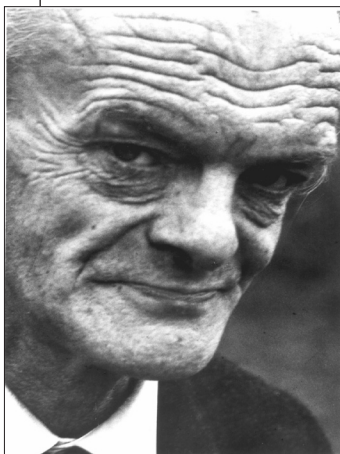


Frederick May

(1911 - 1985)

‘It is doubtful if any nation with such a wonderful storehouse of traditional music has made such a negligible contribution to art music as we have, and it is high time we set about redressing the balance.’



Frederick May was born in Dublin and began his studies at the Royal Irish Academy of Music with John Larchet. After gaining a MusB degree at Trinity College Dublin in 1931, he continued his studies at the Royal College of Music in London with Gordon Jacob and Ralph Vaughan Williams. In 1933 he was awarded a scholarship which enabled

him to travel to Vienna, where he studied with Egon Wellesz.

Unlike many of his contemporaries, May's music is distinctly European in flavour. Although his output was small, his works include the *Scherzo for Orchestra* (1933), *Songs from Prison* (1941) for baritone and orchestra and, perhaps his finest work, the *String Quartet in C Minor* which he wrote on his return to Dublin in 1936. He held the post of Music Director at the Abbey Theatre, Dublin, for fifteen years and wrote incidental music for several plays. His *String Quartet*, performed by the Vanbrugh Quartet, was released on CD by Naxos/Marco Polo in 1996.

Selected Works

ORCHESTRAL

Sunlight and Shadow (1955)

2222 4231 timp perc cel hrp str
MS 9'

Premiere: 22 January 1956. Gaiety Theatre, Dublin. Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, conductor Milan Horvat.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Suite of Irish Airs (1953)

2222 2300 timp 3 perc str
MS 15'

Recording: *New Music from Old Erin Volume 1*. Radio Éireann Symphony Orchestra, conductor Milan Horvat.
Decca . DL9843.

Lyric Movement (1939)

str
MS 17'

Premiere: 15 February 1943. Royal Dublin Society [RDS].
Dublin String Orchestra, conductor Terry O'Connor.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Spring Nocturne (1937)

2222 4331 timp 2 perc cel str
MS 14'

Premiere: 24 April 1938. Gaiety Theatre, Dublin.
Radio Éireann Symphony orchestra, conductor Aloys Fleischmann.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Scherzo for Orchestra (1933)

2222 4231 timp perc str
MS 7'

Premiere: 1933. London.
Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

ENSEMBLE

String Quartet in C Minor (1935)

Woodtown Music Publications Ltd. 30'

Premiere: 1948. London. New London String Quartet.
Recording: *Frederick May, Aloys Fleischman: Chamber music*. RTÉ Vanbrugh Quartet. Marco Polo 1996.
8.223888.

VOCAL AND CHORAL

Hesperus (n.d.)

medium voice, pf
Text: James Stephens
MS 3'

The Little Black Boy (n.d.)

S-solo, pf
Text: William Blake
MS 4'

Dialogue (n.d.)

medium voice, pf

Text: Jaroslav Kvapil

MS 3'

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

North Labrador (ca. 1940)

medium voice, pf

Text: Hart Crane

MS 3'

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Songs from Prison (1941)

Bar-solo, 3232 4331 timp perc cel hrp str

MS 25'

Premiere: 1943. BBC, London.

Recording: CMC Sound Archive.

Irish Love Song (1930)

voice pf

MS 1'