

A. J. Potter

(1918 - 1980)

‘I do not believe in ivory towers, and if anything I write does not make itself immediately understood by the audience and go on giving them new pleasures, I have failed.’



Archibald James (Archie) Potter was the son of a blind Belfast piano tuner. Brought up by relatives in Kent, he ‘got the only education then open to penniless boys – choir school followed by public school’. He also won a scholarship to the Royal College of Music where he studied composition with Vaughan Williams. After

colourful wartime service he

settled in Dublin and gained his Doctorate in Music from Trinity College Dublin in 1953. From 1955 to 1973 he was Professor of Composition at the Royal Irish Academy of Music. His *Missa Brevis* won the Festival of Britain (Northern Ireland) Prize in 1951 and he won the Radio Éireann Carolan Prize in 1952 and 1953. For many years he was a popular radio broadcaster on music.

He was a very prolific composer, whose eclectic style encompassed a wide range of techniques which were used to suit the style of a work to its purpose. His orchestration in particular is outstanding. The sensitivity that lay behind the ebullience of his personality, and his passionate concern about injustice and intolerance, are all evident in his best works.

Selected Works

ORCHESTRAL

Madra Líath na Mara (1977)

Concertino for Cor Anglais and Orchestra
ca-solo, 2022 2000 timp pf str
MS 10'

Premiere: 11 February 1979. RTE. Helmut Seeber (ca), RTÉ Symphony Orchestra, conductor John Hughes.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Symphony No. 2 (1976)

2222 4331 timp 2 hrp str
MS 25'

Commissioned by Irish American Cultural Institute.
Premiere: 11 December 1981. Symphony Hall, Springfield, Massachusetts, U.S.A. Springfield Symphony Orchestra, conductor Robert Gutter.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Sinfonia de Profundis (1969)

3333 4331 timp hrp str
MS 29'

Premiere: 23 March 1969. Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. RTE Symphony Orchestra, conductor Albert Rosen.
Recording: A. J. Potter: *Orchestral Music*. National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, conductor Robert Houlihan. Marco Polo 2001. 8.225158.

Concerto for Orchestra (1967)

2222 4331 timp perc hrp str
MS 15'

Premiere: 13 March 1967. Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. RTE Symphony Orchestra, conductor Tibor Paul.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Rapsóid Deireadh Lae (1966)

vn-solo, 2121 2330 perc hrp str
MS 15'

Premiere: 1966. O'Connell Hall, Dublin. RTE Light Orchestra.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Caitlín Bhocht (1963)

Ballet music
2121 2330 perc hrp str
MS 38'

Premiere: 27 June 1964. Radio Éireann. Irish National Ballet Company, Radio Éireann Light Orchestra, conductor Robert Murphy, choreographer Patricia Ryan.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Rapsóid Éireannaighe (1963)

vn-solo, 2120 2330 perc hrp cel str
MS 10'

Premiere: 1967. Munich Festival of Light Music.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Careless Love (1959)

Ballet music
2121 2220 timp perc pf+cel hrp str
MS 26'

Premiere: 12 April 1960. Olympia Theatre, Dublin. Irish National Ballet Company, Radio Éireann Light Orchestra, conductor Éimear Ó Broin. Scenario: Donagh McDonagh; choreographer Patrician Ryan.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Finnegan's Wake (1957)

Versions also available for two pianos (eight hands) and wind band

2121 2330 perc hrp pf str

Irish + Evergreen / RTE Music 3'

Recording: A. J. Potter: *Orchestral Music*. National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, conductor Robert Houlihan. Marco Polo 2001. 8.225158.

Variations on a Popular Tune (1955)

2222 4331 timp perc hrp str

MS 9'

Premiere: 6 February 1956. Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, conductor Milan Horvat.

Recording: A. J. Potter: *Orchestral Music*. National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, conductor Robert Houlihan. Marco Polo 2001. 8.225158.

Aiste Ó na Gleannta (1953)

1121 2210 timp hrp str

Oifig an tSoláthair / Government Sales Office 6'

Concerto da Chiesa (1952)

pf-solo, 2121 4231 timp perc str

MS 31'

Premiere: 25 September 1953. Phoenix Hall, Dublin. Anthony Hughes (pf-solo), Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, conductor Milan Horvat.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Overture to a Kitchen Comedy (1950)

2222 4331 timp 2 perc hrp str

MS 9'

Premiere: 25 October 1953. ?. Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, conductor Milan Horvat.

Recording: A. J. Potter: *Orchestral Music*. National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland, conductor Robert Houlihan. Marco Polo 2001. 8.225158.

Rhapsody Under a High Sky (1950)

2222 4331 timp hrp str

MS 9'

Premiere: 6 November 1952. Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, conductor Éimear Ó Broin.

Recording: *Romantic Ireland*. RTE Sinfonietta, conductor Proinnsias Ó Duinn. Marco Polo 1996. 8.223804.

ENSEMBLE

Arklow Quartet (1976 - 1977)

2 cnt, t hn, euph

MS 8'

Premiere: 1977. Feis Ceoil, Dublin. Quartet of the Arklow Silver Band.

Céad Míle Bienvenues (1972)

Version also available for symphony orchestra

3 tpt hn 2 trb tuba

MS 9'

Premiere: 28 June 1972. Dublin Festival of Twentieth Century Music. L'Ensemble de Cuivres Gabriel Masson de l'Opera de Paris. Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Teach Lán le Cruiteoirí (1963)

A Full House of Harpers

Irish hrp ensemble, hrp [concert]

MS 15'

Ceathairéad Téad (1938)

String Quartet

2 vn va vc

An Gúm 12'

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

VOCAL AND CHORAL

Clamos Cervi (1979)

The Cry of the Deer

satb org

Text: St Patrick's Breastplate

Wedderburn Music Ltd.

Commissioned by St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin.

Premiere: 29 June 1980. Dublin International Organ Festival, St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin. St Patrick's Cathedral Choir and organist, director John Dexter.

Recording: Choir of St Patrick's Cathedral, Dublin, David Adams (org), conductor John Dexter. Pinewood Records 1982. PRBS801.

The Wedding (1979)

Opera in Three Acts

S-solo, Mez-solo, 2 T-solo, Bar-solo, 2 B-solo, 2222 4321 timp perc hrp hpd str

Text: Lee McMaster (A. J. Potter)

MS 74'

Premiere: 8 June 1981. Abbey Theatre, Dublin. Irish National Opera Company.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

The Cornet of Horse (1975)

A-solo, tbb, 3222 4331, timp perc hrp str

MS 36'

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Ten Epigrams (1967)

satb [div.]

MS 10'

Commissioned by the Cork International Choral and Folk Dance Festival.

Premiere: 1969. Seminar on Contemporary Choral Music, University College Cork. RTE Singers, conductor Hans Waldemar Rosen.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Hail Mary (1966)

Mez-solo, T-solo, satb, 2222 4331 timp perc hrp str

Text: Sacred

MS 10'

Premiere: 1966. Royal Dublin Society, Dublin. Our Lady's Choral Society, RTE Symphony Orchestra, conductor Tibor Paul.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

The Classiad (1964)

The News

ssa, pf

Text: Lee McMaster (A. J. Potter)

MS 21'

Commissioned by the Irish Countrywomen's Association.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Patrick (1962)

Television Opera in Three Acts

A-solo, 2 T-solo, 3 Bar-solo, satb, 3222 4331 5 perc cel 2 hrp str

MS 76'

Premiere: 17 March 1965. RTE TV. Bernadette Greevy (A-solo), Edmund Fitzgibbon (T-solo), Patrick Ring (T-solo), Othmar Remy Arthur (Bar-solo), Martin Dempsey (Bar-solo), Michael McCann (Bar-solo), RTE Singers, RTE Choral Society, RTE Symphony Orchestra, conductor Tibor Paul.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Three Songs (1958)

voice pf

Text: Sidney Bell

MS 12'

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Missa Brevis Lorica Sancti Patricii (1936 rev. 1940)

ssatbb

MS 25'

Premiere: 1953. Radio Éireann Singers, conductor Hans Waldemar Rosen.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

BAND

Salala's Castle (1980)

2 fl, picc, 5 cl, 6 hn, 3 tpt, asax, tsax, barsax, bar, 3 cnt, 3 trb, euph, 2 bass, 5 perc, bagpipes

MS 19'

Commissioned by Dr Omar Zawawi as a present for H. M. Sultan of Oman on the tenth anniversary of independence.

Premiere: November 1980. Royal Palace, Muscat, Oman. Royal Band of Oman, conductor Lt. Col. Tom Crichton.

Pride of Pageantry (1957)

5 cnt, fgh, 3 sax, 2 bar, 2 trb, btrb, euph, 2 bass, 3 perc

MS 5'