

## Symphonies and Accompaniments: 200 Years of Irish Symphonies

Paper read at the symposium 'The Symphony and Ireland', Dublin, DIT Conservatory of Music and Drama, 20 April 2013

© April 2013, Axel Klein, Ph.D., Frankfurt, Germany, [www.axelklein.de](http://www.axelklein.de)

Ireland's musical traditions appear to offer little space for the symphonic genre. Beyond Charles Stanford, few international scholars would be able to name an Irish composer writing symphonies. Yet (as always), a closer look reveals that there is more than meets the eye. In this contribution my intention is to collect the empirical facts about symphony writing in Ireland and by Irish composers elsewhere. In doing so I will try to answer questions such as 'How many Irish symphonies were there?', 'Who wrote them?', 'Could they be heard in Ireland?' and 'What was the heyday of Irish symphonies about?'. The answers will provide clues to further problems such as 'What were the difficulties?' and 'Why don't we know them?'. Thus I seek not only to give an overview of the symphonies in question, but also to the 'accompaniments' in cultural history that prevented or promoted the development of the genre in Ireland.

To begin, let me draw your attention to the probably earliest use of the term 'symphony' in Ireland. It is included in the title of my presentation and of course I am alluding to the famous *Irish Melodies* collection of arrangements of Irish traditional songs by John Andrew Stevenson to poetry by Thomas Moore published in ten volumes and a supplement from 1808. When I began to study Irish musical history more than 25 years ago, Stevenson's use of the term 'symphony' struck me as very odd. But to call *ritornellos* such as preludes, interludes and postludes 'symphonies' is by no means an Irish peculiarity, as Stevenson was merely following the model of his admired Joseph Haydn who had published his *Fifty Scottish Songs with Symphonies and Accompaniments* with the Edinburgh-based publisher George Thomson in 1802. If I am properly informed the earliest use of 'symphonies' as meaning *ritornellos* dates from the 1750s in England. I still find it odd that symphonists such as Haydn and Beethoven actually followed this practice and didn't argue with their publishers. Even the meaning of the originally Greek term 'symphonia' of 'sounding together' or 'concord of sound' doesn't really change anything. I still think they should have protested. As a footnote, however, it is interesting to note that Beethoven's seventh symphony of 1812 is largely based on motifs he composed for his own 'symphonies and accompaniments' to Irish songs which is why several scholars in the past have called Beethoven's Seventh his 'Irish Symphony'.

— O —

Like me, Paul Alday as a native Frenchman may have frowned upon this Anglo-Irish use of the term. He had already written two symphonies before he came to Ireland and continued doing so with two specimen performed in Dublin in February 1820, one of which we are hearing today in what is perhaps the second performance in almost 200 years. I would like to leave everything else relating to Alday to Catherine Ferris's paper later today, but would like to close this paragraph by congratulating you for the wonderful idea of organising a symposium on the occasion of the reconstruction of the score of Alday's *Grand Symphony*. It is a

most befitting gesture on an important occasion in Irish musical history, and I am very proud to have contributed my own very small share to it.<sup>1</sup>

While Alday's two symphonies have probably not been heard since their first performance, Ireland's third symphony has never been heard here at all yet. This is Balfe's *Sinfonia* in F major, written and performed in 1829 in Bologna. Surely, and without wanting to discourage the DIT Camerata, both the Alday and the Balfe works are an obligation for RTÉ if it takes pride in hosting the 'National Symphony Orchestra of Ireland'. These works should be performed with all the pomp and circumstance they deserve in Ireland's National Concert Hall. Again, I say no more about the Balfe work here as we have more competent speakers to follow.

Since we have now heard some words about the first three symphonies from Ireland, what was the fourth one? I prepared some statistics for you – as you know Germans like statistics and compiling lists and so on. Before I present them may I have a guess from the audience: What do you think, how many Irish symphonies are there? Let's define an Irish symphony as a work by an Irish composer working in or outside Ireland or by an immigrant composer living and working in Ireland, and let's include works called symphony, sinfonia, sinfonietta, 'Symphonic Variations' and whatever one could think of as long the 'symphonic' element is part of the title and where therefore the symphonic dimension is part of the concept.

There are **89**. Of these, 70 are actually called 'symphony' or 'sinfonia', with a further 11 taking the more modest title of a 'sinfonietta' or a 'chamber symphony' and 8 others that use the term 'symphonic' in combination with another term. But from the pivotal period of symphony writing in Europe, the 19th century, there are only ten. And of those ten, five are by Stanford. With Alday's two and Balfe's there remain two other 19th-century works to discuss. And you find them, together with the 79 other works, in the appendix.<sup>2</sup> You will see that even if we assume the concept of a 'long nineteenth century' we are still at just 15 symphonies for this period, with seven of them by Stanford.

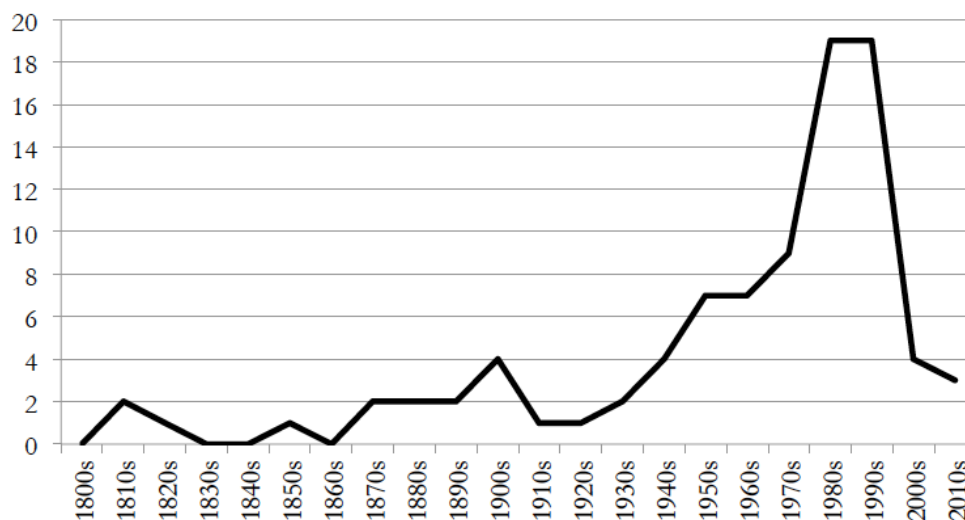
The following chart shows you how these 90 Irish symphonies distribute over the past 200 years. As Catherine Ferris in her invitation to this conference used the term 'trajectory' in relation to the development of the symphony in Ireland, here it is, outlining the number of symphonies per decade. It is a very unusual trajectory in an international comparison, showing the rather meagre outcome during the 19th century, steady progress during the middle of the twentieth century and a culmination during the 1980s and 1990s with 19 symphonies in each of these two decades, followed by a sharp drop. This may be a question for the panel discussion this afternoon: What happened in these years? Why this peak? Or, to remain in the image of my headline, what were the 'accompaniments' to this development, social, cultural, or financial?

---

<sup>1</sup> In 2008 I found some of the missing instrumental parts on the antiquarian market, pointed them out to Barra Boydell, who bought and donated them to the Royal Irish Academy of Music (RIAM) where other parts were held. Together with further parts discovered in 2012 at the National Library of Ireland they complete the full score.

<sup>2</sup> In the conference paper this was a hand-out to the participants. It is now an appendix at the end of this script.

Number of symphonies per decade



Source: own research<sup>3</sup>

Of the 19th-century symphonies not mentioned yet, the first is a work written half-way between Balfe's and the first by Stanford. It's the Symphony in C major by one of Stanford's teachers, the Tralee-born Arthur O'Leary. As Balfe's work, it is a symphony by a young man, written and performed in 1853 when the composer was 19 years of age and still a student. In his recent book on Arthur O'Leary, Bob Fitzsimons explained this work's genesis as a student composition during his time at the Royal Academy of Music where it was performed in the third concert of the season by students of the R.A.M. in June 1853. The performance was noted by the *Daily News* with the words: "the symphony by Mr O'Leary which began the concert showed a proficiency in a very difficult branch of the art, surprising in so young a man."<sup>4</sup> The score appears to be lost, but I presume that O'Leary would have done more with it if he would really have been convinced of its artistic merits. And with his personal acquaintance of German composers and musicians such as Mendelssohn, Moscheles and Joachim from his Leipzig student days he *had* the ability to properly assess its merits.

The second work not mentioned yet is an 1899 work by Charles Wood called *Patrick Sarsfield – Symphonic Variations on an Irish Air*. Wood never completed a full symphony, but apparently there are two undated fragments of symphonies among his papers that show that he experimented with the genre. One of them even extends to 35 pages of full score.<sup>5</sup> Wood's biographer Ian Copley praises the *Patrick Sarsfield Variations* "for the intellectual power and fecundity of invention displayed in them" and says: "This is no anaemic brain-child of a remote academic, but the work of a fine composer at the height of his powers".<sup>6</sup> Apparently, and despite using an Irish melody twelve years after Stanford's 'Irish Symphony', this work was *not* influenced by Stanford but rather by Parry's *Symphonic Variations* of 1897, at least as regards its overall construction, as both Parry's and Wood's *Variations* group a large

<sup>3</sup> Based on Bernard Harrison: *Catalogue of Contemporary Irish Music* (Dublin: Irish Composers' Centre, 1982), listings on the website of the Contemporary Music Centre ([www.cmc.ie](http://www.cmc.ie)), and some individual composers' biographical studies.

<sup>4</sup> Quoted after Bob Fitzsimons: *Arthur O'Leary & Arthur O'Sullivan. Musical Journeys from Kerry to the Heart of Victorian England* (Tralee, Co. Kerry: Doghouse, 2008), p. 73.

<sup>5</sup> Ian Copley: *The Music of Charles Wood – A Critical Study* (London: Thames Publishing, 1978), p. 123.

<sup>6</sup> Both quotes from Copley 1978, p. 122. The following analytical remark is derived from p. 121.

number of variations – 32 in Wood’s case – into four harmonically related groups which come close to a four-movement symphony.

The honour of being Ireland’s first real symphonist thus goes to Charles Villiers Stanford who wrote seven such works between 1876 and 1912. The best-known and most widely performed one was his third symphony, the ‘Irish’, of 1887. I hope it is not claimed too much if I say that this work’s success sparked off a whole series of works on both sides of the Irish Sea inspired by folk music, often including works by Stanford’s London pupils, which contributed considerably to the folk-music inspired ‘English Musical Renaissance’ in the first half of the twentieth century. In Ireland, this series of works inspired by the success of Stanford’s ‘Irish Symphony’ included further such symphonies by Michele Esposito of 1902, and by Hamilton Harty of 1904, and a third one dated 1909, more about which in a minute. All these works made heavy use of Irish traditional music as melodic and rhythmic source material, which was – all you all know very well – a requirement of the annual Feis Ceoil competitions at which these works received their first performances.

As we have another competent paper by Jeremy Dibble coming up about Stanford’s, Esposito’s and Harty’s respective ‘Irish’ symphonies I would only like to add one information regarding the reception of Stanford’s ‘Irish Symphony’ in Ireland which seems to have received little attention so far. In both Stanford biographies by Jeremy Dibble and Paul Rodmell we find the information that it was performed in Dublin in March 1902 by the Hallé Orchestra under Hans Richter. But this was not the first time. It *was* originally to be performed at the first Feis Ceoil on 20 May 1897, the programme of which had been co-organised by Stanford as president of the organising committee. Jeremy explains in his book that Stanford withdrew because of disagreements with other committee members about involving the Hallé Orchestra in the opening and closing concert.<sup>7</sup> Yet, his symphony was still in the official programme two days before the Feis.<sup>8</sup>

It seems to have been withdrawn at very short notice. In fact, the Hallé Orchestra under Richter *did* play the first Irish performance of the ‘Irish Symphony’, but not in 1902 but in 1900. The *Irish Times* of 17 March 1900 announces the performance in the following words:

“Dr. Stanford’s ‘Irish Symphony’ will then be heard perfectly rendered, it goes without saying – for the first time in the Irish metropolis. The giving of this fine work was contemplated by the organisers of the Feis Ceoil, but it was reserved for the enterprise of an Irish lady, Mrs. Page Thrower, in getting over the Hallé Band, to bring contemplation to completion.”<sup>9</sup>

The review of the performance in the *Weekly Irish Times* of 24 March 1900 is not quite as enthusiastic as the announcement would lead one to expect. The author, probably Hercules MacDonnell, particularly criticises Stanford’s treatment of Irish folk tunes – in fact the core idea of the composition:

“[...] to the Irish listener the Gaelic colouring of the work is rather subdued than strongly assertive. [...] To array ancient Gaelic melody in modern symphonic dress is

---

<sup>7</sup> Jeremy Dibble: *Charles Villiers Stanford – Man and Musician* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002), p. 282-4.

<sup>8</sup> *Irish Times*, 18 May 1897, p. 5.

<sup>9</sup> *Irish Times*, 17 March 1900, p. [X].

like including the wild flowers of a primeval forest with exotic blooms that have been nourished in the hot-house of up-to-date culture.”<sup>10</sup>

About a year later, even Annie Patterson is critical of the concept which she herself had so strongly demanded before:

“Dr. Stanford has done more than any man living to *fossilize* the native melody of the Gael. His ‘Irish Symphony’ might be quoted as a case in point.”<sup>11</sup>

As a final remark to the Irish performance history of Stanford’s ‘Irish Symphony’ it should be noted that it was already to be heard on two pianos in March 1894 in a performance by Houston Collisson and Vipond Barry.<sup>12</sup> This may have been Charles Wood’s reduction of the score to two pianos.



Hardly anyone among you may have known that there was a *third* ‘Irish Symphony’ as a result of the Feis Ceoil competition apart from Esposito’s and Harty’s. Certainly *I* had not been aware of it before I researched for this paper. This was a work by Benedetto Palmieri performed on 18 May 1909. The composer, born in Naples in 1863, was director of the singing class at the Royal Irish Academy of Music between 1900 and 1913, so he was a quite a long-time resident in Ireland, albeit not as long as his compatriot Esposito. And he most certainly knew the previous three ‘Irish Symphonies’.

The newspapers were quite critical. A writer in the nationalist weekly *An Claidhimh Soluis* says:

“[...] the Irish Symphony by Signor Palmieri [...] seems to get nearer the classic symphonic form than the work of Stanford, Harty or Esposito. The themes selected are shorter – a few bars from an air often – and the whole is a very creditable attempt to work out the subject matter technically. But at what a sacrifice in our melodies! [...] In the final presto movement, one gets a glimpse of Signor Palmieri as a contrapuntalist, when he balanced ‘S a Mhuirnin dilis’ against ‘Kitty of Coleraine’ [...] but [...] ‘S a Mhuirnin dilis’ [...] is royalty in disguise, and in the grand symphonic mood, of all things it would never philander so gaily by the roadside with a country lass. To hear it rushed off at a pace twice as fast as ever it went before, hardly suggests that the composer approached so beautiful an air in a reverential spirit.”<sup>13</sup>

And two weeks later, the paper had another comment:

“Can a stranger write an Irish Symphony – the kind we want anyway? I do not think he can [...] it would be better perhaps to choose the most open form possible in dealing with our airs in orchestra [...] What we look for is not someone who will scrape snatches of our airs into a ‘pot-pourri’, but a musician who will suddenly find his national self as Grieg found himself, under the influence of Nordraak.”<sup>14</sup>

Certainly, the ‘stranger’ argument must have rung familiar with Esposito who more than once heard the same.

---

<sup>10</sup> *Weekly Irish Times*, 24 March 1900, p. 4.

<sup>11</sup> *Weekly Irish Times*, 7 Sep. 1901, p. 10 (article is headed ‘A Plea for Art Progress in Keltia’).

<sup>12</sup> *Irish Times*, 19 March 1894, p. 7.

<sup>13</sup> *An Claidbeam Soluis*, xi/12, 29 May 1909, p. 7.

<sup>14</sup> *An Claidbeam Soluis*, xi/14, 12 June 1909, p. 7.

Of Stanford's other symphonies, as far as I know they did not have an Irish performance during his lifetime, with *perhaps* one late exception. The *Irish Times* of 19 March 1923 reports about a performance on the previous day by an orchestra called here the 'Irish Symphony Orchestra' under the conductorship of John F. Larchet, of what was described as "Stanford's noble Irish Symphony No. 1 in D minor".<sup>15</sup> As you see in the appendix, the 'Irish Symphony' was the third in F minor, and not the first in D minor. Most likely, what was played was the first 'Irish Rhapsody', which is in D minor, or, if it was a symphony, the second and the seventh are in D minor.



The unusual position which the symphony genre has in Ireland continues well into the twentieth century. In the first decades we have several large scores by two female composers, Ina Boyle and Mary Dickenson-Auner, none of them having ever been performed in Ireland. Dickenson-Auner, a Dublin-born composer resident in Vienna also wrote an 'Irish Symphony' in 1941, which was even published on CD a few years ago. It's a strange piece, artistically not very convincing for me, more or less consisting of an Irish air with variations, and as such it very much resembles Charles Wood's *Symphonic Variations* of 1899.

The generation which has sometimes been described as the "grandfathers of Irish contemporary music", consisting of Aloys Fleischmann, Frederick May and Brian Boydell, was very cautious with writing symphonies or with applying that term to their compositions. In fact, when they did, they were wise in being cautious, because their contributions to the symphonic genre were sometimes derivations from previous work. Fleischmann's *Sinfonia votiva* of 1977 is based on his *Introduction and Funeral March* of 1960; Boydell's *Symphonic Inscapes* of 1968 were derived from a score he composed for the documentary film *Errigal*. May wrote a *Symphonic Ballad* in 1936 of some 18 minutes duration which has had a broadcast performance at the BBC in 1937. It has since led a shadowy existence and doesn't seem to have been revived since, and it is not included in the recent LyricFM CD of May's orchestral music.<sup>16</sup> The only symphony which is called a 'symphony' from this time is Boydell's *Symphony for Strings* of 1945, but again the choice of instrumentation implies a modest approach the genre. Perhaps, because they were so much aware of the immature state of music in Ireland, these three composers shied away from writing a fully fledged symphony despite their undoubted abilities.<sup>17</sup> Boydell may not have been aware of it, but his 1945 string symphony was the first symphony performed in Ireland by a composer who was Irish-born and still resident here.

Apart from Ina Boyle, it needed a younger man to dare writing a symphony for full orchestra, and this was the 26-year-old Seóirse Bodley who completed his 'Symphony No. 1' in 1959 towards the end of his studies in Germany. Although that work is strongly influenced by his Stuttgart composition teacher Johann Nepomuk David, we are very much at the arrival of the avant-garde in Ireland now, and Bodley's 'Chamber Symphony No. 1' of 1964 very clearly demonstrates this. Other exercises in the symphonic genre by young composers were James Wilson's and Gerard Victory's first symphonies of 1960 and 1961. Interestingly, Bodley, Wilson and Victory didn't write another symphony until many years later, and this would be

---

<sup>15</sup> *Irish Times*, 19 March 1923, p. 6.

<sup>16</sup> *Frederick May: Sunlight and Shadow* (RTÉ lyric fm CD 135, undated [2012]), performed by the RTÉ National Symphony Orchestra conducted by Robert Houlihan.

<sup>17</sup> This list would also include the *Sinfonia de profundis* by A.J. Potter (1918-1980) of 1969, which in terms of its title precedes Fleischmann's *Sinfonia votiva* in avoiding the term 'symphony'.

Wilson's 2nd in 1975, or Victory's of 1977. By this time, all Irish composers of note wrote firmly modern contemporary music – more conservative voices like Daniel McNulty, who had written three sinfoniettas between 1958 and 1965, had ceased and did not return before Shaun Davey in 1989.

Or did they? What about Bodley's second and third symphonies of around 1980? Suddenly, the once-leading example of the avant-garde had turned to tonal harmony and a romantic language, which he assumed were more appropriate for the representative occasions for which they were commissioned. In fact, around 1980 Ireland witnessed a similar development as many other nations insofar as there was a widespread return to neo-romantic, neo-tonal, more approachable music from an audience perspective. In Ireland, there is basically no such work by a serious, professional composer before 1980, and most *remained* true to an avant-garde language until about ten years later. But compare John Kinsella's third symphony of 1990 to his first two; look at Walter Beckett's, Derek Bell's, Tom Cullivan's – all of 1990 as well – and you would suddenly find yourself transported some fifty to seventy years back in time. We don't have another avant-garde symphony before Corcoran's third in 1994. So what I described at the outset as the 'heyday' of Irish symphonies during the 1980s and 1990s also marks a watershed between composers who very consciously and proudly rejoiced in tonal harmony on a grand scale and others who didn't much care about pleasing the general public. Is the symphony a genre which more willingly lends itself to opportunism? – Another question for the panel discussion maybe. Don't get me wrong here, please, when I am using provocative vocabulary. I am asking questions rather than stating opinions.

The writing of a symphony is an undertaking which cannot be fully liberated from the heavy tradition of 19th-century central European classical music – in Ireland as much as everywhere else, regardless of the fact that Ireland does not have such a firm tradition. Yet I wonder, don't we now need a musical language for the symphony which recognisably stems from the late 20th or the 21st century? John Kinsella, who is without doubt Ireland's most prolific symphony composer ever, appears fully immersed with historic tradition. In an interview he did with *The Irish Times* just about a year ago half of the article is taken up by expressions of admiration for the well-known 19th- and early 20th-century symphonists<sup>18</sup> and says that, in preparation of writing his tenth symphony, he bought, with assistance from the Arts Council, "a lot of scores and recordings of other music that I took time out to listen to".<sup>19</sup>

Even though John Buckley's symphony of 1988 is a thoroughly contemporary piece of work he concedes that its form "correspond[s] loosely to the form of the classical and romantic symphony"<sup>20</sup> and could even be read as a piece of programme music about the course of the four seasons in a year.<sup>21</sup> Kevin O'Connell in his internet blog writes about his very recent symphony how much he was aware of the 'canon' of European symphonies between Mozart

---

<sup>18</sup> On Haydn: "endless energy", "tremendous sense of fun"; on Mozart: "a voice from heaven"; on Beethoven: "my hero"; on Schubert: "overwhelming power"; on Schumann: "a special love"; on Mendelssohn's 4th symphony: "something I'd love to be able to write"; on Brahms: "can't get enough of him"; on Bruckner: "the ideal symphony", in: Michael Dervan: 'A Lifetime of Obsession with Symphonies', in *The Irish Times*, 9 April 2012; online under [http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/features/2012/0409/1224314546684\\_pf.html](http://www.irishtimes.com/newspaper/features/2012/0409/1224314546684_pf.html)

<sup>19</sup> *ibid.*

<sup>20</sup> John Buckley: 'Symphony No. 1', in: *The Irish Composer*, Nov. 1988, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *ibid.*, p. 6.

and Mahler.<sup>22</sup> He also says: “Yet, the symphony remains a challenge like no other. To find out how good a composer you are, you have to write one.”

Tell us more about that, Kevin. Thank you.

## Appendix

### **Irish Symphonies\***

(\* a. works written by an Irish composer in or outside Ireland | b. works written by immigrants into Ireland [if written in Ireland] | c. works with ‘symphonic element’ in the title incl. sinfonia, sinfonietta, chamber symphony, symphonic variations, etc.)<sup>23</sup>

c1816	Paul Alday: Grand Symphony in C major
c1819	Paul Alday: Symphony in D major
1829	Michael W. Balfe: Sinfonia in F major
1853	Arthur O’Leary: Symphony in C major
1876	Charles V. Stanford: Symphony No. 1 in B flat major
1882	Charles V. Stanford: Symphony No. 2 in D minor (‘Elegiac’)
1887	Charles V. Stanford: Symphony No. 3 op. 28 in F minor (‘Irish’)
1888	Charles V. Stanford: Symphony No. 4 op. 31 in F major
1894	Charles V. Stanford: Symphony No. 5 op. 56 in D major (‘L’allegro ed Il Pensieroso’)
1899	Charles Wood: Patrick Sarsfield, Symphonic Variations
1902	Michele Esposito: Sinfonia irlandese (Irish Symphony) op. 50
1904	Hamilton Harty: An Irish Symphony
1905	Charles V. Stanford: Symphony No. 6 op. 94 in E flat major (‘In memoriam Geo. Fr. Watts’)
1909	Benedetto Palmieri: Irish Symphony
1912	Charles V. Stanford: Symphony No. 7 op. 124 in D minor
1927	Ina Boyle: Glencree (In the Wicklow Hills). Symphony for orchestra
1930	Ina Boyle: The Dream of the Rood. Symphony for orchestra
1936	Frederick May: Symphonic Ballad
1941	Mary Dickenson-Auner: Symphony No. 1 op. 16 (‘Irish’)
1945	Brian Boydell: Symphony for Strings op. 26
1948	Mary Dickenson-Auner: Symphony No. 2 [withdrawn]
1949	Redmond Friel: Symphonic Movement
1950	Mary Dickenson-Auner: Symphony for String Orchestra op. 33
1950	Havelock Nelson: Sinfonietta
1951	Ina Boyle: From the Darkness. Symphony for Contralto and Orchestra
1953	Mary Dickenson-Auner: Symphony No. 3 op. 41
1957	Mary Dickenson-Auner: Symphony No. 5 op. 45 (‘American’)
1958	Daniel McNulty: Sinfonietta No. 1 (‘The Four Provinces’)
1959	Seóirse Bodley: Symphony No. 1
1960	Daniel McNulty: Sinfonietta No. 2 (‘The Shamrock’)

---

<sup>22</sup> See <http://www.kevinnoconnell.com/blog/blog10.html>

<sup>23</sup> Excluded from this list are works without symphonic instrumental proportions such as Jane O’Leary’s *Sinfonia for Three* (1980), David Harold Cox’s *Symphony for Percussion* (1981), Paul Hayes’ *Symphony at Sea* (1991) for electronics, Eric Sweeney’s *Sinfonia* (2006) for organ.



1960 James Wilson: Symphony No. 1 op. 4 [rev. 1967]  
 1961 Gerard Victory: Symphony No. 1 ('Short Symphony')  
 1964 Seóirse Bodley: Chamber Symphony No. 1  
 1965 Daniel McNulty: Sinfonietta No. 3  
 1968 Brian Boydell: Symphonic Inscapes op. 64  
 1969 A.J. Potter: Sinfonia de profundis  
 1970 Proinnsias Ó Duinn: Symphony No. 1  
 1970 Gerard Victory: Jonathan Swift: A Symphonic Portrait  
 1975 James Wilson: Symphony No. 2 op. 64 ('Monumentum') [vocal]  
 1976 Frank Corcoran: Chamber Symphony  
 1976 Frank Corcoran: Three Symphonic Pieces: Pictures from my Exhibition  
 1976 A.J. Potter: Symphony No. 2  
 1977 Aloys Fleischmann: Sinfonia votiva  
 1977 Eric Sweeney: Symphony No. 1  
 1977 Gerard Victory: Symphony No. 2 ('Il ricorso')  
 1980 Seóirse Bodley: Symphony No. 2 ('I have loved the lands of Ireland')  
 1980 Séamas de Barra: Sinfonia piccola  
 1980 James Wilson: Symphonic Variations op. 81 [pf, orch]  
 1981 Seóirse Bodley: Symphony No. 3 ('Ceól') [choral]  
 1981 Frank Corcoran: Symphonies of Symphonies of Wind Instruments  
 (Symphony No. 1)  
 1981 Frank Corcoran: Symphony No. 2  
 1982 Seóirse Bodley: Chamber Symphony No. 2  
 1982 Frank Corcoran: Farewell Symphonies  
 1983 John Kinsella: Sinfonietta  
 1984 John Kinsella: Symphony No. 1  
 1984 Gerard Victory: Symphony No. 3  
 1985 Jerome de Bromhead: Symphony No. 1  
 1987 Eric Sweeney: Symphony No. 2  
 1988 John Buckley: Symphony No. 1  
 1988 John Kinsella: Symphony No. 2  
 1988 Gerard Victory: Symphony No. 4  
 1989 Shaun Davey: The Relief of Derry Symphony [w/solo vocal]  
 1989 Gráinne Mulvey: Symphony  
 1990 Walter Beckett: Dublin Symphony [choral]  
 1990 Derek Bell: Symphony No. 2 [choral]  
 1990 John Kinsella: Symphony No. 3 ('Joie de vivre')  
 1990 Tom Cullivan: Symphony in B flat  
 1991 Seóirse Bodley: Symphony No. 4  
 1991 Seóirse Bodley: Symphony No. 5 ('The Limerick Symphony')  
 1991 John Kinsella: Symphony No. 4 ('The Four Provinces')  
 1991 Brent Parker: Symphony  
 1992 John Kinsella: Symphony No. 5 ('The 1916 Poets') [vocal]  
 1993 John Kinsella: Symphony No. 6  
 1994 Frank Corcoran: Symphony No. 3  
 1994 Jerome de Bromhead: Symphony No. 2  
 1995 Elaine Agnew: Sinfonietta  
 1996 Frank Corcoran: Symphony No. 4  
 1996 C.S.L. Parker: Symphony No. 1  
 1997 John Kinsella: Symphony No. 7 [choral]  
 1998 Fergus Johnston: Wind Symphony

1999 Seóirse Bodley: Sinfonietta  
 1999 John Kinsella: Symphony No. 8 ('Into the new Millennium') [vocal]  
 2001 James Wilson: Symphony No. 3 op. 157  
 2004 John Kinsella: Symphony No. 9  
 2005 C.S.L. Parker: String Symphony No. 1 (5 Pieces for String Orchestra)  
 2006 George Higgs: Symphony of Invisible Sound  
 2010 Kevin O'Connell: Symphony  
 2010 Kevin Volans: Symphony: Daar kom die Alibama  
 2012 John Kinsella: Symphony No. 10

### **Some works on the Irish fringe**

1866 Arthur Sullivan: Symphony in E major ('Irish')  
 1896 Amy Beach: Gaelic Symphony op. 32  
 1922 Arnold Bax: Symphony No. 1  
 1927 Rutland Boughton: Symphony No. 2 ('Deirdre: A Celtic Symphony')  
 1937 E.J. Moeran: Symphony in G minor  
 (1950) E.J. Moeran: Symphony No. 2 [unfinished]  
 1953 Elizabeth Maconchy: Symphony for Double String Orchestra  
 1976 Elizabeth Maconchy: Sinfonietta  
 1989 William Thomas McKinley: Symphony No. 5 ('Irish')