the endless country ways;
Of everything alas! save thee.

11 **If we must part**
Ernest Dowson

This setting of Dowson's poem from his 1896 book *Verses* was described as 'a valediction for voice and piano' and, although composed in 1929, was not published until 1976. It describes the pain of parting, and Ireland's potent setting is brimming with repressed emotion. He claimed that the reason for it not being published was due to a lack of public interest in such a song, but it could have more to do with how personal it was, as indicated by the inscription "for 25 July 1929", a date following his own divorce in 1928, and his young friend Arthur Miller's marriage in 1927.

If we must part,
Then let it be like this:
Not heart on heart,
Nor with the useless anguish of a kiss;
But touch mine hand and say:
"Until to-morrow or some other day,
If we must part."

Words are so weak
When love hath been so strong:
Let silence speak:
"Life is a little while, and love is long;
A time to sow and reap,
And after harvest a long time to sleep,
But words are weak."

12 **When I am old**
Ernest Dowson

By Dowson's standards, this poem, entitled *In tempore senectutis* from his 1896 book *Verses*, is quite optimistic, the message being: in later years, don't dwell on how decrepit I've become, but remember how my passion burned in my youth. Ireland's song, only published in 1998, came to light when the manuscript was discovered in Zurich. This simple but effective setting of the three verses is not entirely strophic – he allows his usual harmonic creativity to develop as the song progresses, with phrases of quiet reflection contrasting with declarations of passion, illustrating the difference between the two ages described in the text.

When I am old,
And sadly steal apart,
Into the dark and cold,
Friend of my heart!
Remember, if you can,
Not him who lingers, but that other man,
Who loved and sang, and had a beating heart, –
When I am old!

When I am old,
And all Love's ancient fire
Be tremulous and cold:
My soul's desire!
Remember, if you may,
Nothing of you and me but yesterday,
When heart on heart we bid the years conspire
To make us old.

When I am old
And every star above
Be pitiless and cold:
My life's one love!
Forbid me not to go:
Remember nought of us but long ago,
And not at last, how love and pity strove
When I grew old.

13 **When lights go rolling round the sky**
James Vila Blake

The text for this song was taken from Blake's 1902 book *Songs*. Like most of his poetry, it is honest and direct, and in this case tells the tale of two couples loving life; from morning to evening they banish sorrow and enjoy their time together. For Ireland, this was an unusually light and hearty choice, and one which he responded to in an equally positive manner. His setting of Blake's life-affirming words is not only boisterous, but at times tender – reflecting both the gung-ho nature of the lovers' attitudes and the sweetness of their wooing.

When lights go rolling round the sky,
Then up, my heart, then ope mine eye,
With Molly and Polly,
And John so jolly –
Away, say we, with melancholy,
Heigh-ho and heigh-ho,
For me's no melancholy.

First rolls the sun in rosy morn,
And wheels away whate'er's forlorn:
Then look I to my Molly,
And, certes, John to Polly –
To each the girl, the love, the wife,
A rosy morn of rosy life:
And so, and so, O ho, O ho...

When moves the early moon a-west,
We say the vesper time is best;
And then lead I my Molly,
And cometh John with Polly,
To sweet sequestered willow shade.
For such dear girls and lovers made:
And so, and so, O ho, O ho...

14 **Alpine song**
James Vila Blake

This was another of Blake's anonymous German translations taken from his 1887 collection *Poems*. The words are sung to an Alpine shepherd, in admiration of his life and surroundings. John Ireland's setting, published in 1911, was, like a number of his Blake songs, intended as a unison song, and as such his approach is quite conservative; the music for both verses is almost identical, and chromaticisms are limited to the occasional passing note. In spite of this, the simplicity of the song fits the honest, open nature of the text, with the singer's opening phrase hinting at the harmonic series of a natural (presumably Alpine) horn.

O Shepherd boy, O shepherd boy!
Thou sing'st so fresh and free,
Upon the verdant mountain side,
Thy cheerful melody.
O joyful is thy mountain-love,
And sweet thy song to me!
O were I now a shepherd lad,
Thou happy boy, like thee!

Then would I sing till echoes wild
From rock to valley rang,
Till to my voice in all the world
Each heart rejoicing sprang.
The Alpine rose its sweetness sheds
Down from the hills along;
O Mountain-love, so fresh and free,
Bear swiftly on my song.

THREE SONGS TO POEMS BY VARIOUS POETS

This group was composed in July 1926 and published two years later, when the baritone George Parker gave the first performance of the first two songs for the BBC London Station, with the composer accompanying. Ireland's former chorister, Charles Markes, described the trilogy as being unified by the theme they share with Shakespeare's *Sonnet 116* ('Let me not to the marriage of true minds Admit impediments'), which speaks of the constancy of true love. According to Markes, love and friendship were synonymous for Ireland, but if he were given the choice he would be on the side of friendship.

15 i Love and friendship

Emily Brontë (1818-1848)

This first song was retrospectively inscribed 'To AGM for February 22 1926', the birthday of Ireland's friend and ex-chorister, Arthur Miller, many of whose birthdays were celebrated in this way in the 1920s. Some have suggested that the intensity of the music written by Ireland for Miller indicates a sexual desire that may or may not have been consummated. This may be so with his other works, but this Brontë setting would seem to suggest that their relationship was purely platonic. It compares the peaks and troughs of desire with the steady strength of friendship, decrying the former in favour of the latter.

Love is like the wild rose-briar,
Friendship like the holly-tree –
The holly is dark when the rose-briar blooms,
But which will bloom most constantly?

The wild rose-briar is sweet in spring,
It's summer blossoms scent the air.
Yet wait till winter comes again
And who will call the wild-briar fair?

Then scorn the silly rose-wreath now
And deck thee with the holly's sheen,
That when December blights thy brow
He still may leave thy garland green.

16 ii **Friendship in misfortune**

Anonymous

The message of this poem is essentially the proverb 'A friend in need is a friend indeed', and when the verse was included in the 1857 women's publication *The home*, it was given the title *Love*. Not only does it take the theme of friendship of the first song, but it also introduces the idea of hope, which is then elucidated in the final song. Ireland's setting, which is marked with the instruction 'sustained and fervent', is highly chromatic, but rather than feeling tortured, this seems to illustrate the many facets and virtues of the friendship he is describing.

Give me the depth of love that springs
From friendship in misfortune grown,
As ivy to the ruin clings
When every other hope has flown.

Give me that fond confiding love
That naught but death itself can blight;
A flame that slander cannot move,
But burns in darkness doubly bright.

17 iii **The one hope**

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

This was last poem in Rossetti's collection of sonnets *The house of life* – number 50 in the original 1870 version, and number 101 in the final 1881 publication – the subject matter being the end of life. In the octave section, the poet asks if he will find peace when he dies, and then in the concluding sestet, he prays that his thoughts are devoted to the name of 'the one hope' of the poem's title – possibly the name of his beloved. Ireland's setting is full of foreboding for the first part of the poem before describing the hoped-for tranquillity in the concluding lines.

When vain desire at last and vain regret
Go hand in hand to death, and all is vain,
What shall assuage the unforgotten pain
And teach the unforgetful to forget?
Shall Peace be still a sunk stream long unmet,
Or may the soul at once in a green plain
Stoop through the spray of some sweet life-fountain
And cull the dew-drenched flowering amulet?

Ah! when the wan soul in that golden air
Between the scripted petals softly blown
Peers breathless for the gift of grace unknown, –
Ah! let none other alien spell soe'er
But only the one Hope's one name be there, –
Not less nor more, but even that word alone.

18 **Sunset play**
William Blake

Blake's illustrated collection of nineteen poems *Songs of innocence* was first published in 1789 and included this poem, entitled *Nurse's song*. He also wrote a more remorseful poem of the same name in his 1794 book *Songs of experience*, but it was the earlier, sweeter verse that Ireland chose to set, originally giving the song the same title as the poem. A unison song, published in 1914 by the Year Book Press, it is a dialogue between a children's nurse and her wards as she calls them in from play at bedtime, with Ireland's simple *siciliano* setting having the air of a lullaby.

When the voices of children are heard
on the green,
And laughing is heard on the hill,
My heart is at rest within my breast
And everything else is still.

"Then come home, my children,
the sun is gone down
And the dews of night arise;
Come, come, leave off play, and let
us away,
Till the morning appears in the skies."

"No, no, let us play, for it is
yet day,
And we cannot go to sleep;
Besides, in the sky the little birds fly,
And the hills are all cover'd with sheep."

"Well, well, go and play till the
light fades away,
And then go home to bed."
The little ones leaped and shouted
and laughed,
And all the hills echoed.

19 **Slumber song**
James Vila Blake

Like *Spring* and *Alpine song*, this is another translation of an anonymous German poet taken from Blake's 1887 collection *Poems*. Ireland set the first two of three verses, to be sung by unison voices, and it was published in 1911 in the Novello School Song series – the omitted verse mentions the child's dimples and laughter. The two verses are set completely strophically and the music is unusually simple by Ireland's standards; clearly he was writing for a specific market. In fact, the song is a beautiful lullaby and the effortless nature of the music is quite appropriate for the text.

Darling, let me kiss thee,
Little love, good-night:
Long hast thou been wakeful, –
Sleep till morning light.
Now, close thy little eyes,
To sleep, my child, to sleep.

Dreams and visions fearful,
From my darling flee.
God's own angel watches,
Baby, over thee.
Now, close thy little eyes,
To sleep, my child, to sleep.

TWO SONGS TO POEMS BY ARTHUR SYMONS AND DANTE GABRIEL ROSSETTI

This pair of songs, composed in 1828 and published the following year, were considered by Ireland's friend Charles Markes to be two of his most lovely songs, despite not being very well known, even to Ireland aficionados. They were published separately, but are listed as a group both in the *Complete works* and Chapman's *Catalogue of published works*. Despite the lack of obvious connection between the poems' subjects, there is a link between the poets; Symons' debt to Rossetti in his own work has been commented upon, but he also wrote a number of articles about the older poet.

20 i **Tryst**

Arthur Symons (1865-1945)

Taken from Symons' collection *Moods and memories* from his 1892 book *Silhouettes*, the original title of this poem was *In Fountain Court*; Symons lived in Fountain Court at the Temple, London. The poet describes a lazy June afternoon, pregnant with the expectation of his beloved's arrival. Symons, like his friend Ernest Dowson, included translations of Verlaine's poetry in this book, and he seems to have absorbed something of Verlaine's economical poetic imagery for use in this verse. Ireland's soporific setting is wonderfully luxuriant, with its indulgent harmonic language pitch perfect in conjuring a sleepy scene, full of languid yearning.

The fountain murmuring of sleep,
A drowsy tune;
The flickering green of leaves that keep
The light of June;
Peace, through a slumbering afternoon,
The peace of June.

A waiting ghost, in the blue sky,
The white curved moon;
June, hushed and breathless, waits, and I
Wait too, with June;
Come, through the lingering afternoon,
Soon, love, come soon.

21 ii **During music**

Dante Gabriel Rossetti

This 1851 poem was not published until 1886, after Rossetti's death. It describes the poet's own musically illiteracy, and the contrasting tumultuous effect that music has on him. The poet's brother William Michael Rossetti, who edited the 1886 edition, stated that he did not know to whom this verse was written, adding that Elizabeth Siddal was an unlikely candidate as she 'had small or no skill in music', even though at this time Siddal was Rossetti's model and muse. Ireland uses a constant quaver motion to highlight the fingers floating over the piano keys, whilst his intoxicating harmonies demonstrate both music's power and its mysteries.

O cool unto the sense of pain
That last night's sleep could not destroy;
O warm unto the sense of joy,
That dreams its life within the brain.

What though I lean o'er thee to scan
The written music cramped and stiff; -
'Tis dark to me, as hieroglyph
On those weird bulks Egyptian.

But as from those, dumb now and strange,
A glory wanders on the earth,
Even so thy tones can call a birth
From these, to shake my soul with change.

O swift, as in melodious haste
Float o'er the keys thy fingers small;
O soft, as is the rise and fall
Which stirs that shade within thy breast.

THREE SONGS TO POEMS BY ARTHUR SYMONS

Arthur Symons

The son of a Wesleyan minister, much of Symons' poetry is steeped in religion, something which no doubt made his texts familiar territory to the church organist Ireland. His writing career was cut short when he suffered a mental breakdown in 1908, but not before he had contributed a great deal to the literary community. This trio of songs was grouped together for the *Complete works*, and Chapman lists them separately in the *Catalogue of published works*, adding that they might be considered as a set. They were composed in 1918 and 1919 and published shortly afterwards.

22 i The adoration

This poem, from the privately published 1901 book *The loom of dreams*, is a dialogue, the participants of which take alternate verses. Gifts are rejected by their benefactor, in the odd verses, the donor of which is accused of loving another. In spite of his protestations in verse two, he leaves, spurned, with his gifts, in the final verse. With its Christmas allusions, this is clearly a metaphor for a sinner returning to Christ, and it has been suggested that Ireland interpreted the gift-bearer as an orthodox churchgoer who had forsaken Christ in favour of the established church.

Why have you brought me myrrh,
And frankincense and gold?
Lay at the feet of her
Whom you have loved of old
Your frankincense and gold.

I have brought frankincense
And myrrh and gold to you,
From weary lands far hence
That I have journeyed through
To come at last to you.

I cannot take your gold
And frankincense and myrrh;
My heart was growing cold
While you were following her:
Take back your gold and myrrh.

Too late I come to you
With prayers of frankincense:
Pure gold, sweet myrrh, ye too,
Scorned, must go hence, far hence
As smoking frankincense.

23 ii **The rat**

Ireland turned to Symons' 1897 book *Amoris victima* for the second song of the group. During the early 1890s, Symons had affairs with various women, mainly actresses and dancers, most of whom he treated with decadent disdain. However, around 1893 he became obsessed with a girl called Lydia, a dancer at the Empire, with whom he had a tempestuous relationship, finally ending when she married someone else. She was the inspiration for most of the poems in his 1897 collection, and this poem speaks of the pain of long-lost love, gnawing away at your heart like a rat.

Pain gnaws at my heart like a rat that gnaws at a beam
In the dusty dark of a ghost frequented house;
And I dream of the days forgotten, of love the dream.
The desire of her eyes unappeased, and the peace of her brows.

I can hear the old rat gnaw in the dark by night.
In the deep overshadowing dust that the years have cast;
He gnaws at my heart that is empty of all delight,
He stirs the dust where the feet of my dreams had passed.

24 iii **Rest**

For the final song, composed nine months after the first two, Ireland returned to Symons' book *The loom of dreams*. It is interesting that the publishers decided to produce the song with a French translation by Jean-Frédéric Aubry (under the pen-name of G. Jean-Aubry), for the prosody of the text and the atmosphere of the music are decidedly French in tone. The tranquillity of the song illustrates the peaceful summer scene described by the poet, before quietly imploring his own heart not to seek such peace, other than in the stillness of death.

The peace of a wandering sky,
Silence, only the cry
Of the crickets, suddenly still,
A bee on the window sill,
A bird's wing, rushing and soft,
Three flails that tramp in the loft,
Summer murmuring
Some sweet, slumberous thing,
Half asleep; but thou cease,
Heart, to hunger for peace,
Or, if thou must find rest,
Cease to beat in my breast.

25 **Santa Chiara**

Arthur Symons

This poem, *Palm Sunday; Naples*, is from Symons' 1899 book *Images of good and evil*. It is the tale of someone who cannot enter the church at the start of Holy Week, and sits watching the sea. They are tired of the secular life, but feel they have no place in church, and ask the listener to carry a palm on their behalf. Ireland's song, published in 1925, starts with a Italianate *verismo*-style motif before the second verse gives way to the moving triplets of the sea. The interlude before the final verse lurches, as if with sea-sickness, before returning the passionate music of the opening.

Because it is the day of Palms,
Carry a palm for me,
Carry a palm in Santa Chiara,
And I will watch the sea;
There are no palms in Santa Chiara
To-day or any day for me.

I sit and watch the little sail
Lean side-ways on the sea,
The sea is blue from here to Sorrento,
And the sea-wind comes to me,
And I see the white clouds lift from Sorrento
And the dark sail lean upon the sea.

I have grown tired of all these things,
And what is left for me?
I have no place in Santa Chiara,
There is no peace upon the sea;
But carry a palm in Santa Chiara,
Carry a palm for me.

We are very grateful to the Ireland Trust for its financial support towards the making of this recording.

Produced and engineered by Richard Sutcliffe.

Edited by Richard Sutcliffe and Matthew Bennett.

Mixed and Mastered by Dave Rowell.

Recorded 14-16 November 2012 at The Music Room, Champs Hill, West Sussex, U.K. by kind permission of David and Mary Bowerman.

Steinway technician: David Flanders.

Thanks to Lewis Foreman, Philip Lancaster, Bruce Phillips and Roderick Williams.

Publishers: Stainer & Bell (1-5,8-13,15-17,20-25); Edward Arnold (6); Novello & Company Ltd (7,19); J. Curwen & Sons Ltd. (14); The Year Book Press (18).

Booklet notes © 2012 Mark Stone.

Photographs of John Ireland, courtesy of the Ireland Trust.

Inside front cover: photograph of Mark Stone and Sholto Kynoch © 2011 Hayley Madden.

Reverse inlay: photograph of Mark Stone, Sholto Kynoch © 2012 Richard Sutcliffe.

Graphic design: Colour Blind Design.

Printed in the E.U.

5060192781007

