

# Brian Boydell

(1917 - 2000)

“In the 1940s and early 1950s I was considered (in the Irish context) a very "modern" composer. Now, about forty years later, my music could possibly be considered rather old-fashioned. This is largely due to a firm belief in artistic honesty: creating sounds that I like personally and refusing to follow fashions that might be more acceptable to the critics of the time.”

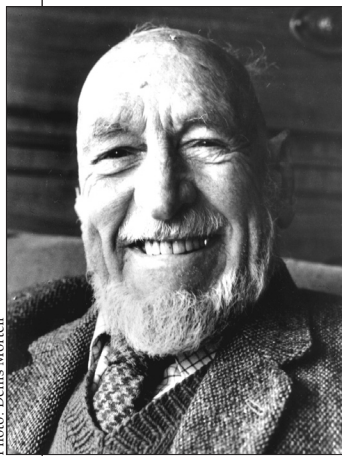


Photo: Denis Mortell

Brian Boydell was born in Dublin and educated at Cambridge University, the University of Heidelberg, the Royal College of Music and the Royal Irish Academy of Music. In 1959 he was awarded the MusD degree of Dublin University. He was Professor of Music at Trinity College from 1962 to 1982 and was later a Fellow Emeritus of the college.

Brian Boydell was a founder member of the Music Association of Ireland and founder and director of the Dowland Consort. For more than twenty years he was conductor of the Dublin Orchestral Players and was frequently guest conductor with the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra. For some years he was a member of the Arts Council/An Chomhairle Ealaíon. The many honours he has received include an Hon. DMus from the National University of Ireland, Commendatore della Repubblica Italiana, and Honorary Fellowship of the Royal Irish Academy of Music. He was also a member of Aosdána, Ireland's state-sponsored academy of creative artists. His compositions, written for a wide variety of media, include four string quartets, a violin concerto, orchestral, chamber and choral works.

## Selected Works

### ORCHESTRAL

#### Masai Mara (1988)

2323 trec 4230 timp 3 perc hp str

MS 12'

Commissioned by RTE.

Premiere: 30 June 1989. National Concert Hall, Dublin. RTE Symphony Orchestra, conductor Kasper de Roo.

Recording: Boydell: Orchestral Music. National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, conductor Colman Pearce. Marco Polo 1997. 8.223887.

#### Partita Concertante (1978)

vn-solo, hp-solo, 2222 2000 perc str

MS 20'

Premiere: 2 February 1983. National Concert Hall, Dublin. RTE Symphony Orchestra, Thérèse Timoney (vn), Denise Kelly (hp), conductor John Hopkins.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

#### Symphonic Inscapes (1968)

2222 4231 timp perc hp pf str

MS 22'

Premiere: 26 January 1969. Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. RTE Symphony Orchestra, conductor Albert Rosen.

Recording: New Irish Chamber Orchestra. RTÉ Symphony Orchestra, conductor Albert Rosen. NIRC 1971. NIR004.

#### Megalithic Ritual Dances (1956)

3222 4321 timp perc str

MS 17'

Commissioned by Radio Éireann.

Premiere: 12 February 1956. Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, conductor Milan Horvat.

Recording: Boydell: Orchestral Music. National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, conductor Colman Pearce. Marco Polo 1997. 8.223887.

#### Elegy and Capriccio (1956)

cl-solo, str

MS 14'

Premiere: 14 March 1956. Phoenix Hall, Dublin. Dublin Chamber Orchestra, Michele Incenzo (cl), conductor Herbert Pöche.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

#### Violin Concerto (1953 rev. 1954)

vn-solo, 3222 4331 3 timp 3 perc hp str

MS 30'

Commissioned by Jaroslav Vanacek.

Premiere: 1 October 1954. Phoenix Hall, Dublin. Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, Jaroslav Vanacek (vn), conductor Brian Boydell.

Recording: Boydell: Orchestral Music. Maighread McCrann (vn), National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, conductor Colman Pearce. Marco Polo 1997. 8.223887.

#### In Memoriam Mahatma Gandhi (1948)

2222 4231 3 timp str

MS 12'

Premiere: 20 July 1948. Phoenix Hall, Dublin. Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, conductor Brian Boydell.

Recording: Boydell: Orchestral Music. National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, conductor Colman Pearce. Marco Polo 1997. 8.223887.

### ENSEMBLE

#### Adagio and Scherzo for String Quartet (1991)

MS 10'

Commissioned by Prof. Hormoz Farhat and Trinity College Dublin School of Music for the Trinity College Dublin Quatercentenary celebrations.

Premiere: 27 February 1994. John Field Room, National Concert Hall, Dublin. RTE Vanbrugh Quartet

Recording: Contemporary Music from Ireland, Volume One. RTE Vanbrugh Quartet. Contemporary Music Centre 1995. CMC CD01.

**Five Blows for Brass Quintet (1984)**

MS 16'  
Commissioned by The Brass Ensemble of RTE with funds provided by the Arts Council / An Chomhairle Ealaíon.  
Premiere: 14 October 1984. Hugh Lane Municipal Gallery of Modern Art, Dublin. RTE Brass Quintet.  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Six Mosaics for Violin and Piano (1972 rev. 1978)**

MS 20'  
Commissioned by Geraldine O'Grady.  
Premiere: 17 March 1974. RTE. Geraldine O'Grady (vn), Havelock Nelson (pf).  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**String Quartet No. 3 (1969)**

MS 20'  
Premiere: 20 September 1970. National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin. RTE String Quartet.  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Quintet (1960 rev. 1966 & 1980)**

fl hp vn va vc  
MS 17'  
Commissioned by the Prieur Ensemble.  
Premiere: 28 June 1960. Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin. Prieur Ensemble. Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**String Quartet No. 2 (1957)**

MS 14'  
Premiere: 14 February 1959. University College Cork. Benthien String Quartet, Wolfram Hentschel (vc).  
Recording: Ceathrar: Contemporary Irish String Quartets. RTE Vanbrugh Quartet. Chandos 1994. CHAN 9295.

**String Quartet No. 1 (1947)**

MS 20'  
Premiere: 17 February 1952. Gresham Hotel, Dublin. Cirulli String Quartet.  
Recording: String Quartet. Benthien String Quartet. Deutsche Grammophon. RE32292.

**Sonata for Cello and Piano (1945)**

MS 19'  
Premiere: 19 September 1945. National College of Art, Dublin. Betty Sullivan (vc), Charles Lynch (pf).  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**String Trio (1943 - 1944)**

MS 19'  
Premiere: 30 January 1944. Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin. Morris Sinclair (vn), John MacKenzie (va), Betty Sullivan (vc).  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

## SOLO INSTRUMENTAL

**The maiden and the seven devils (1991 - 1992)**

pf  
Contemporary Music Centre Editions / CMC 1009 5'  
Commissioned by the GPA Dublin International Piano Competition 1994.  
Premiere: 21 May 1994. GPA Dublin International Piano Competition, National Concert Hall, Dublin. Rusen Özgür Aydin (pf). Recording: Davide Franceschetti. Davide Franceschetti (pf). Brian Boydell . BB/01C.

**A Pack of Fancies for a Travelling Harper (1970)**

hp [double-action]  
MS 16'  
Commissioned by the Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music.  
Premiere: 13 January 1971. Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music. Una O'Donovan (hp).  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

## VOCAL AND CHORAL

**I will hear what God the Lord will speak (1988)**

satb org  
Text: Psalm 85, vv. 8-13  
MS 5'  
Commissioned by the Dean of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.  
Premiere: 26 June 1988. St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. St Patrick's Cathedral Choir, conductor John Dexter.

**The Small Bell (1980)**

satb, fl, hp, 2 vn, va, vc  
MS 20'  
Commissioned by RTE.  
Premiere: 5 May 1981. National Gallery of Ireland, Dublin. RTE Singers, Elizabeth Gaffney (fl), Catriona Yeats (hp), Testore String Quartet.  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Mouth Music for Ten Voices (1974)**

sssaattbb  
Text: Brian Boydell  
MS 12'  
Commissioned by the 21st Cork International Choral and Folk Dance Festival, 1974, with funds provided by Messrs. Player & Wills.  
Premiere: 27 April 1974. Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music, University College Cork. RTE Singers, conductor Hans Waldemar Rosen.  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Three Madrigals (1967)**

satb [div.]  
MS 9'  
Premiere: June 1968. Trinity College Dublin. RTE Singers, conductor Hans Waldemar Rosen.  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Four Yeats Poems (1965)**

S-solo, 2122 2200 perc hp str  
Text: W. B. Yeats  
MS 11'  
Premiere: 25 February 1969. St Francis Xavier Hall, Dublin. Mary Sheridan (S-solo), RTE Symphony Orchestra, conductor Brian Boydell.  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**A Terrible Beauty is Born (1965)**

S-solo, A-solo, B-solo, satb, 2222 4331 perc hp str, speaker  
MS 30'  
Commissioned by RTE.  
Premiere: 11 April 1966. Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. Veronica Dunne (S-solo), Bernadette Greevy (A-solo), William Young (B-solo), Conor Farrington (speaker), Our Lady's Choral Society, RTE Symphony Orchestra, conductor Tibor Paul.  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Two Madrigals (1964)**

satb [div.]  
Text: Fletcher, Wither  
No. 1: MS; No. 2: J. Curwen & Sons Ltd. 42'  
Commissioned by the 11th Cork International Choral and Folk Dance Festival, 1964, with funds provided by Messrs. W. D. & H. O. Wills.  
Premiere: 23 May 1964. University College Cork. Dowland Consort, conductor Brian Boydell.  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Mors et Vita (1961)**

S-solo, T-solo, B-solo, satb, 2 fl, 2 ob, 2 cl, 2 bn, dbn, 2 tpt, 4 hn, 2 trbn, btrbn, timp, perc  
MS 25'  
Premiere: 11 January 1963. St Francis Xavier Hall, Dublin. Radio Éireann Choral Society, Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, conductor Tibor Paul.  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Shatter me, Music (1952)**

ssatb  
MS 2'  
Premiere: 7 January 1953. Archbishop Byrne Hall, Dublin. RTE Singers, conductor Hans Waldemar Rosen.  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**Five Settings of Poems by James Joyce (1946 rev. 1948)**

Bar-solo pf / Bar-solo, 1121 0000 str  
Text: James Joyce  
MS 15'  
Premiere: October 1946. Gresham Hotel, Dublin. Brian Boydell (Bar-solo), Joseph Grocock (pf).  
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

**The Feather of Death (1943)**

Bar-solo, fl vn va vc  
Text: Thurloe Conolly  
MS 8'  
Premiere: 30 January 1944. Shelbourne Hotel, Dublin. Brian Boydell (Bar-solo), Doris Cleary (fl), Morris Sinclair (vn), John MacKenzie (va), Betty Sullivan (vc).

## BAND

**Viking Lip - Music (1996)**

2 tpt 2 cnt 2 hn 3 trbn euph tuba 2 perc  
MS 9'  
Commissioned by Music Network for the Royal Danish Brass Ensemble.  
Premiere: 5 November 1996. Droichead Arts Centre, Drogheda. Royal Danish Brass Ensemble.  
Recording: British Brass Connection. Royal Danish Brass Ensemble. Rondo Grammofon 1997. RCD 8358.