

## *Stanfordian Thoughts*

### A periodical series of reflections on recorded and unrecorded works by Stanford by Christopher Howell

#### 21. Lullabies and Hush Songs

One classical composer of all has become indelibly associated in the public mind with the lullaby – Stanford’s hero Brahms. On an LP issued in 1965, the great Spanish soprano Victoria de los Angeles included two lullabies: the inevitable Brahms *Wiegenlied* and an *Irish Lullaby* arranged by Stanford<sup>1</sup>. A second arranger was also named, Douglas Gamley, and you have to listen carefully to detect traces of Stanford’s work under the thick pile of Gamley’s orchestral carpet. More than this would have been needed before people started talking about “the Stanford Lullaby” in the same way as they talk about “the Brahms Lullaby”. And if they ever did, a knowledgeable Stanfordian might ask, which Stanford lullaby might it be? Prolific as ever, Stanford wrote twenty-two pieces, original or arrangements, vocal or instrumental, entitled *Lullaby* or some such associated name as *Cradle Song* or the typically Irish *Hush Song*. In 1965, you would have been sticking your neck out if you suggested that a singer in search of a lullaby that was beautiful without being hackneyed should look at Stanford. His lot has improved since then and, with a mixture of commercial recordings, YouTube discoveries and off-air retrievals, most of the pieces I discuss below can be heard in some form or other.

#### Original lullabies for voice and piano

##### **Schlummerlied, op.7 no. 6**

The final piece in Stanford’s second set of *Six Songs* with texts by Heinrich Heine, op.7, was a *Schlummerlied*. The date of this second set is not clear. A manuscript of the first set, op. 4, survives and is dated 25 September 1874<sup>2</sup>. It was therefore written during Stanford’s first period of study in Leipzig with Reinecke, in the latter half of 1874. The second set was dedicated to the contralto Auguste Redeker, whom Stanford had met at the Leipzig Gewandhaus<sup>3</sup>. Redeker sang *Schlummerlied* at a Cambridge University Music Society concert on 18 May 1877. The set was published by Stanley Lucas, Weber & Co. without a date. The copy in the Cambridge University Library is date-stamped August 1877<sup>4</sup> while the British Library copy has an accession date of 23 June 1878. The Redeker, and hence Leipzig, connection, implies that op. 7 may have been written, at least substantially, during Stanford’s second spell in Leipzig in the second half of 1875, but this is only conjecture. *Schlummerlied* adopts limited but highly effective formulae. There is a tonic pedal throughout, above which the pianist’s right hand weaves a constant flow of semi-quavers enlivened by occasional piquant chromatic touches, while the vocal line develops a gentle melisma. Just as the music seems to be stuck on the tonic chord, the chord changes to the second inversion of the subdominant and the voices soars upwards. Simple but inspired.

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<sup>1</sup> *A World of Song*, Victoria de los Angeles (soprano), with the Sinfonia of London conducted by Rafael Frühbeck de Burgos, ASD 261.

<sup>2</sup> Frederick Hudson: *A New Catalogue of the Works of Charles Villiers Stanford 1852-1924, Compiled from the Original Sources*, typescript 1994. Held in the Stanford Collection of Newcastle University and accessible here: [https://www.ncl.ac.uk/webtemplate/libraryassets/external/specialcollectionsguide/handlists/stanford\\_charles\\_villiers\\_archive.pdf](https://www.ncl.ac.uk/webtemplate/libraryassets/external/specialcollectionsguide/handlists/stanford_charles_villiers_archive.pdf). Retrieved 13.4.2022. L 6.

<sup>3</sup> Jeremy Dibble: *Charles Villiers Stanford, Man and Musician*, Oxford University Press, 2002, p. 91

<sup>4</sup> Hudson, *ibid.*, L 6.

A reliable translation of Heine's text can be found in the booklet accompanying the Hyperion recording of this song<sup>5</sup>. The decision by the anonymous translator in the original edition to adopt Scottish dialect is not so oddball when we reflect that the poem comes from the verse drama *William Ratcliff*, which is set in Scotland:

Püppchen klein, Püppchen mein, Schliesse auf Die Äugelein. Püppchen fein, Du mußt sein Nicht so kalt Wie Marmelstein. Rosenschein will ich streu'n Auf die weißen Wängelein.	Bairn my ane, Sweetest ane, Ope once mair Thy closed eyen. Bonnie ane, Though thou'rt gane – Be na cauld As marble stane. Roses twain shall be lain On thy brow sae pale and wan.
Heinrich Heine	Unknown translator in first edition

The poem – not called *Schlummerlied* in the play – is sung by the distraught nurse, Margarethe, after Marie has fainted and appears to be dead (she later revives). Hence “cold as marble stone”. Stanford marked his setting *Andante tranquillo* and the song exudes a gentle balm that suggests he did not know, or did not expect his listeners to know, the dramatic context. The sole recording to date, by the baritone Stephen Varcoe accompanied by Clifford Benson<sup>6</sup>, adopts a relaxed tempo and a gentle delivery which most people will find ideal for a lullaby and compliant with the *Andante tranquillo* marking. The only doubt arises from the metronome mark: crotchet (fourth note) = 92. Varcoe and Benson take a steady 60, which is a big difference. A performance at 92 would restore the beseeching urgency implied by the dramatic situation, but would make nonsense of the *Andante tranquillo* (*Allegro agitato* would be more like it) and the title *Schlummerlied*. To make any sense at all, the context in the play would have to be explained to the audience. A performance at this pace could be effective within a performance of Heine's drama, but it has never been suggested that Stanford proposed writing music for a stage production of *William Ratcliff*, or even that he saw one. He later recalled a number of visits to the theatre during his time in Leipzig<sup>7</sup> and *William Ratcliff* is not mentioned. It enjoyed bad press among Heine's admirers, was not performed during his lifetime and I have found no definite information about a German production at all, though an Italian translation by Andrea Maffei had been staged in Milan in the early 1870s. This was unsuccessful, but paved the way for Mascagni's opera on the same subject<sup>8</sup>. It seems more likely that Stanford found the poem in an anthology of Heine's works, with the title *Schlummerlied*, and knew nothing of its origins. Taken at face value, *Schlummerlied* is a beautifully crafted song and the Varcoe-Benson performance should disappoint no one, though it might be interesting to hear the proto-Straussian melismas negotiated by a Straussian soprano or mezzo.

There is another point to consider. The first six notes of the melody are identical to those of the Brahms *Wiegenlied*. One notices this surprisingly little, because the rhythmic shape is different – the two repeated notes are at the beginning of the bar in Stanford while they form an upbeat in the Brahms – and the

<sup>5</sup> By Richard Wigmore. *Stanford: Songs, Volume 1*. Stephen Varcoe (baritone), Clifford Benson (piano), CDA67123. 1999.

<sup>6</sup> See note 5.

<sup>7</sup> *Stanford: Pages from an Unwritten Diary*, Edward Arnold 1914, p. 147.

<sup>8</sup> A graduate thesis by Marianne Anderson, *An Analysis of Heinrich Heine's Dramatic Works: "Almansor" and "William Ratcliff"*, Utah State University, May 1980, gives a detailed analysis of *Ratcliff* but no information about its first production. See <https://digitalcommons.usu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=5601&context=etd>, retrieved 30 October 2023. An article *The Making of Mascagni's "Guglielmo Ratcliff"* gives information about the play's Italian history and implies that it was not produced in Germany, see <http://www.jmucci.com/opera/operamusic/ratcliff/ratcliff4.htm>, retrieved 30 October 2023.

melismatic continuation is quite different. So, of course, is the underlying accompaniment. If you sang it to the words “Guten Abend, gut’ nacht”, which would fit but with altered phrasing, the cat would be out of the bag at once. Was Stanford himself among those who did not notice, or did he have an agenda? In a 1997 article, available on MWI<sup>9</sup>, I discussed Stanford’s use of musical quotations to make his points, such as the insertion of an autobiographical reference to the first of Brahms’s *Liebeslieder Walzer* in his Fourth Symphony. In a more recent article in this series, I discussed the intentionality or not of the apparent Brahms quotation in the *Irish Symphony*<sup>10</sup>. Was he deliberately staking a claim in the world of the lullaby, cockily saying “look what I can do with this theme?” Before anyone protests at the cheek of the man, it is worth remembering that Brahms’s famous opening was in its turn derived from a vocal duet by Alexander Baumann, *S’is Anderscht*. Brahms dedicated his *Wiegenlied* to his friend Bertha Faber on the birth of her second son. Some years earlier, Brahms had been in love with Bertha, and during this time she used to sing this song to him. By weaving it into his own piece, Brahms found a way of sharing common memories that not even Bertha’s husband need suspect. This has come to light, of course, fairly recently<sup>11</sup>. Any attempts to poke and pry into Brahms’s private life in the 1870s would have been firmly repulsed by the composer. However, if Baumann’s piece was popular in its day, the resemblance would surely have been noted and an inner message suspected, even if nobody knew what it was. This would give Stanford some justification for an innocent little piece of musical referencing. All the same, the resemblance may be accidental after all.

### A Lullaby, op. 29 no. 2

Context may again be a problem – if we choose to make it one – with Stanford’s next original lullaby. This, the second of his *Six Songs* op. 19, is dated May 1882 on the score and is a setting of the famous poem attributed to Thomas Dekker, *Golden Slumbers*. The poem, as Stanford himself notes, comes from the play *Patient Grissel*, which appeared in 1599 and was co-authored by Dekker, William Houghton and Henry Chettle. Tradition has attributed the songs in it to Dekker<sup>12</sup>. The play draws upon a story better known from Boccaccio’s *Griselda* and Chaucer’s *The Clerke’s Tale*. The lullaby is sung by Janicola, Grissel’s father, to his grandchildren before they are forcibly dragged away to what Grissel euphemistically describes as “this ungentle doom”. Under the circumstances, the sweet little poem becomes tinged with irony. The longer the children’s “golden slumbers” last, the better for them, since smiles will not awake them when they rise. The sense of the line about “you are care and care shall keep you”, sufficiently enigmatic to have been bowdlerized in domestic versions, becomes clear in the context<sup>13</sup>.

The context certainly would not have bothered the many mothers, including my own, who lulled their children to sleep singing it to the folk tune *May Fair*. It is included, with this tune, in *The National Song Book*<sup>14</sup>. Were Stanford, Warlock, Howells, Casella (a slightly acid take on *May Fair*) and others, including The Beatles

<sup>9</sup> [“Stanford and Musical Quotation”](#)

<sup>10</sup> [The Irish Symphony](#)

<sup>11</sup> The relationship between the Brahms and Baumann pieces is discussed in detail by Karen Bottge in *Brahms’s “Wiegenlied” and the Maternal Voice*, 19th Century Music vol. 28 no. 3 (Spring 2005), pp.185-213. This can be read at <https://www.jstor.org/stable/10.1525/ncm.2005.28.3.185>, viewed 30 October 2023.

<sup>12</sup> They also include *Art thou poor, yet hast thou golden slumbers?* which Stanford set for two-part chorus and piano in 1914 (op.138/6). Later still, he set a further poem by Dekker, *The Merry Month of May* (published posthumously in 1928).

<sup>13</sup> For an extensive examination of Dekker’s authorship and the context of the poem, see *Thomas Dekker, Rock Star: “Golden Slumbers,” the Beatles, and the Wages of Authorship*, by James J. Marino, *Journal for Early Modern Cultural Studies*, Vol. 15, No. 4 (Fall 2015), pp. 1-21, at [https://www.jstor.org/stable/jearlmodcultstud.15.4.1?read-now=1#page\\_scan\\_tab\\_contents](https://www.jstor.org/stable/jearlmodcultstud.15.4.1?read-now=1#page_scan_tab_contents), viewed 30 October 2023.

<sup>14</sup> *The National Song Book, A Complete Collection of Folk-Songs, Carols and Rounds suggested by the Board of Education (1905), edited and arranged for the use of schools by Charles Villiers Stanford*. Boosey 1906. A curious feature of these very simple arrangements is that some are initialled C.V.S. while others are not, though the style is consistent and no collaborator is named. *Golden Slumbers* is not initialled, but implicitly belongs in the Stanford canon.

with a version guaranteed to wake every baby within earshot, aware of the context? Howells entitled his 1948 setting for two-part chorus and piano *An Old Man's Lullaby*, so it looks as if he knew it was sung by Janicola. Stanford's choice of a baritone, Gerard F. Cobb, to sing the first performance of his setting at a CUMS concert on 15 October 1882<sup>15</sup>, possibly implies similar knowledge. If so, he maybe considered the poem to have become sufficiently decontextualized to leave him free simply to write a beautiful lullaby. He used the original form of the poem, with modernized spelling, while allowing a bowdlerized form to appear in *The National Song Book*. The omission of the last line of each verse is usual when the words are sung to *May Fair*.

<p>Golden slumbers kiss your eyes, Smiles awake you when you rise, Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry, And I will sing you a lullaby, Rock them, rock them, lullaby.</p> <p>Care is heavy, therefore sleep you,, You are care, and care must keep you, Sleep, pretty wantons, do not cry, And I will sing you a lullaby, Rock them, rock them, lullaby.</p> <p>Thomas Dekker, as set in Stanford op.19 no. 2</p>	<p>Golden slumbers, kiss your eyes, Smile awake you when you rise; Sleep, pretty maiden, do not cry, And I will sing a lullaby.</p> <p>Care you know not, therefore sleep, While I o'er you watch do keep; Sleep, pretty maiden, do not cry, And I will sing a lullaby.</p> <p>Thomas Dekker, as in <i>The National Song Book</i>, edited by Stanford</p>
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I will discuss the *May Fair* arrangement under unison songs. For the solo song, Stanford expands his harmonic means compared with *Schlummerlied* while maintaining the utmost simplicity. In place of a drone bass, he has an ostinato motive on the piano that serves for the introductory two bars and as underpin for the first four bars of the melody. Melodically, the ostinato motive is no more than an upward scale, but a modal one with a flattened leading note though equally, it is also a diatonic scale starting on the dominant and is thus harmonized. The slight modal suggestion is nevertheless attractive. Following this, the rhythm is subtly altered, introducing a hemiola under the sixth bar of the melody, while delicate chromatic touches hint at more distant tonalities, all this in a mere two bars before the original key is re-established. The interesting thing is that the tune itself has no modulation and could be sung over a drone bass as in *Schlummerlied*. It is enriched, though, by the extra harmonic and rhythmic resources in a way that should be readily perceived by the listener, over and above the technicalities involved. The melody itself has an affecting charm.

The recording by Stephen Varcoe<sup>16</sup> offers detailed phrasing and an intimate approach. Since Stanford himself chose a baritone for the first performance, we need hardly look further, though an attractive performance by a soprano is available on YouTube, from the graduate recital at Missouri University by Ana Leigh Jantz. The pianist is not named, nor is the date, though it was posted on YouTube in 2010. It is encouraging that Stanford should be chosen in Missouri though a comparison with Varcoe points to the difference between a promising student and the finished product. This song has also been arranged for use as a church anthem by Philip Moore, substituting Dekker's poem with Isaac Watts' *Cradle Song*. This has four verses compared with Dekker's two; Moore alternates verses sung "as is" by a solo treble with more elaborate choral verses. It is tastefully done, but four verses seem too many. The one recording I know is excellent<sup>17</sup>.

<sup>15</sup> See Hudson *ibid*, L 8, for the complete programme of this concert.

<sup>16</sup> *Stanford: Songs, Volume 2*. Stephen Varcoe (baritone), Clifford Benson (piano), CDA67124. 1999.

<sup>17</sup> Angus Armstrong (treble), Winchester College Chapel Choir/Malcolm Archer, with Jamal Sutton (organ), Convivium CR 027. Recorded in 2014 in Merton College Chapel, Oxford.

**Lullaby, op.175 no. 5**

Many years were to pass before Stanford wrote another lullaby for solo voice and piano. The *Six Songs* op. 175 were published in 1920 (1-3) and 1921 (4-6)<sup>18</sup>. Before discussing the music, we need to sort out who the poet was and, if it matters, whether his name should be hyphenated or not.

In the booklet for the Somm recording<sup>19</sup>, Jeremy Dibble tells us it “is a setting of a text by Granville George Leveson-Gower, 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Granville, who was a prominent politician in the Liberal party, particularly as a foreign minister during the American Civil War”. Turning the booklet pages to where the poem is reproduced, we find the author described as George Leveson-Gower (1858-1951). Leaving aside the extra “n”, doubtless a misprint, the dates imply a remarkable situation, for the American Civil War lasted from 1861 to 1865. Leveson-Gower would therefore have been three years old when it broke out and seven when it ended. There have certainly been times when foreign ministries, in the UK and elsewhere, have been conducted in such a way that it might have been safer for us all if a three-year-old had been put in charge. But it has never been suggested that such an experiment was tried so long ago. There is a seeming confusion between two Leveson-Gowers (there are several others who need not concern us). The career of the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Granville, Granville George Leveson-Gower (1815-1891), was as described by Dibble<sup>20</sup>, except that his three terms as Foreign Secretary (1851-1852, 1870-1874, 1880-1885) do not coincide with the years of the American Civil War. His second term was notable, however, for healing British relations with the USA in the aftermath of that war<sup>21</sup>. Sir George Granville Leveson-Gower (1858-1951) came from another wing of the family and was also a Liberal politician. He was Commissioner of Woods and Forests from 1908 to 1924. So which of them wrote the poem?

One George Leveson Gower published a volume of poems in 1902<sup>22</sup>. The question of the hyphen now raises its head, since the title page has none, nor is there one on the first page of Stanford’s score. Is this another Leveson(-)Gower? Apparently not. On the next page, we find a poem dedicating the book to his wife Cicely – George Leveson-Gower’s wife was the Honourable Adelaide Violet Cicely Monson. They were married in 1898. Turn another page and we find some acknowledgments signed G. Leveson-Gower. Possibly the poet differentiated himself from the politician by dropping the hyphen<sup>23</sup>. Unfortunately, the poem set by Stanford is not included in this volume, so we have no final evidence that he was the author, but at least we have

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<sup>18</sup> These songs were issued by J. B. Cramer but not in album form, only separately with a uniform cover listing all six of them plus *Fairy Lures*, which has no opus number. On the first page, each song is simply described as “op. 175”, without a subsidiary number. By a tradition not traceable to Stanford’s own day, the order has always been given as 1. *The Song of the Bow*, 2. *Drop me a flower*, 3. *The Winds of Bethlehem*, 4. *The Monkey’s Carol*, 5. *Lullaby*, 6. *The Unknown Sea*. The individual songs are not listed in the *Musical Times* review (April 1922, p.247), nor in Porte (John F. Porte: *Sir Charles V. Stanford*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co. 1921, p.136), nor in Grove III (ed. Colles, MacMillan 1938, Vol. 5, p.122). In Grove V, the songs are listed in the order given above, and this has been followed by Hudson, Dibble, Rodmell and others, but it would be interesting to know the authority for this order. No manuscript has been located, but at the time research was being done for Grove V, Stanford’s children Guy and Geraldine were still alive, so the researcher may have had access to information since disappeared. For what it is worth, the uniform cover for the Cramer publication lists them in the order *The Monkey’s Carol*, *Lullaby*, *Song of the Bow*, *Drop Me a Flower*, *The Winds of Bethlehem*, *The Unknown Sea*, but this hardly provides authority for renumbering the songs. Cramer’s plate numbers imply another order again: 12617 (*Bow*), 12618 (*Drop*), 12619 (*Winds*), 12662 (*Unknown*), 12663 (*Monkey’s*), 12664 (*Lullaby*).

<sup>19</sup> *Charles Villiers Stanford: Children’s Songs*, SOMMCD 0655. Kitty Whately (mezzo-soprano), Gareth Brynmor John (baritone), Susie Allen (piano). 2022

<sup>20</sup> Also Hudson, *ibid*, L 21, attributes the poem to “G. Leveson-Gower, 1815-1891”.

<sup>21</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/history/past-foreign-secretaries/george-gower>, retrieved 26.11.2023.

<sup>22</sup> *Poems by George Leveson Gower*, Heinemann 1902. It can be read here:

<https://archive.org/details/poemsbygeorgelev00leveiala/page/n9/mode/2up>, viewed 12.11.2023.

<sup>23</sup> There is also no hyphen on the title page of his autobiographical *Years of Content 1858-1886*, John Murray 1940.

proof that he wrote poetry, while I find no suggestion that the 2<sup>nd</sup> Earl Granville did so<sup>24</sup>. It looks, therefore, as if the later of these two Leveson-Gowers wrote the lullaby that caught Stanford's eye.

The poem itself is simple and nicely phrased, but it offers some challenges to the composer. It suggests a poet with an ear for the short-term lilt of the words but less control over the larger span, since the lines are of unequal length. This may have been intended experimentally, but the general tenor hardly implies revolutionary ambitions. This is consistent with the poems in the 1902 volume.

The wind is weary, all but asleep,  
Lazily, lazily, up the long hill  
From the misty marches it scarce can creep,  
Sleep, my baby, sleep and be still.

Hardly a whisper is heard from the water,  
Scarcely a ripple, hardly a thrill,  
Slumber my sweet one, slumber my daughter,  
Slumber still.

Bees no longer hum in the clover,  
Birds are hush'd, and the languid sun  
Has sunk in the sea,  
For the day is over,  
Toil is ended and rest begun,  
The long day is done.

Hardly a whisper is heard from the water,  
Scarcely a ripple, hardly a thrill,  
Slumber my sweet one, slumber my daughter,  
Slumber still.

Starlight comes, and the night grows deep:  
Sleep my darling, slumber and sleep<sup>25</sup>.

George Leveson Gower

Stanford negotiates the irregular line lengths with occasional word repetitions and vocal melismas. This is the richest and subtlest of the three numbered lullabies. He begins with a repetitive motif rather on the lines of the op. 19 piece, but it is more pianistically refined, almost impressionistic, and he soon leaves it for other things. The first line ends with a long held note for the voice while the piano echoes the melody just sung. A rocking rhythm gradually takes over while, at the refrain "Hardly a whisper", the piano joins the voice a sixth lower, creating a sense of rising intensity. Memorable, too, is the supertonic seventh chord underpinning "Slumber, my sweet one" (if you do not understand the technical description, you will appreciate the sense of longing). The second verse is skilfully recomposed to accommodate the different line lengths and the end is exquisite. This song had to wait till 2022 for a recording. Kitty Whately and Susie Allen give a beautifully poised rendition.

<sup>24</sup> An admittedly cursory perusal of the very detailed *The Life of Granville George Leveson Gower, Second Earl Granville, KG, 1815-1891*, by Lord Edmond Fitzmaurice, in 2 volumes, Longman, Green and Co., 1905, revealed no suggestion that the Earl was also a poet. <https://archive.org/details/lifeofgranvilleg01fitzuoft/page/n15/mode/2up>, viewed 12.11.2023.

<sup>25</sup> Since I have not found an independent publication of the poem, I have divided the lines on the basis of the capital letters in the printed score. In the booklet to the Somm CD, they are divided slightly differently.

### A Japanese Lullaby

It may be argued that *A Japanese Lullaby* properly belongs under unison songs, since it was first published in this form by Edward Arnold in 1918. However, it is one of the Stanford songs that remained relatively well known even while his reputation was at its lowest, and always as a solo song. In any case, since musical education in the UK did not take the direction Stanford hoped, the only chance for the vast repertoire of unison, 2-part and 3-part songs written for educational use by Stanford and many others to be heard at all depends on their viability and effectiveness for solo singers. In the present case, too, the tessitura seems better suited to solo singing – untrained voices would tend to go sharp in the higher-lying phrases.

It was issued as a solo song by Cramer. The score acknowledges that it is published by “kind permission” of Edward Arnold and repeats the Arnold copyright notice, but does not give a date for Cramer’s own publication. The plate number shows that it was issued in 1928<sup>26</sup>. It was broadcast on 4 August 1935<sup>27</sup> by Nora Gruhn<sup>28</sup>, accompanied by Harold Samuel, a Stanford pupil. Perhaps this helped to put it on the map.

This is another song where the context may be an issue. The poem is by Eugene Field (1850-1895). This American poet is known almost exclusively for his children’s poems, such as *Wynken, Blynken and Nod*, though he also worked as a journalist specialized in humorous articles. While some children’s authors originally aimed at an adult market and became children’s favourites by stealth, Field seems to have had a touch of the Peter Pan syndrome, remaining prone to exercise practical jokes on friends and colleagues and to pull funny faces at children when adults were not looking. He married in 1875 and had eight children, but handed his salary over to his wife, recognizing that he was incapable of managing his affairs responsibly. Why would a person retain a child’s mentality after reaching physical maturity? One reason could be that he was subjected to an experience in childhood that blocked his emotional growth. In his last years, Field published anonymously *Only a Boy*, a description from a 12-year-old boy’s point of view of a paedophilic relationship with a woman some thirty years his senior. I have not read this and I do not expect to. I doubt if it could be definitely established whether it is gratuitous filth (it enjoyed underground circulation for some years among people who like that sort of thing) or a cathartic exploration of an event that marked his life for ever. When Field was six, his mother died and his father sent him to be brought up on the farm of his aunt Mary French, and his cousin Mary Field French<sup>29</sup>. The cousin was twenty-five years older than Eugene and in the poem *To Mary Field French* he pays tribute to her “gracious love” and “patient heart”: “A dying mother gave to you / Her child a many years ago”. He concludes by declaring his “love and gratitude to you”. This sounds innocent if strongly worded. Perhaps there were neighbours.

<sup>26</sup> I do not have a full run of Cramer publications with their plate numbers, but the following should suffice as proof: 13420 M. Shaw: *Up tails, all* 1928; 13433 Craxton/Moffat: Defesch *Les Flûtes* 1928; 13494 Stanford: *A Japanese Lullaby* nd; 13496 Dyson: *Primrose Mount* 1928; 13505 Di Veroli: *Arabesca* 1928; 14476 Stanford: *The Merry Month of May* 1928; 14477 Stanford: *Witches’ Charms* 1928; 13530 Dunhill: *The Holy Babe* 1928.

<sup>27</sup> *The Radio Times*, issue dated 2 August 1935, p. 16.

<sup>28</sup> Nora Gruhn, originally Grunebaum (1905-2001), was a regular presence on BBC programmes as well as in the major British opera houses in the 1930s and 1940s, after which she gradually retired and taught singing until a late age, as well as developing an interest in musical therapy. See <https://www.encyclopedia.com/arts/dictionaries-thesauruses-pictures-and-press-releases/gruhn> for a brief bio, <https://tonyseymour.com/people/david-sisserman/> for music therapy (scroll down to “Dr Sydney Mitchell”, Gruhn’s husband), and <https://www.manifestmarketing.co.uk/my-fairy-godmother/> for some interesting recollections. Retrieved 15.11.2023.

<sup>29</sup> Various accounts state there was an aunt, a cousin or both. As far as I can ascertain, the farm at Amherst, Massachusetts was inhabited by Mary Hubbard French, née Field (1804-1879, the aunt), whose husband, Theodore Francis French (1795-1828), was long dead, and her daughter, Mary Field French (1825-1900, the cousin). See <https://www.ancestry.com/genealogy/records/mary-field-french-24-14zvq> and Mary Field French obituary in the *Rockland County Journal*, 21 April 1900, <https://news.hrvh.org/veridian/?a=d&d=rocklandctyjourn19000421.2.31&e=-----en-20--1--txt-txIN----->, both retrieved 16.11.2023.

*Only a Boy* was not published under Field's own name until 1968, so we can safely say that Stanford had no idea that the author of the poem he set had written such a book. The question is, whether this superficially innocent poem contains any hints that a reader sensitive to poetic atmospheres and images might pick up.

**Japanese Lullaby<sup>30</sup>**

Sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,—  
 Little blue pigeon with velvet eyes;  
 Sleep to the singing of mother-bird swinging—  
 Swinging the nest where her little one lies.

Away out yonder I see a star,—  
 Silvery star with a tinkling song;  
 To the soft dew falling I hear it calling—  
 Calling and tinkling the night along.

In through the window a moonbeam comes,—  
 Little gold moonbeam with misty wings;  
 All silently creeping, it asks, "Is he sleeping—  
 Sleeping and dreaming while mother sings?"

*Up from the sea there floats the sob  
 Of the waves that are breaking upon the shore,  
 As though they were groaning in anguish, and moaning—  
 Bemoaning the ship that shall come no more.*

But sleep, little pigeon, and fold your wings,—  
 Little blue pigeon with mournful eyes;  
 Am I not singing?—see, I am swinging—  
 Swinging the nest where my darling lies.

Eugene Field. The verse in italics was not set by Stanford.

The answer is: possibly. Does the "little gold moonbeam", "all silently creeping", have wholly benevolent intentions? Why does it want to know if the little pigeon "sleeping and dreaming"? It certainly takes note that the mother is looking the other way. What should we make of the suddenly troubled fourth verse, which Stanford must have read even if he preferred to omit it? Why does the little pigeon have "mournful eyes"? And, if the moonbeam is an unwelcome intruder, would the little pigeon not expect the mother bird to protect him, rather than just go on singing and swinging? These are doubts that may come if we know about *Only a Boy*. Stanford did not, so how do we view his setting?

The music is pervaded by the motif of the pigeon's song – a phrase he had already inserted in the love duet in the opera *Much Ado about Nothing*. The piano plays it first unharmonized and Stanford catches perfectly the bird's irritating way of suddenly stopping in mid-phrase. The music veers from minor to major. Particularly memorable is the abrupt return to the minor during the interlude between verses two and three. Although the song ends in the major, the piano inserts a dark, minor-key chord just before the final cadence.

<sup>30</sup> Though Stanford entitled the song *A Japanese Lullaby*, Field's original title had no indefinite article.



So how to interpret it? Whately and Allen take a fairly swift tempo, concentrating on charm and cuteness. If you reject as irrelevant all that I have said above, you may prefer it this way. The undersigned with the Italian mezzo-soprano Elisabetta Paglia combined a slower tempo – more than a minute longer – with the lower key<sup>31</sup>. As a result, the music exudes unease, even foreboding. Passing to this after Whately, I wondered if we had not overdone it. Listening separately, I stand by what we did and I think the music can bear this extra weight. Is there a middle way? Perhaps James Griffett and Clifford Benson found one long ago<sup>32</sup>. Their tempo is poised between the two extremes and this is a restrained interpretation that nevertheless expresses a considerable sense of longing. Incidentally, I have seen no commentary, on either the words or the music, that explains why this lullaby is Japanese.

### Irish traditional lullabies arranged for solo voice and piano

#### 50 Songs of Old Ireland

4. Ancient Lullaby; 9. Fairy Nurse Song; 30. An Irish Lullaby

In 1876, Stanford published his first specifically Irish songs. These were also his first collaborations with Alfred Perceval Graves (1846-1931), who was to provide the texts for his subsequent albums of Irish folk tune arrangements. The songs, published by Chappell<sup>33</sup>, were three. Two – *From the Red Rose* and *Irish Eyes* – were original compositions. The third, *An Irish Lullaby*, was arranged from a traditional melody. This arrangement was later incorporated in *Songs of Old Ireland*, a collection of fifty settings, with words by Graves, dedicated to Brahms and published by Boosey in 1882. Apart from a few adjustments to the words, *An Irish Lullaby* remained identical.

The melody had first appeared in Petrie's first collection of 1855<sup>34</sup>. George Petrie (1790-1866) was perhaps the most celebrated of early collectors of Irish folk tunes. He only published a small number of the tunes he had accumulated. A fragment of a second volume appeared posthumously in 1882, after which the whole collection was put in the hands of Stanford, whose edition appeared in 1902-5<sup>35</sup>. Stanford's edition published the tunes only. Petrie, according to the practice of the day, provided simple piano arrangements and any words he had gleaned from the original singers. Thus, the tune (only) of *An Irish Lullaby* is printed in Stanford's edition as no. 1011, while it can be found in Petrie's 1855 volume on p. 145 arranged for piano and with words, culled from different sources as Petrie tells us, in Irish and English<sup>36</sup>. The English words may be a literal translation from the Irish, since they do not fit the tune, and Graves does not attempt to adapt them, retaining only the "cradle of gold" image. I give below Graves' poem, with the first verse from Petrie's English

<sup>31</sup> *Sir Charles Villiers Stanford: Love's White Flame, Songs Vol. 1*. Elisabetta Paglia, mezzo-soprano, Christopher Howell, piano, Da Vinci Classics C00304, 2020.

<sup>32</sup> *Stanford: Songs from the Elfin Pedlar*. James Griffett (tenor), Clifford Benson (piano). Hyperion A66058, 1982.

<sup>33</sup> Hudson, *ibid*, M 6, states that *An Irish Lullaby* was published by Boosey, but the 1876 edition in the British Library (Holding 1779 L, accession date 3 April 1876) was published by Chappell.

<sup>34</sup> *The Petrie Collection of the Ancient Music of Ireland. Arranged for the Pianoforte. Edited by George Petrie. Vol. 1. M. H. Gill, Dublin, 1855.*

<sup>35</sup> *The Complete Collection of Irish Music as Noted by George Petrie. Edited, from the Original Manuscripts, by Charles Villiers Stanford*. Published in three parts for the Irish Literary Society of London by Boosey and Co. 1902-5. Facsimile edition by Dover, 2003.

<sup>36</sup> A later collector, Edith Costello, felt that Petrie had the barring wrong, "as the strong beat falls on an unaccented word" (*Traditional Folk-Songs from Galway and Mayo. Collected and Edited by Mrs. Costello. Tuam*. The Talbot Press, Dublin, 1923, but previously issued in Vol. 16 of the Irish Folksong Society Journal, 1916. Viewed at <https://archive.org/details/amhrinmhuighesel00cost/page/84/mode/2up>, 20.11.2023). It would need a reader versed in the Irish language to verify this. However, Costello provides a completely different tune (no. 46) which she heard sung to the same words (also set by Stanford in 1924, see below). If you tried to sing the same words to the two tunes, the accents would be wrong in one or the other, so probably Costello is right about this.

words. It can be seen that Graves added a veneer of romanticism, some may say of Victorian cuteness, that was not there in the first place.

<p>I'd rock my own sweet childie to rest          In a cradle of gold, on a bough of the willow,          To the <i>shoheen sho</i> of the wind of the west,          And the <i>lullalo</i> of the soft sea billow.              Sleep baby dear,              Sleep without fear,          Mother is here beside your pillow.</p> <p>I'd put my own sweet childie to sleep          In a silver boat on the beautiful river,          Where a <i>shoheen</i> whisper the white cascades,          And a <i>lullalo!</i> the green flags shiver,              Sleep baby dear,              Sleep without fear,          Mother is here with you for ever.</p> <p><i>Lullalo</i> to the rise and fall          Of mother's bosom 'tis sleep has bound you,          And oh, my child, what cosier nest          For rosier rest could love have found you?              Sleep, baby dear,              Sleep without fear,          Mother's two arms are clasped around you.</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Alfred Perceval Graves</p>	<p>I would put my own child to sleep,          And not the same as the wives of the clowns do,          Under a yellow blanket and a sheet of tow,          But in a cradle of gold, rocked by the wind.              Shoheen sho, hoo lo lo,              Shoheen sho, you are my child.</p> <p>Original Irish words (in English translation) as given          by Petrie (first verse only)</p>
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Though hardly great poetry, Graves' words, here and throughout the collections in which he collaborated with Stanford, are neatly phrased and agreeable to sing.

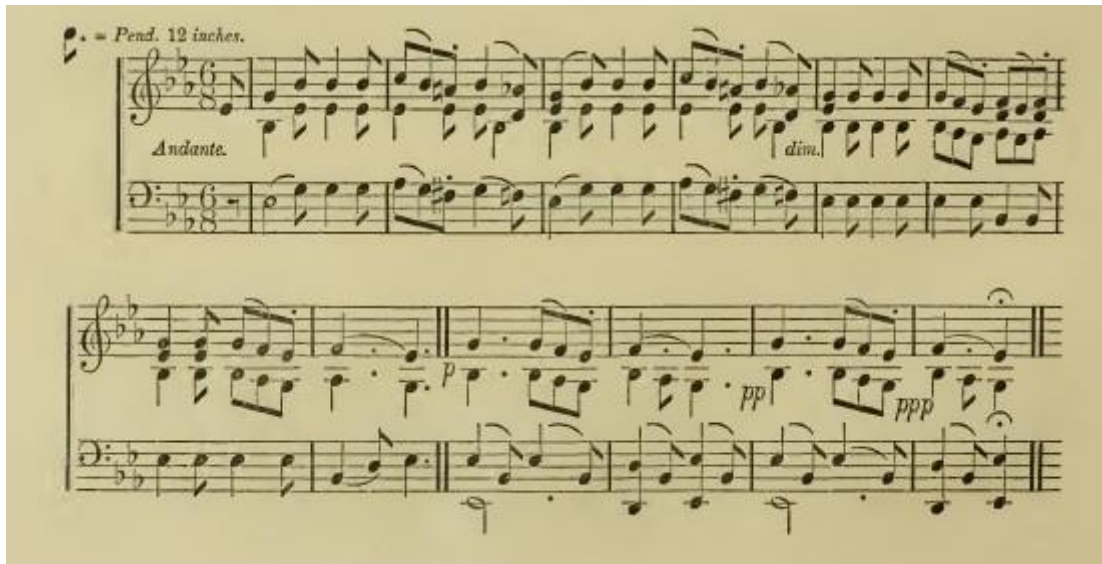
From 1882 onwards, Stanford set the Irish melodies as Petrie and others had notated them. A comparison with either the 1855 or the 1902-5 editions shows that at this early stage he was prepared to make small alterations, to some degree making the tune his own. Stanford was happy to follow Petrie in setting the first part of the tune over a tonic pedal, combining it, however, with a gently flowing accompaniment in the right hand to create a tenderly romantic atmosphere, almost impressionistic with its persistent addition of notes extraneous to the harmony. When the time comes to leave the pedal bass, he is far more enterprising and subtle than Petrie but also, with his chromatic lines, more inclined to pull the work towards German romantic terrain. He is nevertheless able to express a sense of longing that adds a dimension Petrie is unable to achieve. The truly remarkable thing about this setting is that in the second verse, the pedal bass becomes a dominant pedal and, even more strikingly, in the third verse it becomes a submediant pedal. This latter is a stroke of extraordinary originality, such that we must accept the song, folk-song based though it is, as "owned" by Stanford and a masterly composition in its own right.

The originality of the third verse seems to have shocked Bernadette Greevy, whose recording, excellent as far as it goes, stops at the end of the second verse<sup>37</sup>. As mentioned at the beginning of this article, Victoria de los Angeles recorded a version in which Stanford's work has been heavily overlaid by Douglas Gamley. He retains Stanford's initial motivic accompaniment and he also retains the submediant pedal – only two verses

<sup>37</sup> *A Sheaf of Songs from Ireland*. Bernadette Greevy (mezzo-soprano), Hugh Tinney (piano). Marco Polo 8.225098, 1996.

are sung. It sounds less startling when smothered in Canteloube-and-honey orchestral colours and countermelodies. A pity, since the singing itself could hardly be improved upon. All three verses, as written, but with the melody played on a flute, can be heard in the recording by Gilberto Fornito accompanied by the undersigned<sup>38</sup>. Not everybody thought it was a good idea to perform these pieces without the words but, as of now, this version is the nearest you will find to what Stanford wrote<sup>39</sup>.

*An Ancient Lullaby* is no. 1007 in Stanford's Petrie edition and this, too, had already appeared in Petrie's 1855 volume, with a simple piano accompaniment though with no words. It is a particularly strong illustration of the tonal-chromatic problem that can discourage modern listeners, and it can be seen that the problem was already there with Petrie. I try to avoid using musical examples in these articles, since the MWI readership has a large mix from professional musicians to people who enjoy listening but have little or no technical knowledge. In this case, though, it makes it so much easier for those with ability to read music to understand what I am saying that I shall have to beg the patience of those who feel excluded. Illustrated here is the tune as originally set by Petrie.



The question is, what did Jane Ross, who supplied the tune to Petrie, actually hear, and what happened when she wrote it down?

When a singer not accustomed to having an accompaniment sings a phrase that goes, as here, from C to B flat to A, then back up again to B flat, they will sing the A higher than they will if the phrase goes from B flat to A, then on down to G, as happens immediately afterwards in this tune. This is because they are singing to a natural scale, literally the scale that nature itself makes. Jane Ross doubtless heard that the first of the As in this tune was higher than the second, and accordingly wrote one as a natural, the other as a flat. But this is to crystallize a natural inflection in a way that fits the direction western music has taken since the invention of equal tone tuning. The piano cannot reproduce what that singer really sang and renders it grotesque if it tries. Petrie not only took Ross's notation as correct, he accentuated it by accompanying the A natural with an F sharp. The result is like no folk music that existed, though it would fit quite nicely into a romantic

<sup>38</sup> *Stanford: Songs of Old Ireland*. Gilberto Fornito (flute), Christopher Howell (piano). Sheva SH 031, 2010.

<sup>39</sup> As an example of the cavalier treatment Stanford still gets, this piece can be downloaded here [https://www.celticcores.com/sheet-music/757 An Irish Lullaby](https://www.celticcores.com/sheet-music/757-An-Irish-Lullaby) in a straight scan from *Songs of Old Ireland*, but with the music described as "traditional" and the words unacknowledged. This is not actually illegal since the words and music are in the public domain, but morally it is reprehensible and may lead to performances where the singer and pianist, in perfect good faith, do not put the name of Stanford or Graves on the programme.

symphony, especially if played by two horns. Ethnomusicologists will shake their heads, but none existed in Stanford's day and indeed, Petrie himself was considered the leading expert in Irish folk music, so Stanford took it on board, F sharp included, in his own setting. With his own atmospheric piano accompaniment wrapped around it, the result is curiously haunting – he alluded to the opening figure much later in the *Boat Song* from *Nonsense Rhymes*. This apart, it is an exquisitely beautiful song, but it is better judged as Stanford than as an Irish traditional melody.

Graves tells us in a note that he based his text on “an old Celtic Irish Poem, of which the translation is given in ‘The Poets and Poetry of Ireland’, edited by Alfred M. Williams. J. R. Osgood and Co., Boston, U.S.A.”<sup>40</sup> I give below Graves' poem and the literal translation by Williams. Graves omitted two verses. Five may be too many even so. Since Stanford gives identical accompaniments to verses 1-2 and 3-4, a singer could perform just three without omitting anything Stanford wrote. For the unison voices arrangement in *The National Song Book*, discussed below, only the first three verses were given. It is not clear whether Graves worked from the original Irish text or from Williams' translation – which appeared only a year before the publication of *Songs of Old Ireland*. Either way, he added some romantic imagery of his own, with a sentimental rewriting of the last verse. More enjoyable to sing than to read, perhaps.

Much later, Graves included this melody with other words, not his, and two verses only, in *The Irish Song Book*<sup>41</sup>. The tune, without any accompaniment, is reproduced as in Petrie, though in a different key. Rather earlier, Graves included both *An Irish Lullaby* and *An Ancient Lullaby*, without any textual variants, in *Father O'Flynn and Other Irish Lyrics*<sup>42</sup>. This followed *Songs of Old Ireland* by a few years, but *An Irish Lullaby* had already appeared, identical except that it has *Shularoo* in place of *Lullalo*, in Graves' first published book of poems, *Songs of Killarney*<sup>43</sup>. It had therefore existed for a few years before the Stanford arrangement was published. So did Graves intend it to be sung to this tune from the beginning, or was it Stanford who realized the poem could be sung to this melody? In general, the relationship between Graves' poems and the tunes to which they were set by Stanford needs clarification. Reading Plunket Greene<sup>44</sup>, we get the idea that Graves provided the words to Stanford's instructions, and was quite often made to change them. But, while *Father Flynn and Other Irish Lyrics* contains many poems that had previously appeared in *Songs of Old Ireland*, it also contains some, such as the famous *Trottin' to the Fair*, here called *Riding Double*, that did not appear in a Stanford arrangement till much later. Did Graves provide words for tunes selected by Stanford, then, or did he marry words and tunes himself, providing Stanford with a *fait accompli* to which he had only to write an accompaniment? Since the collaboration seems to have been an amicable one – no easy matter given Stanford's temperament – perhaps it was a bit of both.

<sup>40</sup> 1881. <https://archive.org/details/poetspoetryofire00willrich/page/n5/mode/2up>, viewed 18.11.2023.

<sup>41</sup> *The Irish Song Book with Original Irish Airs, edited with an Introduction and Notes by Alfred Perceval Graves*. T. Fisher Unwin Ltd, 1894, no. 109.

<sup>42</sup> Swan Sonnenschein and Co., London 1889.

<sup>43</sup> Bradbury, Agnew and Co., London, 1873.

<sup>44</sup> Harry Plunket Greene: *Charles Villiers Stanford*. Edward Arnold, 1935, p. 169 et seq.

## Ancient Lullaby

O sleep my baby, you are sharing  
 With the sun in rest repairing;  
 While the moon her silver chair in  
 Watches with your mother.  
 Shoheen, sho lo. Lulla lo lo.

The morning on a bed of roses,  
 Evening on rude hills reposes:  
 Dusk his heavy eyelid closes,  
 Under dreamy curtains.  
 Shoheen, sho lo. Lulla lo lo.

The winds lie lulled on bluest billows,  
 Shining stars on cloudy pillows,  
 Waters under nodding willows,  
 Mists upon the mountains.  
 Shoheen, sho lo. Lulla lo lo.

Upon the fruits, upon the flowers,  
 On the woodbirds in their bowers,  
 On low huts and lofty towers  
 Blessed sleep has fallen.  
 Shoheen, sho lo. Lulla lo lo.

And ah! my child, as free from cumber,  
 Thus thro' life could'st thou but slumber,  
 Thus in death go join the number  
 Of God's smiling angels.  
 Shoheen, sho lo. Lulla lo lo.

Alfred Perceval Graves

## 76 THE POETS AND POETRY OF IRELAND.

## NURSE'S SONG.

ANON. LITERAL VERSION.

SLEEP, my child, my darling child, my lovely child, sleep!  
 The sun sleepeth on the green fields,  
 The moon sleepeth on the blue waves,  
 Sleep, my child, my darling child, my lovely child, sleep!

The morning sleepeth upon a bed of roses,  
 The evening sleepeth on the tops of the dark hills;  
 Sleep, my child, my darling child, my lovely child, sleep!

The winds sleep in the hollow of the rocks,  
 The stars sleep upon a pillow of clouds;  
 Sleep, my child, my darling child, my lovely child, sleep!

The mist sleepeth on the bosom of the valley,  
 And the broad lake under the shade of the trees;  
 Sleep, my child, my darling child, my lovely child, sleep!

The flower sleeps, while the night dew falls,  
 And the wild-birds sleep upon the mountains;  
 Sleep, my child, my darling child, my lovely child, sleep!

The burning tear sleepeth upon the cheek of sorrow,  
 But thy sleep is not the sleep of tears;  
 Sleep, my child, my darling child, my lovely child, sleep!

Sleep in quiet, sleep in joy, my darling,  
 May thy sleep never be the sleep of sorrow!  
 Sleep, my child, my darling child, my lovely child, sleep!

Alfred M. Williams

*Fairy Nurse Song* is no. 1532 in Stanford's Petrie edition. It appears on p. 73 of Petrie's 1855 collection accompanied by a long poem and an even longer commentary. The poem refers to the theme, common in Irish literature, of a girl stolen by the fairies – see, for example, William Allingham's well-known poem "Up the airy mountain, down the rushy glen". Graves' own words, which he says are "founded upon a very ancient Irish poem", though he does not quote the source, are related to this same theme but are otherwise quite different from those in Petrie.

This song is a more straightforward case than the previous two. The melody itself has no dubious chromatic inflexions and the two verses are set to an identical accompaniment which is simple but attractive, with some charming harmonic touches. Though less striking than the other two settings discussed, it could prove no less appealing in performance. So far as I am aware, neither *An Ancient Lullaby* nor *Fairy Nurse Song* have so far been recorded.

## Fairy Nurse Song

Mortal babe the fays have brought me,  
 At your woe freshly flow  
 All the bitter griefs they wrought me  
 Long ago,  
*Shohoolo!*  
 When a blooming bride they snatched me,  
 Welladay!  
 From my husband's arms and matched me  
 With a fay.  
 Loveless here below I languish,  
*Shohoolo.*  
 From above  
 Hast thou come to soothe my anguish,  
 Cooing dove, with thy love.

Hush! my pretty, hush! my honey,  
*Shohoolo*, see my show,  
 Goblin gems and magpie money  
 How they glow!  
*Shohoolo!*  
 Bonny babe thou art beguiling,  
*Shohoolo!* by your joy  
 My sad lips at last to smiling,  
*Shohoolo!* bonny boy.  
 Soft the fringed curtain closes,  
 Closes quite,  
 O'er his sight;  
 On my bosom he reposes,  
 Love, goodnight.

Alfred Perceval Graves

**30 Irish Songs and Ballads**

10. Lullaby (Luimneach); 17. Hush Song (Luimneach)

*Irish Songs and Ballads*, once again with words by Graves, was published by Novello in 1893. It is perhaps the richest of the Graves collaborations. Stanford's imagination seems constantly engaged, his language more refined and personal than in *Songs of Old Ireland*, while in the later *Songs of Erin* there is sometimes a suggestion that the act had been got down to a practiced art.

*Luimneach* is an English transliteration of an Irish word that means not *Lullaby* but *Limerick*. The original meaning of this word and its association, if any, with the town of that name, let alone with the modern use of it to describe a form of humorous verse, is not clear. The word is thought to have meant, originally, a flat area of land. Moreover, while the first of these two tunes is entitled *Luimneach* in Petrie (no. 1539), the other (no. 1017) is called simply *Cradle Hymn*. Petrie also has the unexplained source for no. 1539, in brackets, of *Ossian's Poems*, while no. 1017 is stated to have come "from Mr. Southwell". Perhaps an ethnomusicologist could sort this out. Fortunately, these two pieces can be taken as art songs in their own right, and extremely beautiful ones.

Stanford (or Graves) reproduces the tune of *Lullaby* as it stands, but then repeats the second half, slightly extending it, very effectively. The three verses are wrapped in a delicate accompaniment that, beginning as a repetitive ostinato, develops into a constantly evolving flow of semi-quavers. Having queried some chromatic intrusions in the earlier settings, it is worth noting that here, in the first two verses, there is not an accidental in sight, while the few chromatic touches in the third tend provide no more than passing colour. Graves perhaps finds a greater simplicity here.

#### Lullaby

In the green arbutus shadow  
On the lovely banks of Laune,  
I would rock my laughing laddo  
In his cradle up and down;  
Up and down and to and fro,  
Singing lulla, lulla lo!

Soft cloud fleeces floating o'er us,  
Curtain up the staring sun!  
Pretty birds, in loving chorus  
Pipe around my precious one!  
Pipe your softest shoheen sho  
Tirra lira lullal lullalo!

See! the sky to brightest blossom  
Flow'rs within the furthest west,  
And the babe upon my bosom  
Flushes with the rose of rest;  
Whilst with magic light aglow  
Laune gives back my lulla, lullalo!

Alfred Perceval Graves

Beautiful as this is, I think *Hush Song* is more haunting still. Here, in the piano introduction, Stanford faces the contradiction between flattened and sharpened leading notes endemic to minor key folk tunes by having the two sound – though not actually struck – at the same time. There are five verses, but short ones and with Stanford's variegated and partly illustrative treatment – including a short half-verse sung unaccompanied – it is difficult to imagine anyone finding it too long. The repeated “dream” at the end may have been Stanford's idea. The tune in Petrie does not have these two extra notes but is otherwise unaltered.

#### Hush Song

Though the way be long and weary  
Over mountain, under wood,  
Mother will never mind it, deary,  
With you hammock'd in her hood.

Hush! my honey! See, my sonny,  
How from off the Autumn trees  
Sparkling showers of fairy money  
Fall and flutter in the breeze!

Hush! the Queen-bee to her levee,  
 Buzza-buzz! with humming sport,  
 From the blossoms in a bevy  
 Calls her golden glancing court,

Hark! the cushats without number  
 In the treetops o'er our track  
 Coo-a-coo, to smiling slumber  
 Coax the boyo on my back.

Shohee shoho! lullalolo!  
 Safe from sight and sound of harm,  
 Dream till daddy lifts his laddy  
 Laughing up upon his arm.  
 Dream! Dream!

Alfred Perceval Graves

No recording of *Lullaby* is known to me. A CD I have been unable to locate<sup>45</sup> included an item called *Hush Song* that may have been this one or the 1924 setting I discuss below. Under the bare title of *Hush Song*, a YouTube site has a transcription of this piece to a Midi file<sup>46</sup>. The channel owner “found” it “in a book of songs by Alfred Percival [sic!] Graves”. No mention of Stanford, but as the music plays, Stanford’s score is exactly reproduced in the video, apart from some copying errors. The Midi file treats it as a piece for violin and harp. The harp, or at any rate an electronic imitation of one, lacks the sonority to do justice to Stanford’s piano part and the synthetic violin is excruciating to my ears. This YouTube channel seems to be linked to a singer called Sue Whitehead, who has issued a number of albums available on Deezer and other streaming sites. She includes *Hush Song* on a CD called *Songs from a Faded Past*. No acknowledgement of either Stanford or Graves. This time the accompaniment is realized on a Midi file for a small instrumental ensemble, but the notes are all Stanford’s. A real singing voice should be an improvement over a synthetic violin, but there are intonation problems.

## 50 Songs of Erin, op. 76

### 21. Lullaby

Stanford’s third and last major collaboration with Graves, *Songs of Erin*, was published in 1901. I remarked above that this volume sometimes gives the impression of a well-rehearsed act, but I would not extend that to this beautiful *Lullaby*.

The rather long melody is obtained by combining two originally unrelated tunes. These are nos. 83/1006 and 1009 in Stanford’s Petrie edition. The latter was also included on p. 38 of Petrie’s posthumous 1882 collection. It would be interesting to know whether the idea to unite them was Stanford’s or Graves’. Ethnomusicologically correct or not, it was an inspired choice, the result seemingly more “complete” than the sum of its two parts. The “husho!” motive which appears between the two parts and at the end, as well as pervading the piano introduction, was presumably inserted by Stanford. Moreover, the verbal repetitions

<sup>45</sup> *Sir Charles Villiers Stanford: Irish Songs*. Maria Tölle (soprano), Daniel Gerlach (piano). Gema CD 021021. This was purchasable only through Amazon and is no longer available. Its release was noted by the Stanford Society in 2014. Unavailable CDs often linger around on YouTube or streaming sites such as Deezer, but this seems to have vanished. Information found 19.11.2023.

<sup>46</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7p-oatYntgc>, viewed 19.11.2023.



noted below allow us to speculate that Stanford may have been stretching words originally intended for just the first of the two separate tunes, to fit the new extended one. In which case, the idea to combine the tunes would have been Stanford's.

Once heard, the simple yet flowing accompaniment, delicately varied both texturally and harmonically for the second verse, seems inseparable from the tune. This song was printed singly under the title *I'll rock you to rest*<sup>47</sup> and has always been the best known of Stanford's traditional Irish lullaby settings. Graves' poem is unobtrusively attractive.

#### Lullaby

I've found my bonny babe a nest  
 On Slumber Tree.  
 I'll rock you there to rosy rest,  
 Astore machree!  
*I've found my bonny babe a nest*  
*On Slumber Tree.*  
*I'll rock you there to rosy rest,*  
*Astore machree! (1)*  
*Husho, Husho! (2)*  
 Oh, lulla lo! sing all the leaves  
 On Slumber Tree,  
*On Slumber Tree, (1)*  
 Till everything that hurts or grieves  
 Afar must flee.

I'd put my pretty child to float  
 Away from me,  
 Within the silver new moon's boat  
 On Slumber Sea.  
*I'd put my pretty child to float*  
*Away from me,*  
*Within the silver new moon's boat*  
*On Slumber Sea. (1)*  
*Husho, Husho! (2)*  
 And when your starry sail is o'er  
 From Slumber Sea,  
*From Slumber Sea, (1)*  
 My precious one, you'll step to shore  
 On Mother's knee.  
*Husho, Husho! (2)*

(1) Repetitions in italics not in original poem

(2) The *Husho* interpolations are not in the original poem

Alfred Perceval Graves

<sup>47</sup> The separate edition does not have a date other than 1901, applying to *Songs of Erin* as a whole, but it bears the legend "sung by Miss Ada Crossley". Hudson (ibid, M 22) has traced a performance by Ada Crossley, accompanied by Hamilton Harty, at the Bechstein Hall on 13 February 1905. Unless Crossley had given an earlier performance of which we have no knowledge, the separate publication must have been made in 1905 or soon after.

This song has a remarkably long recorded history. It was set down in 1902 by the baritone Denis O’Sullivan with an unknown pianist and issued on a 10” Berliner (5646) in 1904. O’Sullivan (1868-1908), though of Irish descent, was born in San Francisco. He came to Europe to study and acquired a major reputation in London. He sang the part of Shamus at the first production of Stanford’s *Shamus O’Brien* in 1896. Since he recorded nothing from this opera, it is good that we can at least hear him in something by Stanford. This recording was issued on CD by a label called Flare. I have no further information about this disc, except that the *Lullaby* can be found on You Tube. It needs to be approached with caution. I was initially dismayed at such a cavalier, unfeeling interpretation, till I noticed that it plays a tone above the original score pitch of F<sup>48</sup>. This is already rather high for a baritone. I therefore made the experiment of slowing it down to F. This extended the timing from 02:35 to 02:53, still just within the possibilities of an early 10” shellac disc. A baritone might want a lower key still, but since the high Fs are sung falsetto, I think this pitch is correct. The resulting performance is charmingly relaxed if not especially expressive. It is a relief to find that the first Shamus was a good singer after all. He is rather free, after the manner of his day, in the second part of the tune, and there are some small verbal amendments. Did he perhaps have an earlier manuscript version? Before the performance starts there is a brief conversation between two people, but I could not make out the words.

James Griffett and Clifford Benson<sup>49</sup> gave a touchingly restrained performance in 1982, though I query the decision to sing it in G. A couple of high Gs should not be a problem for a tenor, but they sound forced and hoarse. Perhaps they came at the end of a gruelling day.

A present-day singer who has made this lullaby very much her own is the Irish mezzo-soprano Sharon Carty. No official recording, but there are performances on You Tube, with Finghin Collins as pianist, from Dublin on 12 November 2017 and from Maynooth University on 15 May 2021. At a slightly slower tempo, she uses her seamless, beautifully clear voice to make this one of those Stanford pieces, like *The Blue Bird*, where time stands still. In the later performance, her final “husho” surely announces the arrival of a singer who can do things that the listener carries away and remembers long afterwards. Collins is responsive to every subtlety in Stanford’s piano part.

### [Six Irish Folksongs]

#### 3. Hush Song

In 1924, Cramer issued a final group of six Irish folk-song settings. They were not published specifically as a set, hence my square brackets – the title is mine. They mirror the op. 175 songs that Cramer issued slightly earlier in that they were published separately with a single uniform cover. The words were once more by Graves and the titles, in the order they appear on the uniform cover, are *The Hurling Boys*, *The Irish Lover*, *Hush Song*, *Limerick Point to Point Race*, *My Brave Boy* and *With the Dublin Fusiliers*. Only the second of these, a setting of the *Derry Air* preferable to that in *Songs of Old Ireland*, achieved much currency, though it was late in the day even for this. Since 1910, this tune had meant, for most people, *O Danny Boy*, and so it tends to remain. Stanford’s association with this melody requires a separate study.

*Hush Song* is practically unknown. Hudson<sup>50</sup> lists the 1924 Cramer publication, but he erroneously states that it is a reissue of the *Hush Song* from *Irish Songs and Ballads*. Dibble<sup>51</sup>, perhaps relying on Hudson, lists the other five arrangements from 1924, but not *Hush Song*, which has therefore been written out of Stanford’s work list.

<sup>48</sup> The separate publication of this song was available, apart from the original F as in *Songs of Erin*, in E flat, E and G.

<sup>49</sup> Ibid. Hyperion 1982.

<sup>50</sup> Ibid, M 14.

<sup>51</sup> Ibid. 2002, p. 486.

The melody for this setting is not from Petrie, but from the Costello Collection of Galway & Mayo Airs<sup>52</sup>. This is interesting, since Uí Choisdeailbh, Eibhlín (Edith Costello) (1870–1962), as well as an ardent collector of Irish traditional airs, was a fervent Irish nationalist. She stood for the Sinn Féin party in the 1920 elections and became the first woman District Councillor for North Galway. From 1921 to 1922, she acted as Judge on the Sinn Féin arbitration courts, and subsequently worked towards the founding of the new independent Irish state<sup>53</sup>. Just the sort of person who would have roused the Unionist Stanford's hackles to bursting point. Another of the contradictions that arise whenever we try to approach Stanford, just as his railings against Popery do not seem to have excluded a greater interest in Catholicism than would be logical. At the very least, we must suppose that a presumed distaste for a person's beliefs and actions did not prevent him from appreciating their work in other directions<sup>54</sup>.

The melody of *Hush Song* is no. 46 in Costello's collection. She points out that it was sung to the same poem as the tune recorded by Petrie (1011) and set by Stanford as *An Irish Lullaby* in *Songs of Old Ireland*. She believed, however, that Petrie's barring was wrong and indeed, if Graves had ever considered the easy way out of using the same poem again (why not, if the same Irish words were sung to both melodies?), he would have found that his old words did not fit Costello's tune.

Fifty years before, Graves had somewhat romanticized the original Irish poem. This time he followed it more closely, though he could not resist the temptation to sentimentalize the end.

Hush Song	Shoheen Sho
<p>O not as the wife of a clown I would hap you,  All in a coarse blanket-fold to wrap you,  But between two silken sheets I'd lap you,  With your golden cot in the wind a-swaying.      Sho-heen sho, and lu, la, lo,      Shoheen sho, my darling baby;      Shosheen sho, and lu, la, lo,      Shosheen sho, my own sweet baby.</p> <p>One beautiful day in shining summer,  I would rock you, rosy newcomer,  There in your cradle my heart's delight,  Sleep to the droning of the wee Bee Drummer.      Sho-sheen sho ....</p> <p>Till evening makes room for the Starry Number,  O may no ill dream destroy your slumber,      Only may angels, angels in white,  My heart's delight, keep you free from care and      cumber.      Sho-sheen sho ...</p> <p style="text-align: right;">Alfred Perceval Graves</p>	<p>With my arms I'll lay you to rest, my baby,  And not as the wife of a bodach would lay you  In a blanket's fold or a sheet to swathe you,  But a cradle of gold with the wind to sway you.      Shóheen shó, and lú la ló,      Shóheen shó, my darling baby;      Shóheen shó, and lú la ló,      Shóheen shó my own sweet baby.</p> <p>I'll lay you to rest in a sleep untroubled  On a quiet day in the height of summer,  On the broad clean floor of the hills, on the      summit,  In the shade of the trees, with the breezes to lull      you.      Shóheen shó ...</p> <p>And into your rest may pleasant dreams come,  And health be yours, my babe, from your sleeping;  I pray that no colic, or child's disease,  Nor any finger of death may reach you.      Shóheen shó ...</p> <p>Literal translation of the Irish poem, from Costello</p>

<sup>52</sup> See note 36.

<sup>53</sup> <https://www.dib.ie/biography/ui-choisdeailbh-eibhlin-edith-costello-a8761>. Retrieved 20.11.2023.

<sup>54</sup> Stanford set a poem, *My Land*, by another ardent Irish nationalist, Thomas Osborne Davis (1814-1845), in 1911.

The melody, like that of *I'll rock you to rest*, is in two parts, but this time it was so originally. After a brief romantic piano introduction, Stanford is sparing of notes, as he was wont to be in his last years, but always with an ear for atmosphere. The first two verses have an identical setting while the accompaniment is slightly varied for the third. Let us hope this article will draw attention to another attractive lullaby, so far unrecorded.

Stanford's folk-song settings are best looked on as art songs, no less than his original songs. Solo singers looking for an ear-catching lullaby to slip into a programme therefore have a choice of eleven, all worthy of a place. Not many singers would want eleven lullabies, but there is no reason why eleven singers should all choose the same one.

### Unison Songs

*A Japanese Lullaby*, originally issued as a unison song, has been discussed above. The two lullabies included in *The National Song Book*<sup>55</sup> deserve brief consideration. The accompaniments in this volume are vanishingly simple. Not only would they have little appeal to a solo singer, they seem scarcely sufficient for their intended purpose. This is the interesting point.

I am probably not alone in remembering elementary school days when the class grouped round the piano to sing many of the same songs as are also in *The National Song Book*. What I remember, though, is that the teacher played, or plonked (some were better than others) a harmonized version of the tune. In other words, we "sang along" with the piano. Stanford's arrangements in *The National Song Book* are not only simple, they rigorously avoid doubling the tune on the piano. In his philosophy, there was to be no "singing along", the children had to know the tune and the only support they would get from the piano was harmonic and rhythmic. If they could learn to read the notes, so much the better – Stanford strongly believed in singing by note, not by ear<sup>56</sup>. This places him in a mid-way position between the schoolmistresses of my childhood days and a musical educator like Kodály who would not have the children sing with a piano at all until they could sing in parts, unaccompanied. In view of the direction taken by musical education in the UK in the last fifty years, there seems little future for *The National Song Book*, at least in the country for which it is written. Good educational work continues in some other countries, but they have similarly designed repertoire of their own, such as the numerous Danish songs for educational use by Carl Nielsen.

In the present two cases, the setting of the traditional *May Fair* tune for *Golden Slumbers* lacks even an introduction. Presumably the teacher would play the first or last line, as with a hymn. The setting of *An Ancient Lullaby* is independent from that in *Songs of Old Ireland*. The piano starts the song here and has a pervasive rocking figure of its own, but it is likely that the children would enjoy better the more imaginative accompaniment of the "adult" setting, providing their teacher could play it.

### Two-part songs with piano

As with unison songs, the prospects of educationally-intended two-part songs surviving today will mainly depend on their attractiveness to pairs of solo singers (soprano and mezzo) looking for repertoire. If it is lullabies they seek, both *Cradle Song* and *Lullaby* deserve a look.

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<sup>55</sup> See note 14.

<sup>56</sup> See article no. 10 in this series, p. 4: <https://www.musicweb-international.com/classrev/2022/Jun/Stanfordian-thoughts-10.pdf>

*Cradle Song* was published in 1907 together with three other two-part songs. It has no opus number and the four pieces were not specifically a group, but a common feature to three of them is words by William Blake. The *Cradle Song* is not that from *Songs of Innocence* but a parallel piece found in some editions of *Songs of Experience*, though not in Blake's own<sup>57</sup>. The "cunning wiles" and "dreadful light" should be read in tandem with the gentle pieties of the "innocent" *Cradle Song*. It is not as acerbic as Graham Greene's hilarious story *Awful when you think of it*, but the seeds of experience are clearly present in this baby. It is difficult to see how these hints could be rendered in a romantic musical language – Weill or Shostakovich might have found a way. Stanford does not try, but the two voices entwine with mellifluous grace over a rocking accompaniment.

Cradle Song

Sleep, sleep, beauty bright,  
Dreaming in the joys of night;  
Sleep, sleep; in thy sleep  
Little sorrows sit and weep.

Sweet babe, in thy face  
Soft desires I can trace,  
Secret joys and secret smiles,  
Little pretty infant wiles.

As thy softest limbs I feel  
Smiles as of the morning steal  
O'er thy cheek, and o'er thy breast  
Where thy little heart doth rest.

O the cunning wiles that creep  
In thy little heart asleep!  
When thy little heart doth wake,  
Then the dreadful light<sup>58</sup> shall break.

William Blake, from *Songs of Experience*

*Lullaby* was "written for Professor Horatio Parker's 'Progressive Music Course'", though it did not actually appear there until 1916<sup>59</sup>, by which time Stainer and Bell had issued it in England in 1913. The words are by the American poet Frank Dempster Sherman (1860-1916). Whether Stanford chose an American poet out of deference to the American commission or whether Parker himself suggested the poem is presumably unknown. Sherman's *Little-Folk Lyrics* were first published in 1892, but *Lullaby* was added for an enlarged

<sup>57</sup> It was included among *Songs of Experience* in William Michael Rossetti's 1874 edition of Blake's poetical works and also in Yeats' edition (Routledge 1905). Some modern editions exclude it or relegate it to an appendix on the grounds that Blake himself did not originally include it.

<sup>58</sup> "Night" in some editions, but "light" as set by Stanford and as found in the editions of W. M. Rossetti and Yeats.

<sup>59</sup> *The Progressive Music Series* by Horatio Parker, Osbourne McConathy, Edward Bailey Birge and W. Otto Miessner. Teachers' Manual, Vol. 3. Silver, Burdett and Company, Boston, New York, Chicago, 1916-17. Parker cast his net widely. In this same volume, we find specially composed songs by Bantock, Bruch, D'Indy, Humperdinck, Moszkowski, Röntgen, Sibelius and Wolf-Ferrari, as well as several of Parker's American contemporaries. Stanford made two contributions. The other, the unison song *The Invitation*, appeared in Vol. 2.

edition in 1897<sup>60</sup>. Americans initially rated this volume alongside Stevenson's *A Child's Garden of Verse*, but it has worn less well over time. The slightly fey words of *Lullaby* may explain why.

### Lullaby

Slumber, slumber, little one now,  
The bird is asleep in his nest on the bough;  
The bird is asleep, he has folded his wings  
And over him softly the dream fairy sings:  
Lullaby, lullaby – lullaby!  
Pearls in the deep –  
Stars in the sky,  
Dreams in our sleep,  
So lullaby!

Slumber, slumber, little one, soon  
The fairy will come in the ship of the noon:  
The fairy will come with the pearls and the stars,  
And dreams will come singing through shadowy bars:  
Lullaby etc.

Slumber, slumber, little one, so\*:  
The stars are the pearls that the dream-fairies know,  
The stars are the pearls, and the bird in the nest,  
A dear little fellow the fairies love best:  
Lullaby etc.

\* "So" in the original poem and as published in Parker's *Progressive Music Series*. The Stainer & Bell edition has "see".

Frank Dempster Sherman

Unlike the Blake setting, Stanford here has the voices sing in thirds and sixths almost throughout. The three verses are sung to the same music, except for a prolongation of the final "lullaby", though the piano accompaniment is nicely varied for the third verse. All this would seem to make it less attractive than *Cradle Song* for two solo singers, though the music itself is charming and goes through some nice modulations.

I am not aware of any recordings of these two pieces.

### Solo quartet and piano

#### Sweet and Low, op. 68 no. 2

Tennyson's narrative poem *The Princess*, in which a Prince and two friends, disguised as women, enter a strictly female university to enable the Prince to pursue his so far vain suit of the university principal, Princess Ida, who has forsworn all male company, has divided opinion ever since it was written. Sir William Gilbert saw the funny side at once. The jury is still out over the serious side and cannot even decide whether Tennyson was for or against women's emancipation. The poem lives on mainly through the Gilbert and Sullivan operetta *Princess Ida* and through the lyric poems inserted along the way. Over these, there was

<sup>60</sup> Houghton Mifflin Company, Boston, New York and Chicago 1897.

<https://archive.org/details/littlefolklyric00cowlgoog/page/n6/mode/2up>. Viewed 21.11.2023.

never any doubt. *The splendour falls on castle walls* and *Tears, idle tears*, especially, are among the most sensuously beautiful poems ever written.

Stanford's cycle for solo vocal quartet and piano uses nine of these poems. An obvious drawback for a group of four solo singers is that, in many of the pieces, Stanford has them singing in four-part harmony throughout. The egos of the mezzo, tenor and bass will likely be bruised by the impression that they are just fodder for the soprano. In spite of Stanford's insistence on solo voices, a small choir might be more effective. Two songs that give the individual singers more to do are *O Swallow, Swallow* and *Sweet and Low*. In this latter, the voices entwine charmingly among themselves and with the piano. There is no commercial recording of any part of *The Princess*, but *Sweet and Low* can be found on You Tube in a live recording from June 2023 sung by an Australian group called VOX Ballarat. The acoustics and the recording quality are unsympathetic to their efforts, but it still comes across as an attractive piece.

#### Sweet and Low

Sweet and low, sweet and low,  
 Wind of the western sea,  
 Low, low, breathe and blow,  
 Wind of the western sea!  
 Over the rolling waters go,  
 Come from the dying moon, and blow,  
 Blow him again to me;  
 While my little one, while my pretty one, sleeps.

Sleep and rest, sleep and rest,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Rest, rest, on mother's breast,  
 Father will come to thee soon;  
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
 Under the silver moon:  
 Sleep, my little one, sleep, my pretty one, sleep.

Tennyson, from *The Princess*

### Instrumental lullabies

Stanford wrote a great deal of educational piano music in his later years. The two sets of *Six Sketches - Primary and Elementary* – came out in 1918 and have remained in print. *A Toy Story* and *6 Song Tunes* followed in 1920, but quickly fell from view. The fifth piece from the first set of *Sketches* is entitled *Lullaby*. The Associated Board set it as a Grade II exam piece in 2013-4 and it has gone global – You Tube is full of little children playing it. I don't claim to have heard them all and it would be unkind to name anyone, but my impression is that this piece, if taken too fast, without proper phrasing or dynamic shading, or conversely if the opening two-note phrases are too crudely separated, can sound uncomfortably pat. The only commercial recording seems to be my own<sup>61</sup> and it is for others to say if I have avoided the pitfalls just described, but I can recommend the thoughtful 2015 YouTube performance by Luis M. Castro – a mature player not a Grade II candidate – as a worthy model.

<sup>61</sup> STANFORD: *Complete Music for Solo Piano, Vol. 1*. Christopher Howell, Sheva SH 115, 2014.

The first of the *6 Song Tunes* is entitled *Sleep Tune*. This has remained hidden from view but piano teachers might find it no less pleasing than the *Lullaby*. In this case, my recording is the only choice<sup>62</sup>.

For most of his large organ output, Stanford preferred abstract forms, but in later life he developed a taste for more descriptive titles. The third of the *4 Intermezzi*, op. 189, published in 1923, is a *Hush Song*. The opening exchange between solo stop and harmonized response, repeated with a chromatic inflexion that pulls it immediately into a distant key, is ear catching. Here and in the graver chorale-like middle section, it could be argued that Stanford relies on skilful scoring and inventive modulations to disguise the fact that the melodic material itself is rather short winded, but the old charm still works. The only recording so far made, part of Daniel Cook's complete survey of Stanford's organ music<sup>63</sup>, makes an attractive case for it.

Both the *6 Irish Fantasies*, op. 54 (1893) and the *6 Irish Sketches*, op. 153<sup>64</sup> (1918) contain a *Hush Song*, respectively nos. 5 and 6. The *Fantasies* enjoyed considerable success in their day. Lady Hallé presented four of them, including *Hush Song*, in St. James's Hall on 3 February 1894 and immediately repeated three of them, again including *Hush Song*, at Hampstead Conservatoire on 24 February<sup>65</sup>. Bernard Shaw thought they made "excellent fiddling" and commended "the entire absence of professorial spirit proper to genuine Irish violinism"<sup>66</sup>, though he did not comment on the individual pieces. Porte noted that "one or other of its numbers" were "not infrequently heard at professional violin recitals, while the whole six are much played by amateurs"<sup>67</sup>. The habit of cherry-picking remained and, by the time the undersigned recorded the whole set with the Italian violinist Alberto Bogni<sup>68</sup>, several of them had appeared on disc singly, including *Hush Song*<sup>69</sup>. By the time of the *Sketches*, Stanford was no longer hot news and Hudson was unable to trace any performance of them<sup>70</sup>. Nor did I find any review of them in *The Musical Times*.

The op. 54 *Hush Song* is memorable for its gently spun melody over an ostinato figure played by the piano. This figure is also alluded to during the more hymn-like central section. The *Sketches* are by no means a rerun of the *Fantaisies*. In their overall form they are complimentary. The *Fantaisies* start with a passionate *Caoine* and end with a thrilling *Reel*. The *Sketches* lead off with a dashing *Reel* and conclude with the restrained *Lullaby*. Having studied and recorded both ten years ago I can say, listening to them again, that the earlier one sticks most in the mind, but there is much wistful charm to the later piece. If it seems to start from the same premises, and in the same key, it follows a path of its own in the central section, where delicate triplets flutter like falling leaves. It is not just a rerun of former times.

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<sup>62</sup> As in note 58, Vol. 2.

<sup>63</sup> *STANFORD: Organ Music, Vo. 4*. Daniel Cook, Westminster Abbey, Priory PRCD 1161, 2015.

<sup>64</sup> Porte (John F. Porte: *Charles V. Stanford*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co, 1921, p.116) lists these as op.154, and several others have followed him. The manuscript and the printed scores are marked op.153, but so also is the printed score of the *Sonata Celtica* for organ (the MS is missing), whereas no Stanford work bears the opus number 154. Logically, one of the two works labelled as op.153 must really be op. 154. Porte wrote within Stanford's lifetime so may have had direct information.

<sup>65</sup> Hudson, *ibid*, H 25.

<sup>66</sup> *The World*, 7 February 1894, quoted by Hudson, *ibid*, H 25.

<sup>67</sup> Porte, *ibid*, p. 54.

<sup>68</sup> *Charles Villiers Stanford: Complete Works for Violin and Piano*. Alberto Bogni (violin), Christopher Howell (piano). Sheva SH 100 (3 CDs), 2013.

<sup>69</sup> By Lucy Gould (violin) and Benjamin Frith (piano) on *Stanford: Piano Quartet no. 2, Piano Trio no. 1, Legend, Jig, Hush, Song*. Naxos 8.572452. 2009. There is also a You Tube performance of *Hush Song* given in Hendersonville, North Carolina, USA on 19 October 2019 by Shirley Gruenhut (violin) and Karen Attaway (piano). Pleasing as it is to find an American duo investigating this repertoire, the acoustics and the piano-dominated balance make it difficult to assess this slightly faster performance against the other two.

<sup>70</sup> *ibid*, H 46.



The last movement of the Serenade in G for orchestra, op. 18 (1881) begins as a rumbustious *Allegro vivace* but this gives way to a *Lullaby* that concludes the work. The Serenade was well received at its first performance, which Stanford conducted himself, on 30 August 1882 during the Birmingham Festival. The Times<sup>71</sup> noted “the charming lullaby which brings the work to a close”. A London performance under Hans Richter followed on 9 November 1882. Again, the final lullaby drew particular comment:

*It was a bold stroke ... to follow up his lively final allegro by a gentle lullaby, and to wind up his piece with a pianissimo, slowly dying away in the distance. Mr. Stanford's work met with genuine success, the composer being called more than once to the platform*<sup>72</sup>.

The Serenade was less successful in New York, where Theodore Thomas conducted it with the Philharmonic Orchestra on 19 January 1884.

*Mr. Stanford's handling of his orchestra is quiet but masterful; he expresses what he has to say in elegant phrasing. Unfortunately he does not say much. There is a touch of Schumann throughout his ideas, and in the nocturno and final lullaby he is decidedly commonplace. ... After Mr. Stanford's feeble effort, the superb “Leonora” no. 2 of Beethoven shone out with rare brilliancy*<sup>73</sup>.

The Serenade so far remains unrecorded. It was broadcast by the BBC Concert Orchestra conducted by Alan Suttie on 30 November 1977 and set down by the Ulster Orchestra under Barry Wordsworth on 15 September 1984, for broadcast on 15 May 1985 with repeats in 1989 and 1992. I have been able to hear only the Wordsworth performance, which seems to me little more than a dutiful run-through. It shows, at least, that the *Lullaby* contains much cool writing for the wind instruments over a pizzicato bass. I am a little puzzled that a piece marked *Adagio* should go at about the pace generally adopted for the rather similarly scored minuet from Brahms' first orchestral serenade and wonder if a genuine *adagio* would fall flat or whether it would bring out a vein of poetry not heard in this performance. Even so, “decidedly commonplace” seems unfair.

Twenty-two lullabies or similarly titled pieces, then. What other composer has written so many? I would not suggest listening to twenty-two lullabies in a row, whether by one composer or by twenty-two, but studying these pieces one after another shows that Stanford had a capacity to reinvent himself each time. There is no self-repetition here.

**Christopher Howell © 2023**

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<sup>71</sup> *The Times*, 31 August 1882.

<sup>72</sup> *The Times*, 11 November 1882. Dates and reviews from Hudson, *ibid*, G 3-4.

<sup>73</sup> *The World*, 20 January 1884. Retrieved from a website, no longer present, called *Postcards from Brooklyn*.

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