

Symphonic Bagpipes

Though the Scottish Great Highland Bagpipe and Irish uilleann pipes have the greatest international visibility, bagpipes have been for centuries played throughout large parts of Europe, the Caucasus, around the Persian Gulf and in Northern Africa. In recent years, often driven by revivals of native folk music and dance, many types of bagpipes have enjoyed resurgence in popularity. While bagpipes are popular in ethnic, traditional and rock bands, there are a number of orchestral works that include the bagpipes:

- *Sinfonia mit Dudelsack und Drehleier "Die Bauernhochzeit"* (*Sinfonia with Bagpipe and Hurdy-Gurdy "Peasant Wedding"*) by Leopold Mozart, first performed in 1756.

More recent compositions include:

- [*The Relief of Derry Symphony*](#) (1990) in four movements, by Shaun Davey, includes a highland pipe band. Shaun Davey was born in Belfast in 1948 and attended Rockport School in County Down. He graduated from Trinity College, Dublin in the history of Art in 1971. He then took a master's degree at the Courtauld Institute of Art in London. Davey also composed a number of symphonies for uilleann pipes; *The Brendan Voyage* (1983), *The Pilgrim* (1983) and *Granuaile* (1985). "**The Relief of Derry Symphony**" is based around the 17th century Siege of Derry, showing the Protestants inside and the Catholics outside the beleaguered city.
- [*Orkney Wedding, With Sunrise*](#) (1984) by Sir Peter Maxwell Davies. One of Davies's lighter pieces, it lasts for approximately twelve minutes, and vividly depicts the riotous celebrations after a wedding on Orkney. The piece closes with the entry of the bagpipes, which Davies describes as symbolic of the rising sun over Caithness. In concert performance, the piper, dressed in traditional Scottish regalia, is required to enter the hall from the back, parading to the stage and taking the soloist's position only as the piece concludes. It was written to a commission by the Boston Symphony Orchestra, who premiered it under John Williams on May 10, 1985. Davies also composed, *Cross Lane Fair* for Northumbrian pipes and Orchestra.
- *Joan of Arc: An Opera in Three Acts* (1993) by Steven Jobe includes bagpipes in the orchestra.
- *Arthur's Return*, for bagpipes and string orchestra (1983) by John Davison (Commissioned by the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia and premiered in Dover, Delaware on September 23, 1983, by the Concerto Soloists of Philadelphia, dir. Marc Mostovoy; Roderick MacDonald, bagpipe)
- [*Song of the Yellow Jessamine*](#), by Janette Montague, for bagpipe and string quartet is in Primary Piobaireachd Form, and was inspired by a discussion with Bob Rogers (Bob Dunsire Discussion Forums) of South Carolina. The Yellow Jessamine is one of the emblems of that State. Piobaireachd is traditionally played on a solo bagpipe. It is essentially a Theme and Variations often with a return to the Theme at the end. The variations increase in complexity. The piece describes the beautiful Yellow Jessamine, in itself a delicate looking flower, yet poisonous to some animals, and where allowed to grow unabated, can even swamp the countryside and grow up trees, and round tree trunks. In the music, both the delicacy of the individual petals of a single flower, and the rampant, almost strangulatory effect of the plant taking over vast areas, is represented.

Whatever your taste in music...bagpipes fit right in.