



AN ANCIENT MELODY

FOR SOLO VIOLIN & PIANO

ARRANGEMENT OF TRADITIONAL IRISH MELODY

BY

Charles Villiers Stanford

1923

COVER IMAGE

“Serenity” by Elizabeth Williams, n.d.



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The “renaissance” in English music is generally agreed to have started in the late Victorian period, beginning roughly in 1880. Public demand for major works in support of the annual choral festivals held throughout England at that time was considerable which led to the creation of many large scale works for orchestra with soloists and chorus.

Although a number of those works were engraved, printed and are regularly performed today, performance scores for a considerable number of compositions, both large-scale and more intimate works, are not available. These works were either never engraved or were engraved and printed but are no longer available in the publishers’ catalogues. While the existence of these works is documented in biographies of the composers, the ability to study and, most importantly, to perform these compositions is not possible.

Changes in the International copyright laws, coupled with changing musical tastes, played a pivotal role in creating this void. As a result, music publishers lost the ability to generate revenue from the sale/rental of such music. In 1964, holograph and copyist scores from both Novello and from publishers it represented were offered to the British Library and the Royal College of Music Library (see The RCM Novello Library – The Musical Times, Feb. 1983 by Jeremy Dibble).

These autograph full score manuscripts along with copies of engraved vocal scores, widely available through various online library sources, are now the only resources available for studying and performing these works.

The English Heritage Music Series has been created to ensure that these compositions are preserved, are accessible for scholarly research and, most importantly, are available for performance by future generations. Its mission is to:

- Source non-engraved/out-of-print English composer compositions that are in the U.S. public domain
- Preserve these compositions through the preparation of performance scores using notation software
- Provide open Internet access to the scores to facilitate study, performance and sharing of performance material (program notes, audio, reviews, etc.)

In preparing the English Heritage Music Series editions, every effort has been made to adhere strictly to the notation contained in the manuscripts. Because of the passage of time and its effect on the condition of the manuscript, the absence of clear information often times by the composer in notating divided instruments, and with emendations in the composer and other hands resulting from use of the manuscript in performance, there were numerous circumstances which required interpretation and decisions for notes, accidentals, dynamics, articulations and tempi. Should questions arise in the use of these editions, the composers’ autograph manuscripts and the Novello vocal scores should be consulted for clarification.

Matthew W. Mehaffey
Editor

Professor of Music
University of Minnesota - School of Music
Minneapolis, Minnesota USA

Source Information

Full Score Manuscript

Newcastle University - Stanford Special Collection CVS MS-114

Manuscript Transcription & Score Preparation

David Fielding - dhcfielding@charter.net

Reference Material and Software

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Document Software: Affinity Serif Publisher *Music Notation Reference:* [Behind Bars](#) by Elaine Gould, Faber Music © 2011

Sir Charles Villiers Stanford (30 September 1852 – 29 March 1924) was an Irish composer, music teacher, and conductor of the late Romantic era. Born to a well-off and highly musical family in Dublin, Stanford was educated at the University of Cambridge before studying music in Leipzig and Berlin. He was instrumental in raising the status of the Cambridge University Musical Society, attracting international stars to perform with it.



While still an undergraduate, Stanford was appointed organist of Trinity College, Cambridge. In 1882, aged 29, he was one of the founding professors of the Royal College of Music, where he taught composition for the rest of his life. From 1887 he was also Professor of Music at Cambridge. As a teacher, Stanford was sceptical about modernism, and based his instruction chiefly on classical principles as exemplified in the music of Brahms. Among his pupils were rising composers whose fame went on to surpass his own, such as Gustav Holst and Ralph Vaughan Williams. As a conductor, Stanford held posts with the Bach Choir and the Leeds triennial music festival.

On the recommendation of Sir William Sterndale Bennett, Stanford went to Leipzig in the summer of 1874 for lessons with Carl Reinecke, professor of composition and piano at the Leipzig Conservatory. The composer Thomas Dunhill commented that by 1874 it was "the tail-end of the Leipzig ascendancy, when the great traditions of Mendelssohn had already begun to fade." Nevertheless, Stanford did not seriously consider studying anywhere else. Neither Dublin nor London offered any comparable musical training; the most prestigious British music school, the Royal Academy of Music (RAM), was at that time hidebound and reactionary. He was dismayed to find in Leipzig that Bennett had recommended him to a German pedant no more progressive than the teachers at the RAM. Among Stanford's compositions in 1874 was a setting of part one of Longfellow's poem *The Golden Legend*. He intended to set the entire poem, but gave up, defeated by Longfellow's "numerous but unconnected characters." Stanford ignored this and other early works when assigning opus numbers in his mature years. The earliest compositions in his official list of works are a four-movement Suite for piano and a Toccata for piano, which both date from 1875.

After a second spell in Leipzig with Reinecke in 1875, which was no more productive than the first, Stanford was recommended by Joachim to study in Berlin the following year with Friedrich Kiel, whom Stanford found "a master at once sympathetic and able ... I learnt more from him in three months, than from all the others in three years."

In 1883, the Royal College of Music was set up to replace the short-lived and unsuccessful National Training School for Music. Neither the NTSM nor the longer-established Royal Academy of Music had provided adequate musical training for professional orchestral players, and the founder-director of the college, George Grove, was determined that the new institution should succeed in doing so. His two principal allies in this undertaking were the violinist Henry Holmes and Stanford. In a study of the founding of the college, David Wright notes that Stanford had two main reasons for supporting Grove's aim. The first was his belief that a capable college orchestra was essential to give students of composition the chance to experience the sound of their music. His second reason was the severe contrast between the competence of German orchestras and the performance of their British counterparts. He accepted Grove's offer of the posts of professor of composition and (with Holmes) conductor of the college orchestra. He held the professorship for the rest of his life; among the best known of his many pupils were Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Gustav Holst, Ralph Vaughan Williams, John Ireland, Rebecca Clarke, Frank Bridge and Arthur Bliss.

Stanford's teaching seemed to be without method or plan. His criticism consisted for the most part of "I like it, my boy," or "It's damned ugly, my boy" (the latter in most cases). In this, perhaps, lay its value. For in spite of his conservatism, and he was intensely and passionately conservative in music as in politics, his amazingly comprehensive knowledge of musical literature of all nations and ages made one feel that his opinions, however irritating, had weight.

To Stanford's regret, many of his pupils who achieved eminence as composers broke away from his classical, Brahmsian precepts, as he had himself rebelled against Reinecke's conservatism. The composer George Dyson wrote, "In a certain sense the very rebellion he fought was the most obvious fruit of his methods. And in view of what some of these rebels have since achieved, one is tempted to wonder whether there is really anything better a teacher can do for his pupils than drive them into various forms of revolution." The works of some of Stanford's pupils, including Holst and Vaughan Williams, entered the general repertory in Britain, and to some extent elsewhere, as Stanford's never did. For many years after his death it seemed that Stanford's greatest fame would be as a teacher. Among his achievements at the RCM was the establishment of an opera class, with at least one operatic production every year. From 1885 to 1915 there were 32 productions, all of them conducted by Stanford.

In 1887 Stanford was appointed professor of music at Cambridge in succession to Sir George Macfarren who died in October of that year. Up to this time, the university had awarded music degrees to candidates who had not been undergraduates at Cambridge; all that was required was to pass the university's music examinations. Stanford was determined to end the practice, and after six years he persuaded the university authorities to agree. Three years' study at the university became a prerequisite for sitting the bachelor of music examinations.

Stanford composed a substantial number of concert works, including seven symphonies, but his best-remembered pieces are his choral works for church performance, chiefly composed in the Anglican tradition. He was a dedicated composer of opera, but none of his nine completed operas has endured in the general repertory. Some critics regarded Stanford, together with Hubert Parry and Alexander Mackenzie, as responsible for a renaissance in music from the British Isles. However, after his conspicuous success as a composer in the last two decades of the 19th century, his music was eclipsed in the 20th century by that of Edward Elgar as well as former pupils. Stanford composed about 200 works, including seven symphonies, about 40 choral works, nine operas, 11 concertos and 28 chamber works, as well as songs, piano pieces, incidental music, and organ works. He suppressed most of his earliest compositions; the earliest of works that he chose to include in his catalogue date from 1875.

Throughout his career as a composer, Stanford's technical mastery was rarely in doubt. The composer Edgar Bainton said of him, "Whatever opinions may be held upon Stanford's music, and they are many and various, it is, I think, always recognised that he was a master of means. Everything he turned his hand to always 'comes off.'" On the day of Stanford's death, one former pupil, Gustav Holst, said to another, Herbert Howells, "The one man who could get any one of us out of a technical mess is now gone from us."

After Stanford's death most of his music was quickly forgotten, with the exception of his works for church performance. His *Stabat Mater* and *Requiem* held their place in the choral repertoire, the latter piece championed by Sir Thomas Beecham. Stanford's two sets of sea songs and the partsong *The Blue Bird* were still performed from time to time, but even his most popular opera, *Shamus O'Brien* came to seem old-fashioned with its "stage-Irish" vocabulary. However, in his 2002 study of Stanford, Jeremy Dibble writes that the music, increasingly available on disc if not in live performance, still has the power to surprise. In Dibble's view, the frequent charge that Stanford is "Brahms and water" was disproved once the symphonies, concertos, much of the chamber music and many of the songs became available for reappraisal when recorded for compact disc.

For comprehensive biographies of the man and his music, refer to Jeremy Dibble's *Charles Villiers Stanford: Man and Musician*, Oxford University Press, 2002 ISBN 0-019-816383-5 and Paul Rodmell's *Charles Villiers Stanford*, Ashgate Publishing, 2002, reissued by Routledge Publishers, 2017 ISBN 13: 978-1-85928-198-7

An Ancient Melody

arr. Charles Villiers Stanford
1923

Andantino

Violin

Piano

Andantino

p

mf

p

p

Note: To this beautiful air, George Petrie has provided neither name nor origin.

10

Musical score for measures 10-12. The system consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below. The key signature has three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). Measure 10 features a melodic line in the treble staff with eighth notes and a half note, and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff with eighth notes and a half note. Measure 11 continues the melodic line with a half note and eighth notes. Measure 12 concludes with a half note and eighth notes.

13

Musical score for measures 13-16. The system consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below. The key signature has three flats. Measure 13 features a melodic line in the treble staff with a half note and eighth notes, and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff with eighth notes. Measure 14 continues the melodic line with a half note and eighth notes. Measure 15 features a melodic line with a half note and eighth notes, and a piano accompaniment with eighth notes. Measure 16 concludes with a half note and eighth notes.

17

Musical score for measures 17-20. The system consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below. The key signature has three flats. Measure 17 features a melodic line in the treble staff with a half note and eighth notes, and a piano accompaniment in the grand staff with eighth notes. Measure 18 continues the melodic line with a half note and eighth notes. Measure 19 features a melodic line with a half note and eighth notes, and a piano accompaniment with eighth notes. Measure 20 concludes with a half note and eighth notes. Dynamics include *f* (forte) in measure 19 and *mf* (mezzo-forte) in measure 20.

20

dim. f

This system contains measures 20, 21, and 22. The upper staff features a melodic line with accents and a dynamic shift from *dim.* to *f*. The piano accompaniment includes chords and moving lines in both hands.

23

This system contains measures 23, 24, and 25. The upper staff continues the melodic line with a dynamic shift to *f*. The piano accompaniment features complex chordal textures and rhythmic patterns.

26

dim. e rall. colla parte

This system contains measures 26, 27, and 28. The upper staff begins with a dynamic of *dim. e rall.* and includes a fermata. The piano accompaniment includes the instruction *colla parte* and ends with a double bar line.

30

mf

33

pp

36

pp

39

Musical score for measures 39-41. The system consists of three staves: a single treble clef staff at the top, and a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) below. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). Measure 39 features a melodic line in the treble staff with a slur and a flat accidental. Measures 40-41 contain piano accompaniment with multiple triplet markings (indicated by a '3' above or below the notes) in both the treble and bass staves.

42

Musical score for measures 42-43. The system consists of three staves. Measure 42 features a melodic line in the treble staff with a slur and a flat accidental, marked with a *cresc.* (crescendo) instruction. Measure 43 features piano accompaniment with triplet markings in both staves and a *mf* (mezzo-forte) dynamic marking in the bass staff.

44

Musical score for measures 44-46. The system consists of three staves. Measure 44 features a melodic line in the treble staff with a slur and a flat accidental, marked with a *f* (forte) dynamic. Measure 45 features piano accompaniment with triplet markings in both staves. Measure 46 features piano accompaniment with triplet markings in both staves and a *f* dynamic marking in the bass staff.

47

p

50

p

53

p

rall.

rall.

56

The musical score consists of three staves. The top staff is a vocal line in a treble clef, starting with a half note followed by a melodic phrase of four eighth notes, then a half note, and ending with a quarter note and a whole note. The piano accompaniment is in a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The right hand plays chords and single notes, while the left hand plays a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The dynamic marking *pp* is present in both the vocal and piano parts.

pp

pp

Violin

An Ancient Melody

arr. Charles Villiers Stanford

Andantino

1-3 *mf*

7 *p*

12

16 *f*

20 *dim.* *f*

24 *dim. e rall.*

Violin

30

mf

35

cresc.

40

cresc.

43

cresc.

46

f

50

cresc.

54

rall.

p *pp*



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